

STAMFORD HILL - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH BERYL KRAMER

Recording date: July 2016

00:00:03

Hello, my name is Beryl Kramer, and I'm going to give the recollections of my life in Stamford Hill between 1946 and 1951. I came from the East End and I moved from Boyed Street in the East End to Linthorpe Road in Stamford Hill in 1946. It's a beginning of a new life. The contrast was quite dramatic. The offspring of Jews who had in the main come from Europe were leaving the East End slowly and surely; and my parents followed suit. We had to adapt to both a different area, and a different atmosphere. The leafy suburbs of Stamford Hill were definitely a draw, and were considered a step up in life.

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Linthorpe Road had many Jewish families, but they were not religious. However, I managed to find two orthodox families so that I could befriend, in particular the Cohen family, who lived number 62 and the Hooker family. The father of the Cohen family and my father olov hasholom went to Yeshiva, Yeshiva Eitz Chaim, which was the only Yeshiva at the time in the whole of United Kingdom, and my father took a degree afterwards and Mr Cohen took a degree afterwards. One became an accountant and opened his own business, the other one became a head master, a teacher of Limudei Kodesh and an educationist in two main grammar schools in London. Namely the Central Foundation School for boys and the Hackney Down School. These schools were very famous because they were the only schools where half the children were Jewish, half the boys there were Jewish.

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Regarding davening - that's praying - for those who want to listen to this, there were not many shtiebls, not many small shuls in Stamford Hill at the time. But my father decided to join number 22 Dunsmure Road run by the Margolis family. It was a mixed crowd, some of were Chassidish some Litvish. He acted as their Baal Korei, that means he read from the Torah. And my family davened there for many, many years. The other shul was the big shul, which is United Synagogue Egerton Road Shul, which is run by United Synagogue. The Minister there was Rabbi Dr Simon Morris Lermann. Every week he gave a highly intellectual sermon after leining, that means reading, weekly readings from the five Books of Moses, which was listened to intently by the congregation, where no one talked. The famous chazzan Goldstein took the services, and there was a very good men's choir. We always enjoyed the performance which was world renowned. It is interesting to note the Aron Kodesh in the new synagogue is in the south wall rather than facing east, to avoid praying towards the church in Rookwood Road. It was a very unusual church - the least said about this particular type of living the better. The new synagogue was known to be the most orthodox synagogue shuls from all the united synagogue shuls, and it blended in with orthodox Jewish life in Stamford Hill. Sometimes my father olov hasholom gave shiurim there and also at the federation shul in Grove Lane.

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My first Primary school in Stamford hill was Yesode HaTorah girls' school. Unfortunately I only stayed there for two years as many lessons were conducted in Yiddish, and as I couldn't speak the language my progress was slow, although I did understand a little bit actually. I do remember the name of my teacher however, Miss Hannah Khon. She was very sophisticated, and beautifully dressed, and very often wore a white silk flower attached to the top of her dress. I then changed schools and went to the Montefiore House Primary school. There the children were mostly Jewish. My teachers were Mrs Davis, Mrs Cooper, Mrs Rowen, Mr Rowen, sorry, and Mr Cousins. I thought they were all Jewish but I got no evidence of that. Mr Rowen his speciality was English literature, Mr Cousins was very interested in music and opera, he taught my particular class the Pirates of Penzance by Gilbert and Sullivan scenes of which we performed at the end of the year. Learning Gilbert and Sullivan was part of English culture and we were encouraged to become acquainted with these operas and in so doing develop and widen our interests in all facets of life. Montefiore House Primary school also became a boys club in the evenings, and the clubs and scouts also met there.

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Some of the names of the pupils in 1948 were Stanley Lebevitch, Tony Bernstein, Ryne Silverman and Ervin Deal. It's interesting to note that Stamford Hill had many eminent Jewish residents, including the Montefiore family, and they actually owned the school, as a property, as property to live in before it was transferred in to a school by Claude Montefiore. To assist us in processing our 11 plus examination we were given a book called attainment test by Hyde Perry. And this was full of the questions we could expect in the exam and that is the 11 plus. We were told to work at this at home and I remember my parents going through it with me very diligently to make sure I would be up to the required standard. My mother Olov Hasholom concentrated on my math and my father Olov Hasholom on English. From there I won a place to a Grammar school called Skinners company school for girls, a non-Jewish school. But whose intake allowed for a large number of Jewish pupils. Incidentally my mother was so sure I wouldn't get in that she approached the headmaster of the Avigdor's Jewish school to admit me and he said he would. At the time I recall only two Jewish schools in existence in Stamford Hill; Yesodey Torah and the Avigdor School, so there wasn't much choice. Skinner's school was originally a firm guild. And ranked very highly in the hierarchy of the guilds. Since a large number of the pupils were Jewish the London board of Jewish religious education which was the main Jewish ...um organisation that dealt with these things with Jewish education. Centre supply teacher called Mrs Lipmann. She lived in Geldaston road in Clapton, and she was asked to teach religious studies to the Jewish girls. The Jewish girls we also had separate daily Jewish assemblies in the morning and then joined up with the none Jewish girls for general hymns or you call them psalms. The Jewish and none Jewish girls managed to co-exist very well on a certain level, although there were little integration. The ethos of the school was of a high standard and they tried to inculcate in good moral ethical principles. When a teacher came into the class all the girls had to stand. Respect for people was an important part of the school character building there was no swearing or bullying. Punishment was always extra homework. Regarding dress code was a uniform that all girls were required to wear and it

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certainly produced a special pride in belonging to the school. When I joined it was the end of an era. The headmistress Miss Lydia Barton was retiring at the end of the year and she was being replaced by Miss Margaret Grey. Miss Barton has excessively led the school for many years and was a formidable headmistress. Small in stature but large in persona. She always tied her white stroke grey hair in a bun and wore chains and chains of beads very effectively. She was a disciplinarian and we were terrified of her. The names of the other teachers I recall was Miss Ethic, Miss White was the English teacher, Miss Watson the French teacher and Miss Brown the Latin teacher.

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Stamford Hill felt a very safe area and we could walk home in the middle of the night without any qualms.

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Trams running through Stamford Hill were the main form of transport. Majority of the families did not have cars.

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During the week our evenings in general were spent doing homework reading or meeting up with friends. Shabbos was usually spent going to Shul in the morning and meeting your friends in the afternoon at the bandstand in Springfield park. I did try joining the local beis Yaakov girls group on Shabbos afternoon but unsuccessfully. As every time I made the effort to go the girls and leaders didn't turn up. At the time it wasn't very well organised.

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During this time my life of Hebrew education was worrying. And for short while joined the classes at the home of Rabbi Shem Tov, the representative of Lubavitch who lived in Cranwich Road. Their daughter Fraydel or as we knew her as Freeda taught me. She eventually became the wife of Rabbi Sudack and the head teacher of Lubavitch girl's school. Later I joined the Egerton road Hebrew classes run by the London Jewish religious education under the direction of Mr Salamons. I recall taking an examination being asked to read an unseen passage from the Siddur. I said it was not fair as I already knew this passage by heart, could I have another unseen passage to read. Even then I was very honest.

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The hustle and bustle of normal life on the Hill was very quiet in comparison with today's. Where Sainsbury is situated now in Stamford Hill there used to be a cinema called the Regent, later to become the Odeon. And also another cinema called the Super where Asda now stands. There was a Butcher shop called Gilberts there was also a kosher restaurant near the Super cinema and I think the name of the kosher restaurant was Carmel. The Skinner's school was in the most prominent place on the Hill. On one side of Skinner's was Northfield road and from there till Linthorpe road stood a number of very large houses. If I remember correctly the Jewish

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organisation called O.S.E and it's got, it's a French name for the children's aids society, made available a large kitchen in one of these houses and arranged for hot kosher food to be served to Jewish children in their lunch time. I ate there and found their food very good.

Next door to the Regent cinema on the Stamford Hill side there was a camera shop owned by Michal Silver and a photo studio. Directly before the corner just before Egerton Road was Woolworth, an amusement archive and a non-kosher delicatessen. There was a post office on the corner of Egerton Road which in fact is still there. On the Stamford Hill corner was also Boots and Sainsbury's was situated close to chemist. On the corner of Portland Avenue stood a large church and on the main road in front of this church was a horse trough dating back to 1880, from which horses used to drink from the top of the trough and dogs drank from the underside. This of course ceased when horses stopped being used. On Stamford Hill just before the junction of Dunsmure Road there were two large houses, one was a Dental surgery and the other was a doctor surgery where Doctor David sorry Debra David connected to Lynsky family which was a very well-known family in the area. To get back to other things some electric trolley buses terminated at this point near Dunsmure road and there was of course the bus station formally the tram station I Rookwood Road end of Egerton road. I'm unsure when the trams changed over to trolley buses. During the 1940s trees had a white washed band at shoulder height around the trunk left over from war time - it was an aid during the blackouts and buses similarly had a white or yellow disc painted on the rear. By the Stoke Newington rail station there was a small are of shops including a florist and a branch of Charringtons coal merchants. At the beginning of Stamford Hill which was the beginning of Rookwood road end was Stevens, a large drapery store. And opposite Grove Lane junction was George Grey green coach station. There were many other things that were very famous there and but one of the interesting thing was a blue police box for emergency calls that was at the junction of Manor road, this all disappeared later on.

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Regarding shopping my mother would go to Ridley Road market in Dalston on Friday morning to buy food for Shabbos It was packed with other Jews doing the same. Grodzinski had opened up in Dunsmure road which was very good, I also recall my mother going to the to purchase her meat and chickens which she koshered herself she taught me how to kosher and I assisted her sometimes.

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Holidays were usually spent in Westcliff- on-sea. My parents rented a flat for four weeks every year, schools were closed for about six weeks or more for the summer holidays, most people did not have cars - we didn't, we packed everything into cars and we schlepped (carried) them down ourselves by train and it was great fun and of course we met most of our friends from Stamford Hill there.

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Regarding finance prior to decimalization in which we have nowadays we used to use the pound, called the sterling pound. This was divided into twenty shillings into one pound, and each shilling

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was worth twelve pence making 240 pence to the pound.

In respect of religion, this country was mainly protestant, which allowed us as Jews to observe our religion in freedom. It wasn't a strict religion, therefore it helped us. The Old Testament which they called the bible was accepted as the fundamental source of religion with the New Testament being studied by Christian followers. The moral and ethical codes by which we lived still strong in this country. Marriage between a man and a woman was accepted norm and respected. Other relationships were frowned upon and in some respects considered illegal.

Fashion- in 1940's and 1950's the latest fashion changed to sweeping longer skirts, fitted waist, and rounded shoulders. They wore dresses and skirts that were full and flowery. Also, they wore gloves, preferably a pair that matched their outfit. Fur was very popular, as were animal skins.

Crocodile purses, lambskin linings and leather sleeves were all accepted. Nothing was off limits.

Women's shoes were often one of these three popular colour choices: red, white or blue.

Now I can't think much more to say about the period then, I'm sure that there is plenty more to say, but to conclude my recollection, I'd like to record that my feelings at the time were one of excitement and one of anticipation for the future. The Second World War had finished, hundreds had settled down to peace and Britain was beginning to prosper. The future looked rosy.

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MRS BLANCA STERN

Recording Date: June 2016

00:00:16 Hello, my name is Blanca Stern, I was born Schreiber and I was born in Vienna in 1930.

00:06:25 We lived a very nice peaceful community life there. In 1938 Hitler took over Austria and things were not so good for us Yidden (Jews), so lots of people lost their livelihood and some were eventually taken to concentration camps and there were some trying to get out, so Dr Schonfeld from London organised a Kindertransport, that he is now famous for, and he managed to get 250 children whose parents were eager to send them away to London and then the immigration of the parents would fall that much easier. So my siblings and myself joined this transport... They arrived in December when it was Chanuka (The Festival of Lights), it was actually the fifth night of Chanuka when we met them at the railway station. My father took us there and my father bentched (Blessed) us and we got off the train. It was a very long and bitter cold journey. It was snowing a lot of the way and in middle of nowhere we got stuck in the snow, the train got stuck in the snow, and our whole journey took very much longer than it should have. So the next night of Chanuka we were still on the train unfortunately. There was one of the big boys, they called them the big boys, who had a Menorah (a sacred, 8 branch Candelabra) with him and he lit it and we all stood in the corridor and heard him light the sixth night of Chanuka... and the train went on and on and on right through Germany and when we came to the border we were all very frightened, what are the German officials going to say? What are they going to do? Because they were quite unpredictable, but they were quite nice and passed us on. They just asked whether we had any money and I had with me my little handbag, which I've still kept, and a one Deutsch Mark coin in it and I was very frightened to say that I have but I was afterwards very frightened what I would do. What if they are going to ask and what if they are going to search and then find it and this was a terrifying thing, but they just passed on and only now am I able to... with it as nobody would have cared about one single Deutsch Mark. We arrived in Holland and were received by a little reception with people who were prepared to take us, and at that time it was Friday and we were preparing to settle down for Shabbos and suddenly we were told we have to go. We have to pack our things together, take our suitcases and board the boat to England because the next lot of refugees were coming and there was no room and we were told to catch this boat. We were told... The Rabonim Paskened (The Rabbis Ruled) that we were allowed to go on Shabbos. There was crying going on and everybody cried, we didn't want to go on Shabbos but we had no choice, we were just herded along and we got on to the boats and it was very stormy weather and the boat tossed and turned and jumped and we thought this is it and this our punishment for travelling on Shabbos. Nearly everybody was seasick and the journey from the port of Holland across the Channel should have taken six hours in those days and it took ten hours because of the stormy weather. Eventually we arrived and it was in middle of Shabbos and again we had no choice but to disembark and from there we were put onto a train to London, to Liverpool Street station.

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00:09:45 By the time we arrived in Liverpool Street Station Shabbos was nearly over and then we did wait to get to our destination. As soon as Shabbos was out Rav Schonfeld organised taxis to bring us into town and he divided up the children among places that were available to him. One was his school, the building of the Secondary school, 109 Stamford Hill, now Lubavitch school is there and 86 Amhurst Park, which is now Belz Cheder, not Belz Cheder sorry, Getters Cheder and us; more or less the youngest bunch, about 40 of us, he took to his house which means his mother's house – he was still living at home with his mother and younger brother, his brother wasn't there at the time. We arrived at Rabbi Schonfeld's House, 35 Lordship Park, which is actually the house I am still living in now. He put couple of beds in every single room, it was a large double fronted house, he put a couple of beds in every room – downstairs, upstairs, in the dining room, the lounge, the library, every room upstairs. Even the rooms that were occupied by the domestic staff beforehand, when they were children, when Rav Schonfeld was a child. We were very frightened of the open fires, in those days nobody had, well most people didn't have central heating, though public buildings did have though most private houses didn't have central heating, in fact they were open fireplaces. Nowadays people still have these decorative fireplaces if they want to look very posh... but in those days there were open coal fires and we were very scared because at home we used to heat with enclosed stoves, also with coal, but it was enclosed. But we still got used to all these things.

00:17:30 This house, 35 Lordship Park, where I first arrived in this country has very rich history. At the time, actually the owners before Rabbi Shlomo Schonfeld's father, Rav Avigdor Schonfeld founder of the Adass Yisrael Shul (synagogue) here in Stamford Hill, actually the only Adass Yisrael in London. Before them the owner was a relative of mine, that's what I discovered later – family Lutsa. But later when war broke out family Schonfeld moved away from here, they were in the country for some of the time at least and they never came back here to live. The house was left empty during the war but it was still owned by the Schonfeld family and many communal things would go on here. For instance, if anyone from the community was bombed out, that means they had nowhere to be temporarily, so they could come into 35 Lordship Park temporarily until their house was put right again. Or, there were many weddings in this house, there were many chasunahs (weddings) in this house. They were very small, just with the close community, the friends and family did the cooking... There were eventually... Oh there were other... Besides the Adass Shul which was situated on Green Lanes there were also several smaller Batei Midrashim (synagogues). One of the Shotzer Rebbe, the Shotzer Rebbe's son-in-law had another one. There was the Triske Rebbe in Dunsmure Road. There was of our kind of Adass based community... oh yeah there were, there were... Rabbi Pinter had a little Shtiebel (synagogue) then and a few others... I don't remember the names of them. There was kosher shops in... Grodzinski was already open then, they proudly displayed how long they've existed. So they were already in Dunsmure Road. Otherwise Dunsmure Road was devoid of any Yiddishe (Jewish) shops. The main shopping of the area was along Stamford Hill, oh yes, there was Breuer and Spitzer – The grocery in Manor Road at the time...

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Actually it was first Mr Breuer on Manor Road and his cousin, two brothers Spitzer on Green Lanes. Later on they merged and the shop became Breuer and Spitzer. Later, much later, they opened another branch in Dunsmure Road and closed the one in Manor but they still have their stock there, their stores there. They actually, in Manor Road they used to have two shops next to each other. One used to be regular shop and the other one was only used for Pesach (Passover). One was the Pesach shop and this is what... their family had this tradition and I remember a relation of mine who had a grocery shop in Vienna, he also had an extra shop for Pesach. Then there was no kosher fish shop, there was no kosher greengrocer, so we were able to buy our things wherever we wanted and just had to be careful with whatever we got. There was no butcher which we could use, which we would use in London so they... Kedassia Shechita (Jewish slaughter) was started in...Hertfordshire, but that's going off the point...

Here in 35 Lordship Park there was also our Shul, which is now at 69 Lordship Road, it started off at 35 Lordship Park. It actually started at 65 Lordship Road and then at 35 Lordship Park. So there was one double room, was the main Shul and the conservatory/Succah was the ladies' Shul. We also had Beis Yaakov classes here because whoever was here went to non-Jewish schools and so we had Hebrew studies, we had, 2 or 3 times a week after school and the whole of Sunday morning. We had extra classes in Torah, Dinim, Sedrah, Dik Duk, whatever... I think in those classes we learnt as much as nowadays in a full day school, in like academically speaking... We were just very small groups, very mixed age groups because there was not much staff and there was not much room.

00:19:12 Eventually, after the war, this house had got some bomb damage, as there had been a bomb two doors away, that house was rebuilt, but this house the damage was repaired and Rebbetzin Schonfeld put it up for sale. In 1952, I was just married, I got married in summer 1951, and we were looking for a house. A suitable house, in a suitable position. We heard this was up for sale and my husband bought this house, to everybody's satisfaction, because we were happy to be here and I was especially happy to be back in my very first home here and also because the structure of the house is very similar to where I got married in Heathland Road. So we bought it at that time in 1952 and been living here ever since.

00:31:36 When I first came I was in a hostel that sent us to the nearest local school, not to the Jewish school, although it was a Frum (Orthodox) hostel but they were somehow in disagreement with Rabbi Schonfeld. So I went to Northwold school, which is an ordinary state school, elementary school. Compulsory education at that time was from the age of 5 to 14 and it was quite usual for young people of 14 to leave school and go to work. Or they went through other courses to fit them for work. So my first school was in Northwold Road and this was until the outbreak of war on September 1939. When war was imminent all the schools had to be evacuated, that means out of London, into the country – all schools. And so it would mean me also being... out of our community, out of the country with a totally strange culture and so Boruch Hashem (thank G-d) I got permission to join the Jewish school, JSS – the Jewish secondary

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school, Rabbi Schonfeld's school with Dr. Judith Grunfeld as the headmistress and Dr. Grunfeld gave me permission to join and reluctantly the matron of my hostel let me go. Just two days before... a few days before when war looked imminent we had to... we were given gas masks, all of us, every person, and our school – now my school was the Jewish secondary school, we had to go to school although it was in the summer holidays, we had to go to school every day and wait for orders to evacuate. On one of these days, on a Wednesday, Boruch Hashem my parents arrived, and we got the message my parents arrived from Vienna, but we weren't allowed to leave school until after everybody was dismissed. Then on Friday the order came to evacuate and we, the bulk of the school went to Shefford in Bedfordshire and a lot of us in the surrounding villages. I got to Stotfold, five miles from Shefford. Total strangers, it was quite miserable there but at least school was organised, it occupied the local conservative hall and liberal hall that was kindly lent to our school and we had lessons there and we had our dinners there. And the people we stayed with, we were billeted with, that's how it was called, were given to understand that we eat kosher and we are not allowed to eat meat – that was the main thing. Everything else was doubtful. The school remained there for the duration of the war but I eventually moved in closer to Shefford and I was more miserable than ever. One day I had to go into London for an eye test and I refused to go back. But now I was home with my parents and, not both my parents because my father was interned, all men who were German citizens were interned, that means they were in camps surrounded by barbed wire on the Isle of Man and they were quite comfortable, they were allowed to walk in the grounds and they set up a kosher kitchen and our Heimishe (Orthodox) men, what did they do? They sat and learnt. They were eventually allowed Seforim (Jewish study books) and they spent their days and some of their nights learning. This way many young men, or even older men, who hadn't had much chance to do real learning Torah joined them and they remained Chavrusas (study partners) even when they were released, when they came home, for years and years they would learn together. In this way one of the Berochos (blessings) of this internment camp is that many young men who would never had had a chance to really sit and learn, started to do so. My father had 2 or 3 people for a few years, for the rest of his healthy life. Eventually he was released for essential work, as it was called, and he would work at the time in a factory, he was actually a diamond socher, merchant, but for this time, for leaving the camp he had to do physical work.

The Jewish school was still away, so I went again to the nearest local school, a different one on Stoke Newington High Street and in the evening, as I said before, in the evening we learnt in Beis Yaakov.

When the bombing became quite bad our family moved away to Bletchley, Buckinghamshire and then I went to another school. It was actually not the local school, it was a school that was also evacuated from somewhere else in London. This went on for a while and then we came back when it was quieter and I went to yet another school on Stoke Newington Church Street. And from there many of us were moved to another, newly founded school which is now Montefiore Court, was called Montefiore House, and it was a small elementary school. But we didn't learn very much there and had very few Heimishe company, I had my cousin there, but not very much more.

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So we had nothing socially to do in school. Eventually I managed to get a scholarship, instead of the usual age 11, nowadays there are also some major ones to get into a higher school/secondary school I think, but post war many children missed this test at age 11, so I was given another chance at age 13 and I was chosen to be able to go to a secondary school free. In those days you had to pay unless you had a scholarship, which meant you passed the test very well and you were able to go free. That was the best school I was in, we called it... Place, it was a Clapton Secondary school. I was there for the next 2 years, the next three years, with interruptions. I was able to, I was happily learning in an ordinary type of education again carrying on with Beis Yaakov classes in the evening.

At age 16 I left school, I had missed a whole year and had not gone in for the school certificate, it was called in those days but I was happy to leave because Rabbi Dunner started the Beis Yaakov Seminary. And I was one of the founder members of the Beis Yaakov seminary and at that time the Beis Yaakov house was in Manor Road and we had our classes there too. Then from... position in Leicester, they moved it to Allerton Road and we had classes there. Eventually the sem managed to get a house in Woodbery Down. So that's my education for these years of sem.

00:35:56 Being that all borders were closed during the war, there was no import/export of food or anything else and also all industry had to be concentrated on the war effort. There wasn't a shortage of food actually, but the government rationed the essential foods like butter, margarine, sugar, tea, eggs... eggs actually, everybody had a ration book and coupons were torn out of the ration book or marked in the ration book every week as there wasn't so much of everything. There was plenty to keep everybody well-nourished without any excesses of course, so in those days there was no obesity problem and on the other hand there was no starvation either.

We were able to... The English being great tea drinkers, we were able to swap tea coupons for essentials that we needed more let's say eggs – it came to Shabbos, Yom Tov, baking, we needed more eggs than usual or we needed more sugar, more margarine... And eggs were, because they are sometimes more plentiful than other times, it was a week by week. Sometimes we got one egg a person, sometimes two, sometimes four – it was quite irregular, but there was always something. Whenever there was a shipment of oranges or bananas children would be priority, children or people who really needed it badly. But nobody complained because we were all in this together. And also nobody had any grudge against anyone else, there was very little anti-Semitism because, as I said, we were all in it together and everybody cared for everybody else as well as themselves. Later on they rationed bread as well, but again it was enough to keep everybody happy. Oh, I was talking about eggs... When there was a shortage of eggs there was a new product called egg powder and this came in powder form, a yellow powder in little boxes and that could be mixed with water and made into fried eggs or scrambled eggs rather or used for baking. So everybody was, we were quite happy to see that go afterwards when eggs were again plentiful.

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Clothes were also rationed, there were coupons. You could buy clothes or buy material and sew them, all through these coupons. And everybody just did with what they had and every managed to dress decently and to feed themselves decently.

00:37:20 Yes, the fashion was different – there weren't any flared skirts, or very long clothing, coats and jackets and things. Everything was much more economical and also people could, as it's called, make do and mend. You could take a material of two different things and patch them up together and that became a fashion.

Later on, when all this rations was finished after the war, there was a new look, it was called The New Look and it was very flarey and flouncy, just as a relief.

Also there was the slogan Dig for Victory, we would have gardens and everybody was encouraged, not forced, but encouraged, to grow vegetables and herbs so that they wouldn't be dependent, could be dependent on anyone else.

00:38:36 Uh, yes. Well this... What is now called broadly Stamford Hill, it was around the real Stamford Hill there were lots of Jewish people but the main concentration of religious Jewish people was around this area from let's say, from Bethune Road up to Green Lanes. No, further than Green Lanes – right up to Highbury New Park. Because that was not so far from the Adas on the end of Clissold Park on Green Lanes. We lived very closely in the community although the Jewish population was quite large already. We had already moved a lot from the East End where there used to be the most, but there were many now in Stamford Hill, around Stamford Hill.

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MR MALCOLM SHEARS

Recording Date: July 2016

Date of Birth: 1936

00:00:03 What's your name?

Malcolm Shears

00:00:08 When and where were you born?

I was born in London in 1936

00:00:15 Can you tell us about your life?

Yes.

00:02:50 So you can start to tell us now about... Thank you.

We, my parents when they married in 1935, they didn't, my father came from Edgware my mother came from East End and they didn't like it in East End and Edgware because the village in the country was very remote. Well, they felt it was very remote and so they compromised and they decided to live in Stamford Hill.

And they brought me back to Stamford Hill from the Jewish maternity hospital in the East End. And they lived in Alkham Road initially, a house that was later bombed, happily they had moved out of that house by then. And after that we lived in Kyverdale Road and then in Darent Road.

When the war was declared everyone thought that London was going to be heavily bombed straight away and they were very worried about it because the Nazis had rained bombs on a town in Spain during the Spanish civil war and it was absolutely awful there and people thought they would rain bombs on London so people moved out of London as fast as they could. And I remember we escaped to Devon, by car I remember because I had travel sickness in the car and Danny Worburg, who was sitting in the car, gave me sheets of his Binoh comic, into which I could vomit when I, when I felt sick. And the poor boy, he had no comic left by the time we got to Devon.

00:06:40

Anyways, we stayed in Devon for a few weeks, but it was very nice there, but there was really no war as far as people were concerned, it was called the phoney war at that time. It was in Poland where the Germans had begun war, but certainly in this country it was as if there was no war, so we came back to London.

But of course the war heated up and got to be very severe. After the fall in France in 1940, what was called the Blitz had begun, and my memory of the Blitz is me sleeping in my grandparents' house one night, and I think it was a Friday night, and suddenly the door to the room opened and

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there was a chink of light, oh everywhere had blackouts – you weren't allowed to show light to the streets so as to fool the bombers, well a chink of light appeared as my father opened the bedroom door. And my father, he came and lay on top of me, I didn't understand why he lay on top of me, but I realise now it was because a bomb fell in Oldhill Street, we were just around the corner Oldhill Street, perhaps 100 yards away from the place where the bomb fell and it must have been a very frightening experience at the time. And I imagine that in the morning all sorts of local people came to see what the damage was, and that's what probably prompted my parents to move away from London to Oxford, where there was much less bombing and where we lived for a few years. I don't know if there was any bombing in Oxford, but what there was very interesting, there was the development of penicillin in Oxford. What happened was that it was very difficult to get accommodation there because so many people had fled among them, and I suppose other places in the South East of England and they managed to get accommodation in a boarding house run by Mrs St. Clares. Now also in the boarding house were a number of students from universities, and they knew about this wonderful drug being developed in the university at the time and the history of the human race was going to be different, because the drug was going to be so powerful and very helpful.

Now, my father had a sister Ami. Ami had an infection and she was having a terrible time and her doctor assured everyone that if my father could get some of the penicillin, as it was called then, it would be very helpful for Ami. So my father went to see, he made an appointment and went to see one of the people involved in the development of penicillin, but he wouldn't give him any because what they had was in tiny amounts and it was reserved for fighting men – for the armed forces, and poor Ami was not in the armed forces and she died because she couldn't get penicillin.

00:11:49

Then another memory I have of Oxford is my father managed to get a bicycle for me and it was very difficult to get toys and things because everything was donated to, what was called The War Effort and things like boys' bicycles were just not made, because it was winning the war the mattered, not learning how to ride a bike.

My father got me a second hand bike and I remember asking him who is going to win the war because I got the answer we are going to win it. The Germans were winning at the beginning but now we're winning – it was very reassuring that we were going to win in the end. And things got so much better then that we came back to London because the bombing stopped for a while, but later in the war, the Nazis developed rockets that they sent across to London from the North of France and Belgium. It wasn't the bombardment of London then, it wasn't as intense as it was at the beginning of the war but in a way it was nastier because at the beginning of the war there would be an air raid, what would be called an air raid warning, a siren would sound at the beginning of a raid and what was called an all clear at the end of the raid. Well with rockets, with a lot of the rockets there was no siren, there was no preparation, no time in which to prepare – the thing would just fall somewhere and do a lot of damage and perhaps kill people.

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Then one day my father came to collect me from school and at lunch time to take me home for lunch, and we were walking down Ravensdale Road when suddenly a rocket fell on Ravensdale Road, but at the other end of Ravensdale Road, and it's a fairly long road. And we went to see the damage that had been done, and I remember a woman was coming across the road carrying her son in her arms, he was bleeding onto the road and when word went round the school sometime after that he had died, well there wasn't much we could do so we continued to go home, but my father wouldn't let me go to school in the afternoon and sent a letter to the teacher that I was much too upset to go to school by what I had seen. It was only, when I got to be about 13 that I realised that it was my father that was upset rather than me, because he had seen the son bleeding and in a terrible state and he wanted to have me next to him and safely in the house during the afternoon and in fact it made such an effect on my parents that we went away from London again and went to the north of England, next to Manchester there is a seaside resort called Southport and we stayed there for a while and then we went to Yorkshire and then back to Southport and came back to London where we lived until the end of the war. And I remember when the war finished, coming home from school one afternoon and a boy was running through the street shouting the war is over, the war is over, and I can't tell you how exciting it was that the war was over and we were going to be able to walk into shops and buy what we like, like sweets and chocolates, that was a big attraction for a boy of nine to be able to buy sweets, just pay for them and take it out the shop. It didn't work that way at all, it was quite different with the rations, but we had of course, we had, everything was rationed during the war, they were rationed after the war like bread. But potatoes and fish and chicken were never rationed, but chicken was at the time considered a luxury and a lot of people couldn't afford it.

00:13:14

So the bombing was always a big consideration in London. My father had an air raid shelter built inside the house, in the basement of the house with the reinforced ceiling. And I remember one evening we were in the air raid shelter and my father called, there was a door at the side, a side door to the house, next to the air raid shelter, and my father called me to the door and he said look. And I could see a German pilot parachuting out of his aircraft and was floating through the air. Now the strange thing was, in the morning it was in all the newspapers and he landed in Ealing, all the way on the other side... And I never understood how he managed to land in Ealing, but there it is – he landed right on the other side of London.

00:14:59

Another thing about the bombing was that there was always the fear that the Germans would gas us. They never did in the second world war, well they did use gas in the camps of course and that was horrible, but they didn't attack us in London with gas and nevertheless there was always a possibility that they'd use poison gas and we had these things called gas masks. Now I didn't keep the gas mask because it was so... during the war. They were rubber things that smelt horrible and we had to have practice gas sessions in school, putting on our gas masks quickly and learning how to wear them. I could never be happy in a gas mask. It had a plastic front to it, through which we were supposed to see what was taking place, but they always got misted up

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and I wanted to ask what I should do if I couldn't see through the visor, as it was called, but I never got up to ask. But anyways I think I would have had to... well there would have been little tricks to keep the visor clear, but I was a little boy and I didn't know these tricks.

00:16:50

The end of the war came and the... This is the war in Europe and the government instituted a bank holiday – a day off for everyone, well for most people. So it was called VE day – Victory in Europe day and then there was a VJ day – Victory in Japan, but I can remember VE day because for most people it was the war in Europe that was more immediate to us. And there used to be a Jewish restaurant at the corner of Leweston Place and Clapton Common, it was called Jacks, and as a treat my mother took me there, because we lived around the corner from there.... And I remember she bought me a red, white and blue cap to wear for the meal because they were sold outside Jacks and it was ever so expensive – the equivalent nowadays of 15p, but it was more like £15 at the time because it was so expensive. 'Don't tell daddy', she said about the cap. Now I remember we didn't get much choice in a restaurant in those days, but we had... And the man at the next table, I always remember him saying, 'I've waited 5 years for this meal'. And it was a great celebration because we were able to go out and know that the bombing was finished but the rationing, it took ages for the rationing to disappear in this country. It stayed for at least another 10 years and people got very fed up with it because the rationing continued for so long.

00:18:03

And then just as people are tired of Poles and Lithuanians from Europe coming to this country to work - I don't mind them coming but there is a lot of feelings about it. There was a lot of feelings about the prisoners of war, the Italian and German prisoners of war that appeared in the country after the war, thousands of them. My father used to taunt them from his car. I always got embarrassed by it, but he used to open the window and shout Heil Hitler to them. And, I thought it was very cheeky – they were in an awkward position being a prisoner in a foreign country. I thought they should be left alone. But, so there you are, some of them even replied Heil Hitler to him.

00:18:50

One of the most nastiest things was that the last bomb of the war, the last rocket of the war fell on a block of flats in Valance Road in Whitechapel, that was inhabited almost entirely by Jewish people, and that was Hitler's last, last, that was Hitler's last arrow at the Jewish people – he killed a lot of them with the final bomb.

00:21:10

Then the war ended and my grandfather, may he rest in peace, lived in Edgware. He was the first Jewish person, well my family were the first Jewish people to live in Edgware in 1936. Anyhow he had to go to a Bar Mitzvah in Leabridge Road and he came to live with us Friday night and in the morning I walked with him from Darenth Road to the Shul in Leabridge Road. And on Clapton Common, between the pond and Portland Avenue he stopped and spoke to a Jewish man

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in Yiddish and at the time I couldn't speak Yiddish – nobody spoke to children in Yiddish in those times, because they thought it was a dying language at the time and nobody would speak it again, so it was a waste of time speaking to children in Yiddish. So after a few minutes my grandfather left him and came to join me again and we went on to Clapton and my grandfather said, 'that was such an interesting man'. He told me he was what they called a Chasid and he didn't think there was any of them left, he thought they'd all been murdered during the war. 'I am so pleased,' he said, 'that a handful of them survived. They have a place in Leweston Place. I just wish I could take my ... on Clapton Common now, on Shabbos morning.' It was a lovely surprise – he didn't know, and we are not a Chasidish family at all. He was from Litta, so we are a Litvishe family. But, he was very pleased that some of them survived.

00:24:05

There were all sorts of things, but not like there are now - there wasn't the variety that we have now. So, also.... Sorry you'll have to cut this.... When we were in... People were not as fussy, for example when we were in North England, in Yorkshire, there was a fish and chips shop across the road from where we were staying. Now I've got the impression that a lot of people were not fussy about eating fish and chips, because strictly speaking you shouldn't, but during the war there was such an intense rationing, that it was considered acceptable to eat fish and chips. In fact I was told that the Chief Rabbi had come on the radio at the beginning of the war and told people that in extreme circumstances they didn't have to be that fussy about eating kosher food, because they would be, they would be... How should I put it, they would find themselves starving perhaps if they didn't, if they were that fussy. So fish and chips was more acceptable.

00:24:14 And kosher meat?

Well kosher meat there was, and certainly kosher chickens. Chickens were never rationed.

00:24:44 Do you remember shopping in kosher stores?

There weren't kosher stores like the ones we have now. Across the road there is Watermint Grocers and everything in there, you don't have to look, you can just be sure that everything is kosher. You didn't have that. We had shops where some things were kosher and some things were not and you had to look and check.

00:26:46

When German Jews started coming here, before the war, my father may he rest in peace, my father... he used to like them and they tended to gather in Golders Green and many in St. Johns Wood also and my father used to call them soopers and I when we went to Golders Green he used to say we're in Sooland and I never knew why until I realised that everyone was going around, because everything was so strange to them in this country, that they would say uch sooooo when they came to understand something... I'd find it amusing, but my uncle told me many years later, perhaps twenty years ago, that they were very unpopular, but it's understandable because they were, a lot of them had been through terrible experiences and this was a strange country, and they

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didn't fit into this country immediately. But I imagine many of them had strong feelings and a lot of resentment about how they were treated and what was happening to them. Nevertheless, my parents, their best friends were from Berlin. Ella the wife, well my mother described her departure from Berlin, she... Ella's mother came with her to the station and they kissed each other and said goodbye and they never saw each other again. It must have been a horrible situation, just horrible. There are people who were, there are still people around who went through that experience.

00:28:49

The cupboard that is over there came with one of the transports from Czechoslovakia. My aunt, my aunt she took in one of the Jewish children that managed to be rescued from Czechoslovakia before the war began and the girl came, well I never understand – I never asked her questions, how could she come with a nice piece of furniture, I thought they were lucky to come with their clothes because that must have taken some effort to send to this country. Well I never met the girl, because, I was told that her parents managed to get out of Czechoslovakia and come here and my aunt had to give her back to her parents, which was only fair. But recently we moved it and I noticed that on the back there are, there is things painted on the back including the number seven. Now you might know how they cross the seven on the continent, so it just confirms the story.

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MRS BAILA STERN

Recording Date: July 2016

Date of Birth: 04 June 1938

00:00:00

I came with my parents in order to escape from the Nazis. I arrived in January 1939 to London and as I was only 6 months old at the time I can't really remember anything about the journey.

00:00:18

During the war years I was only a little girl so I didn't do very much, but I remember that we moved from London to Bletchley to get away from the bombs.

00:00:33

I remember when a bomb fell in Bethune Road and destroyed a house together with a whole Yiddishe (Jewish) family, I can't remember what their name was. And at that time, I was when that bomb exploded I was sitting in my bath in Heathland Road, where we lived and the ceiling came down into the bath where I was sitting and from the shock I lost my speech and I couldn't get it back for a whole year and as there was no therapy in those days. I just finished off stammering very badly but Boruch Hashem (Bless G-d) it passed after a while.

When we lived in Heathland Road, just across the road there was a house and they had a restaurant in their house for people who didn't have where to eat or where to go and it was called Lock's restaurant and they made the most delicious food and all the people who didn't have families, like men who came from Europe alone, their families got killed or.... They used to eat there – weekday and Shabbos (Sabbath).

00:01:41

The food was rationed, that means there was very little food available so it had to be shared out equally between everybody. So we got a book called the ration book, which had little stamps in it and for each stamp we would get a certain amount of food. But there was very little and there really wasn't enough food to go around, so we managed with less.

00:02:04

My father was a Rav of 69. Now you asked me before about Shuls and so on. So after Dr. Schonfeld made a Minyan (quorum) in 35 Lordship Park, which later moved to 69 Lordship Road, which became 69 as we know it today. My father was the Rav there until he was Niftar (passed away) and then Rav Feldman took over the Rabonos in that Shul and he is now Rav today.

00:02:34

Baatei Midrashim (Shuls), Chadarim and organisations – there was Yesodey Hatorah School, there was the Avigdor school... I don't think there were any other Jewish schools and then

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Eventually Satmar opened – that was the first Yiddish speaking school in London, eventually Satmar opened... and after that, many years after that all Chassidish (Hassidic) schools opened – Belz, Viznitz, Ger, so on... But that was still in the future of that time.

Ok. In Golders Green there was the Hasmonian and I think that was the only frum (orthodox) school.

Well, the only frum (orthodox) schools were the Yesodey hatorah and the Avigdor which was not quite as frum. Yesodey Hatorah started off as a boys' school, which is now in the original building at 2-4 Amhurst Park. Um..The Avigdor catered more to children from English homes not so much to the refugee children. And then, there were no Chadarim at the time but then Getters Cheder (boys' school) opened and that was the first Kol Hayom (full day) Cheder and then after that, after the war many other Chadarim opened, after the war. And today Boruch Hashem (Bless G-d), we have so many Chadorim and Kein eiyn Hora (without the evil eye) they're all full to the brim, so Boruch hashem.

Organisations, there were none as such – we didn't have the Gemachim that we have today, where you could borrow things for nothing and you could borrow dishes and you could borrow centrepieces for Simchas (celebrations) and you can borrow almost basically anything. You could borrow, you could hire... You can hire a wedding dress today, in those days there was nothing like that. So everything you needed you had to supply for yourself and because the people were very poor at the time, why were they poor? Because they came from Europe with nothing – they left everything behind, they came to England just with the clothes on their back.

And em, and Dr. Schonfeld single handedly organised the Kindertransport, that means he brought over about 10,000 children from Europe and found places for them to live in England so that they would establish Im Yirtzeh Hashem (g-d willing) good Yiddishe (Jewish) families

00.05.15

Bikur Cholim was not organised as such, people who wanted to do the mitzva (commandment) visited ill and old people but there was no organisation as there is today like Satmar, Bikur Cholim or something like that. There was nothing like that.

00:05:43

There was the kedassia, which is the hechsher (stamp of approval) for the kosher food in London, but it was very hard to get kosher food.

There was actually one Yiddishe (Jewish) shop in Stamford Hill and that was Breuer and Spitzer in Manor road and any kosher food we needed we had to buy it there and they used to grind their own coffee the shop always smelt deliciously of coffee sand we loved going there .

Um milk, there was kosher milk but it was delivered by the goyshe (non-Jewish) milkman together with the goiyshe milk and it was delivered with a horse with a carriage with such a thing behind it and we always had to check to make sure that we got the right milk. In those days you had to

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the milk came in glass bottles and you had to rinse out the bottles and put them back on the front steps where it was collected the next day. There was no such thing as disposables in those days everything had to be washed and recycled and reused...Um meat there was a bit of a problem because there wasn't much of a shecita (ritual slaughter) in England ..not a shechita that was accepted to everybody then my father in law Mr Stern – Mr Betzalel Stern opened the first kosher shecita house in England and then I had a shop in the little town called Letchworth outside London and there he used to divide up the meat according to the rations and he used to bring all the meat to 69 and then everybody came to collect their little parcel of meat from there because that is what they got in their ration book so that's how much you need per person and so he really established the first kosher meat in England.

STAMFORD HILL - INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MRS HOCHBERG

Recording Date: June 2016

00:00:00

I came to London because I was one of the people living in Hitler's Austria after the Anschluss. I was brought up in Austria, but Hitler's Anschluss - it means he wanted to join Austria to Germany - was in March 1938 and after that, I mean, we saw that things were getting worse and one tried to find a way out to leave Vienna... and then I was at the time when I did come I was in a group of young girls and boys who went on the Westbanhoff - that was the railway station that led to the end of Germany beginning of Austria, the other way round actually... and I came, I was in the train to Oostende where I changed from this particular train where there were lots of girls and lots of boys who also wanted to go to England. I changed in Cologne and then went on a train to Antwerp where my mother was at that - sorry, I meant my grandmother was at that time staying for... who had already stayed there for half a year also as a refugee. I stayed with my grandmother for 2 days and I enjoyed her presence very much.

00:02:19 Daughter: When you were talking about the journey, I asked you what the journey was like, how you felt on the journey.
I felt frightened- it wasn't exciting

Daughter: you were very frightened?

It was frightening. We were looking forward to leave Nazi Germany but we were frightened what would be at the other end.

Daughter: And then they warned you before the journey what you should expect...

I was warned by somebody that on the last station in Germany before leaving Austria, before going to Aachen which was the... and Oostende that there would be personal

Daughter: Personal checks...

Checks, body checks for everybody...

Daughter: To see if they are not hiding money or jewellery...

Because we were not allowed to take money or anything, very little money only, and I was warned that people would be searched. Ladies would be searched by men and men would be searched by ladies and I was very frightened of that. In the end it was quite normal, it was nothing extraordinary and in Cologne where the train stopped. I actually managed to write a little letter to my parents and I don't know whether they ever got it.

00:03:55

Anyway I went to Antwerp, I was there for 2 days. My grandmother had a furnished room by a

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family Fogel at that time.

Daughter: You never managed to trace that family...

No, I never managed to trace the people, I don't know who they are, who they were actually. Anyway my grandmother stayed with them for quite some time and I was there for 2 days and then I went with my grandmother for a walk... and she showed me the shops and that was – it was amazing for me because in Vienna after the Anschluss the Germans managed to get the most of the good fruit and vegetables into Germany... and we didn't see, and bananas and grapefruit we hadn't seen for a year or so, so I was quite amazed what I could see in the greengrocer.

00:05:05

Anyway after 2 days my grandmother took me to the station and I went to Oostende to by the channel crossing and that was the first time I saw an open sea.

Daughter: And what did your grandmother tell you when she left, when she said goodbye to you? When my grandmother left me, she... me that I should be careful that I should never go alone with a man. Anyway, I was a young girl and I was looking forward to the sea journey and it was difficult but I just had to eat very easily. Anyway when we came to Oostende – on my journey to Oostende, I stood mainly on the deck in order to see the white cliffs of

Daughter: of Dover, it was very emotional, being separated from family.

00:06:24

Well, I was amazed at the vastness of all. Things were so big. I mean, Vienna was a town, but nothing like that. Then we got out of the station, we got on a bus – on a double decker bus – which was something I had never seen before. Then I went to where my uncle lived in Hampstead and from there I went overnight to a distant cousin who was actually also a refugee, but she had already been here for a few months, and I stayed there overnight... and my surprise for breakfast was that they offered me a cup of tea which in Vienna when anyone had a cup of tea with milk it was only when somebody wasn't well, so it was something very strange.

Daughter: Imagine being offered a cup of tea when you think it's like a medicine, it's a real English thing to drink a cup of tea.

So anyway, that day was a Friday, and on Friday afternoon I went with my uncle to Enfield, to a family who knew me, who had taken before refugee children to have them in their house during the time.

Daughter: it started off with just a few, and then during the Blitz

It started off with about 5 or 10 children, and during the Blitz of London which was in 1940, there were about 35 people in a 5-bedroom house... and it was rather cramped, but this family Lewin was very nice to us all.

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Daughter: A frum couple who had no children.

Yes, they had no children, but he was actually a mashgiach in a butcher shop in the East End.

Daughter: He was baal korei, baal tefillah, baal tokeia, everything, yes?

He had a minyan in the house, and he was the baal tefillah and he was the baal korei and on Yomim Tovim he blew the shofar. He was everything, but he did it well.

Daughter: she taught the girls how to do things in the kitchen, Mrs

Yes, she showed girls what to do in the kitchen, they were helping a little bit in the kitchen.

Anyway, I was there in that family for 2.5 / 3 years.

Daughter: That's where you got to know your very close friend.

00:09:38

At that time I knew nothing about Stamford Hill at all, but later on I was invited together with my uncle to a chassunah of a friend. It was actually, at that time 69 was in 19 Lordship, no sorry 35 Lordship Park, and that's where the chassunah was... and that's when I first saw Stamford Hill.... and then, a little bit later, then I was in the nursery, I was working in the nursery – in a boarding nursery – during the war.

Daughter: First say that you had 3 choices when the war broke out. 3 choices what you could do. Yes, we had to do the work of national importance, it was called... and we could choose either to go in the woman's army.

Daughter: Or to go in ammunitions factory?

Or ammunitions factory, or nursing. So I chose nursing, and I found a job in a kindergarten nursery.

Daughter: In a boarding nursery, where there were children who were either orphans or their parents were in the war.

The bedrooms were down in the cellar, which was a precaution against air raids, so in the cellar of the house where the nursery was, there were like bunk beds, and the children slept there. All the nurses there had regular night duty, every few weeks another one. To just be there, you see the children were only little, about 3 years, 4 years.

Daughter: And that's where you got your qualifications.

That's where I got my qualifications.

Daughter: As a nursery teacher

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00:12:00

At the end of the war, we were told to look for –

Daughter: It was before the end of the war, you got the job at the Beis Yaakov kindergarten, it was still war time.

Yes, it was still wartime when I started kindergarten at the end of 1945.

Daughter: You got a job in Beis Yaakov kindergarten in Manor Road.

I was interviewed by Dr Schonfeld a"h, I was accepted to take the Beis Yaakov kindergarten.

Daughter: Now tell the story of what happened in the Blitz

00:09:36

During one siren bomb raid, the children were sitting around the table, saying Modeh ani, whatever, and suddenly there was an enormous bang, and there was an explosion, which was actually a direct hit in Green Lanes. In Manor Road, most of the window glasses were broken, but nothing happened actually in the house, except...

Daughter: One thing happened, that the ceiling...

Oh yes, the ceiling, part of the ceiling fell down during the raid on the table where the children were sitting, but nothing happened.

Daughter: Nothing happened. You said you told the children to lie down on the floor, they all lay down on the floor. The ceiling fell onto the table and nobody was hurt, not one window was smashed in that building. The whole of Manor Road had loads of windows smashed.

00:14:00

Anyway, that was a few weeks before the war.

Daughter: It was during the Blitz when there was very heavy bombing in London.

It was already after the Blitz... they were called v1, v2; there were no pilots in those last few weeks of the war. They were pilot-less aircrafts, and you heard the aircraft on top, and then it suddenly stopped, and that's when the pachad (fear) started.

Daughter: There was no time for air raid warnings, even?

They had warnings, but it didn't take long.

Daughter: So this bomb that fell when you were in Manor Road, in which part of Green Lanes did it fall?

Actually in Enville Court, it's being built on that place, where the bomb fell, opposite the water tower was the target.

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Daughter: They used to bomb a lot there

That was actually the water, the pumping, now they made an indoor climbing thing out of it.

Daughter: That used to be a real pump for water, I used to hear the pump, we used to hear the beating of the pump, I grew up like that. There were real reservoirs there, water was pumped for us.

00:15:50

I worked in a factory – that was my first job in England – which sold straps for underwear.

Daughter: And how many?

A few thousand a week. I was there for quite a while, until the Blitz started actually.

Daughter: You didn't say what you had before this job, the very first job you had you had to sit there cutting off threads that the machinist left hanging. You were doing this from morning to night. Only after that you got the more promoted job where you could start making shoulder straps. How much did you earn?

I think about 30 shillings a week. 20 shillings was a pound at that time. I had to pay £1 – 20 shillings for my upkeep (rent). I put away 5 shillings or something like that to be able to send to my parents, who had no means of earning any money in Eretz Yisroel (Israel). They had only just arrived on an illegal transport, it was called Aliyah Beit, I think. They went along the Danube.

Daughter: They arrived penniless, they had nothing.

So I sent them a pound of my meagre earnings. They produced underwear for Marks and Spencer, some kind of underwear.

Daughter: You used to work near Tower Street

No, it was called Featherstone Street, near Old Street.

00:18:13

Anyway, we arrived in the morning on the bus. We could see the flames from everywhere. That was after the bombings after the night. The factory relocated to somewhere in the country, I don't know where. We – the girls that had been working there, were without any work. Then I found a job to make buttonholes on the machine, and I should say one thing, that the whole thing of machines was something completely new to me, and I had to learn how to use them. More than once I caught my finger in it as well.

00:19:13

Everybody got a ration book and in the ration book there were vouchers and some ration books had little pages of vouchers and we had ration books I think for mainly food and also clothing.

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Daughter: What food could you get from the rations?

We got – basic food you could get anyway, but... was hard to find... I think peppers.

Daughter: And eggs?

And eggs, I think you had 2 eggs a week per person... and when you bought it you had to show that they took out the coupon.

Daughter: And you were allowed a little bit of butter as well.

Yes you were allowed 2 ounces of butter a week, less even, I can't remember.

Daughter: And then clothes

Clothes, but the clothing coupons actually lasted very much longer than the... and it was by a chassunah in '47, 2 years after the end of the war but we had still coupons at that time and I remember I bought ... it was given... where I could buy a nice top and a skirt for the coupon that I had... and then if I wanted to have another dress for the chassunah I had to buy it on the black market.

Daughter: You got ration cards on the black market?

Anyway we had to work out where you could get it and then you can get it.

00:21:10

I managed to get a furnished room with a gas ring.

Daughter: The gas ring, oh the gas fire to heat.

Keep warm, and a gas ring to warm up.

Daughter: Food, no fridge?

Meters, so they had to put every part ... when the money had run out, the fire had run out, so they had to try and make sure we had? Today...

Daughter: And this room was in a building, sharing...

This room was ... I had this furnished room and in the same house there were actually only yidden it was very nice ... had elderly family and a middle aged family and we all shared one bathroom, it was on the first floor.

Daughter: If the bathroom ever was not available, what did you do? You went to Hackney Baths.

Very often, a few times I went. Actually it wasn't Hackney Baths, it was, I don't know what it is, it's near the library there was a bath house, and you could have a bath. It costed, I don't know how much it costed, not very much.

Daughter: In those days many people didn't have bathrooms and you had no fridge, so how did you eat meals?

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Whatever we had we had no big quantities in the house, in the evening I went to this restaurant in Heathland Road , it was a restaurant, it was a house where Mrs Roth was cooking for other people who were alone .There were not many people who had families at that time.

Daughter: A lot of refugees went.

People had come from the continent, possibly with a sister. When my grandmother came to England, children asked me, what's that a grandmother there wasn't anything, nobody had a grandmother.

Daughter: Who had grandmothers in those days? You were one of the lucky ones after the war.

00:23:43

Daughter: when you worked in Beis Yaakov kindergarten up the road, in Manor Road, what were your wages, how much did you earn?

I think £6 a week, of which I had to pay £1 for my room and rent for the evening for the main meal in Heathland Road and it was actually very good heimish food.

Daughter: Should we go back to the beginning when you came here first, when you were working, it was freezing and you needed gloves so you had to save up for some time till you had enough money to buy gloves.

We weren't very? When I had come to England, not that I had very much more lately on but a little bit more. So I saved up a few shillings at a time and then I went to a shop that was near the grocery and I bought a pair of warm gloves because it was a very cold winter and I suffered during the time from chilblains and it was very difficult without gloves.

Daughter: And you wrote a letter to your parents telling them so, you showed me that letter, you've still got the letter.

00:25:19

When the war ended many people came back from the countries from being evacuated during the war and the batei midrashim filled up a little bit more, um, that was 69, that was already very similar to... Although it's much smaller now/

Daughter: There was Adass

There was Adass in Green Lanes at the time that people went to daven, and some people came very far to get to the Adass , there was Ashkenazi Stanislaw in 55 Lordship Park , that's where ... davened at the time, and also Mrs Honig, some young men stayed with her for a while because...

Daughter: Refugees, so my father stayed at the Honigs. My mother said that when she got engaged, she was introduced to the Honigs and R' Sholom Ashkenazi and Rebbetzin Ashkenazi and Mrs Honig become her surrogate mother.

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00:26:44

I think it was at that time called Bikur Cholim I'm not sure. when one was expecting a baby, one had to call them, and tell them that the baby was due that day... and people had to have a help because many people didn't have anybody else ... so we had a help to help in the house and to help with the meals for about 3-4 weeks, depending on how much they could give.

00:27:25

Daughter: You wanted to say... you went on a bus home from work. The bus stopped in Wood Green.

It was a frightening experience. I went home from work.

Daughter: With your friend, Mrs Schreiber Leiber.

We came on the bus from the city and the bus suddenly stopped and there was a big shelter in Wood Green but it was completely empty and we were terribly frightened because there wasn't anybody else there. Anyway, the Aibishter hot geholfen we just managed to get out of it and nothing happened to usand there was another thing when I came when I was working in the nursery we were evacuated for a while and we managed to come to London every few weeks I don't know what the reason was ...and that one time I was going to go back and I was sitting on the train waiting for the train to go in 5 minutes but suddenly there was an air raid warning. Then we heard an enormous bang and we just all lay flat on the ground and then we somehow managed to get up and we saw things flying in the air when the bomb had already fallen. It was frightening.

Daughter: You said how you slept when you lived in Enfield with that family. How did you sleep, it was already wartime? Where did you sleep, you had bedrooms upstairs?

In bombing time during the blitz, we were in... we didn't go to bed on the first floor, I slept on a little couch and we joined across 4 chairs so we had like a double bed for 2 girls and while sleeping there we just took our outer things off, we didn't dare to be really undressed in night-times, but nothing happened to us Baruch Hashem.

Daughter: Terrifying, to spend nights like that.

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH RABBI AVRAHAM PINTER

Recording Date: June 2016

00:00:00

Well my earliest memory in Stamford Hill... I still remember getting, we used to get kosher milk. It wasn't actually from a kosher dairy. There were 2 companies – one was called United Dairies and one was called Express Dairies, but what was interesting was that they used to deliver milk to everybody's door, but it would actually come by a horse drawn milk cart, so that's one of my earliest memories when I used to tease the horses.

00:00:40

My parents were typically from, like the time I was born, a long long time ago. And they were, my mother actually was initially from the East End, her parents came from Galicia and they came from, there were different areas in Galicia, and they came from a very famous Belzer family and they lived in... Initially they lived in the East End, then they moved to Cricklewood, but my mother then married my father and my father was, he was a refugee. He arrived here in November 1938, where he escaped the Nazis. He was actually very lucky, he came from Vienna. When I say he was very lucky that he came from Vienna, many people wouldn't know this, but the majority of German and Austrian Jews survived the Holocaust, the reason being because they knew the Holocaust was coming and in Poland it just came upon them – over 90% of Polish Jewry died during the Holocaust, but more than 50% of Austrian and German Jews survived the Holocaust and my father was one of the lucky ones who arrived here in November 1938. He actually arrived on a very foggy day and I always remember my father, whenever it was a foggy day in November, he would go out in the streets and breathe a sigh of relief. I could never understand until he told me, 'that was the day when I arrived on the shores of England, it was a foggy day and I knew that foggy means to me freedom'.

00:02:43

I was born, I was actually born at number 61 Heathland Road. I was born at home, at that time it was quite common for children to be born at home, not necessarily in a hospital.

00:03:05

It's similar to today, but what it was, there were very few um Charedi Jewish schools at the time. If I remember correctly, there was the Yesodey Hatorah, there was the Avigdor, and if I remember the Avigdor was actually mixed boys and girls, and then there was Getters Cheder – those were the schools which most people went to.

And then I remember, when I was about 10 they started establishing Chadarim, what you call the 'Kol Hayom Chadorim' (Full Day Boys' School), and Yesodey Hatorah they made that. They had besides the school, they also had a Kol Hayom Cheder (Boys' School), which also had more

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kodesh (Hebrew) subjects. And one of the things about that time, we were a small community and everybody was close – everybody knew each other, everybody was helping each other and everybody was supporting each other and there wasn't anybody you didn't know.

00:04:19

Yesodey Hatorah was half day kodesh (Hebrew Studies) and half day chol (secular studies), they probably at that time, they taught more chol then they teach now in Yesodey Hatorah, but on the other hand the girls' school, um girls' education at that time was more like a babysitting service. Like it wasn't at a tremendous level, then it was called GCE and there was a very limited number of GCEs that girls took. Now with the GCSEs, girls in this particular school, they take 11 subjects, which is normal.

00:05:13

They didn't have a formal education, it was just less demanding, much less demanding. I think that the change is in the whole world it's not only in.... In all societies it's become, particularly in the Charedi community, girls' schools provide, most of the girls' schools provide now the National Curriculum.

00:05:31

Well, it was actually, people believed that my father founded Yesodey Hatorah. That's not true. It was actually my father came in, it was founded by a Rabbi Pardes and Rabbi Pardes he was sadly Niftar (passed away), he also founded the Mesivta Yeshivah (boys' higher education), and he died without any children. But two years into Yesodey Hatorah, my father, then took over the reins of Yesodey Hatorah, might have been more than 2/3 years, but at that time there was a very, very small school.

It started off with 6 children and something which might surprise everybody, in the first few years the primary school, there was mixed with boys and girls together and if somebody would ask somebody like Dayan Dunner, he might even tell you who was in his class.

00:06:39

It started, you know the kehillah (congregation) grew and initially the Yesodey Hatorah started off in middle of the 2nd World War, where there was a very small Charedi community. Immediately after the Second World War a lot of refugees arrived from all over Eastern Europe, but later on there were even refugees who came which many don't know about, which was something called the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and then also another influx of Yidden (Jews) who arrived from Hungary.

00:07:25

And then later on other schools started to develop, to open up. One of the earliest ones might have been, might have been Lubavitch, then, then Satmar and then it was... but initially, if I

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remember correctly there was only one Charedi girls school at the time and it was Yesodey Hatorah. And a lot of parents actually sent their children to non-Jewish schools. A very common school which they sent to, was a school known as Laura's Place, which is now Clapton Girls School. It was a very popular school for Charedi girls at the time.

00:08:13

Well there weren't very... There were Shuls, but there weren't many, there weren't many, very many Shuls. Actually one of the very famous ones was the Adass Yisrael and for many years the Charedi community was known as the Adass community, that's people would call it the Adass community. But then... And that was mainly from, that catered to the German Jewish community and that had around 26 and actually opened up in Highbury and only later on moved to Stamford Hill. Then there was, one of the earlier Shuls was a Shul on, our family Shul Pinter's and that was established at the end of the Second World War. There were other Shuls, there was Trisk, there was, there were... There weren't very many Shteiblech (smaller synagogues). Belz had a Shtiebel, Ger started much later on and Satmar, Satmar which is now the biggest community in Stamford Hill, even they established that much later than that, so there was no, at that time there was no Satmar Shul. When we talk about one of the biggest Shuls where, where mainly Satmar Chasidim would daven would be the Mesivta and that was part of the Mesivta Yeshivah, but it wasn't a Satmar Shul.

00:09:58

The Rabbonim of town, what I remember was when I was a young child... Hagoan Rav Henech Padwa, he came from Eretz Yisrael (Israel), so he was the first real Rav that I, who I remember. There were some other Rabbanim, but they weren't, they weren't as recognised as when Rabbi Padwa came, he was really the first Rabbinical authority who was universally accepted by all of Stamford Hill.

00:10:30

Many people involved in textiles. More people were involved in jewellery and diamonds – working in Hatton Garden and there were a lot of people who were involved with manufacturing but that changed a lot when we became, when England stopped manufacturing, you know things started coming in from other countries and you know the textiles business became less important and people started to be not manufacturing textiles but dealing in textiles. I remember there were three zip manufacturers in Stamford Hill.

00:11:19

Em... It was a, life was, it was a little bit slower, it wasn't as vibrant, you didn't... so there is, there is what you call swings and em, what's it called, swings and eh... I've lost the word.... There were plusses and minuses, there were. There were a lot of good things where the community was much closer but you can't compare the amount of chessed (charity) organisations that there is today and the amount of gemachim (lenders), there were gemachim but not, not at the level there are today. But people did voluntary work, but in a less organised way. We didn't have a Hatzola, we didn't

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have Shomrim, we didn't have Chaverim, but we still got on well with each other.

At that time life was different we didn't have all the choices, only last week someone came in from another area, who doesn't live in a very Charedi area and said I heard all about your eirr kichelech (sweet crackers) where do you get your eirr kichelech? So I took them over to Carmel, to Carmel stores and all of a sudden I never knew there were eight different kinds of eirr kichelech so the fellow asked me which one should I take. I don't have anything, I have no idea I didn't even know there were 8 types of eirr kichelech.. but let me tell you. In those times there was no such thing as eirr kichelel ..we were very limited we did have Grodzinsky which was a very successful bakery but they didn't give you the choice, let me give you an example. If you go now into into a Heimishe (Jewish) shop you will find a whole um fridge full of milky items.. The only thing you could get milky at those times was milk. Some times before shevuos (Jewish Festival) you could buy some cheese but yogurt I didn't know what a yogurt was, I had never tasted a yogurt, and a chocolate yogurt forget about it. We didn't have, there was very limited amount of kosher food we had something called Snowcrest and they made some crisps chocolate which came from Switzerland and besides that there was a very limited amount of kosher manufactured food that you could buy. And what did we do, it was all homemade, believe me it was better.

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TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH MR TZVI RABIN MBE

Recording Date: June 2016

Date of Birth: 1947

00:00:01 When and where were you born?

My name is Tzvi Rabin and I was born in London in 1947 and we lived at the time in Elm Park, just past Romford and there were two shuls at the time and two synagogues, and we moved back very very soon to Dalston to my grandparents' house, my father's parents' house in Dalston. And I can remember living in my grandparents' house in Dalston when I was very very young, and we moved when I was about three to Stoke Newington and we lived there until about 1960.

00:00:45 So where were your parents brought up?

My father was brought up in Dalston and my mother was born in Manor Road in 1921.

My grandfather, my zeida had bought the house in Manor Road before the First World War and my mother was the eighth of ten children and so as a child I was surrounded by a lots of my uncles and aunts and cousins and um that's where they were brought up.

00:01:20 Which school did you learn in?

First of all when I was five I went to Bethnal Road Infants School which was a very new school just built just after the war and was very, very new and about half the children in Bethnal Road School were Jewish. And we all went home early on Friday afternoon and we all didn't go to school on Yom Tov, none of the Jewish children went to school on Yom Tov and all the Yomim Tovim (Jewish Festivals), basically Shavuos, Succoth as well.... And so that's where I first went to school, I don't have too many memories of that.

Then I moved when I was about eight, we went, I went to Northwold School which is a very big school and once again half the children in the school were Jewish and we had a Jewish headmaster, Mr Kirshall, a Shomer Shabbos headmaster and he was an observant Jew and I can remember him talking to us about going to shul, going to the Synagogue on Hoshana Rabbe. I don't know why he used to always talk to us about going to shul on Hoshana Rabbe, well I can't remember that... And we had some Jewish teachers as well and then when I passed my 11 plus I went to grammar school and Central Foundation Boys School. And once again half the children and half the boys, and at least half, probably more than half were Jewish and we had kosher meals in school and nobody went to school, nobody went to school on Yom Tov, although Friday afternoon was less, less likely that boys would go home early then there was in the other schools.

There were a lot of boys who went to that school who came from the East End but there was quite a lot who also came from Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill as well went there and we had, once a week we had Jewish lessons, Jewish religious education with Mr Kraumer who lived in Linthorpe Road, a very kind hearted man but not a very good teacher.

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00:03:40 So what types of jobs did Jewish people work with?

Both my grandparents were in the fur trade and my father was in the fur trade. We had other relatives who were also in the fur trade, it was a very common thing for Jewish people to do at the time. There were a lot who owned shops, tailor shops, food shops, kosher butchers... You know the other things that Jewish people do. Next door to my father's parents lived Mr Weinbaum who was a Shochet, Mohel and, and...

00:04:19 What was the Jewish kehilla (congregation) like, the shuls, the food?

Well there were, in Dalston, Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill, there were lots and lots and lots of shuls and a very lot of shuls, all of the English type, those were the shuls that I remember. Most of the shuls that I remember at that time don't exist anymore, but we went to the Ratzon Tov Shul, the West Hackney shul which was built after the war to replace the shul that was bombed during the war. That's where my zeida, I used to go there with my zeida regularly and I used to go also Friday night, we used to go to Montague Road which was a very very big shul, where Rabbi Dessler was the Rav during the war before he went to Gateshead to open the Kolel, he was the Rav there.

Food, food... There were Jewish food shops all over the place...

00:05:17 What is the history of the library and your role in it?

Uh, the library. Well I was advised by my teacher in school, who I was quite close with and was very kind to me, that I should consider librarianship as a profession, not a very common profession amongst Jews. And so I did, I started working with libraries in 1969 and that was roughly the time that I got involved with Lubavitch, before that I went to shul three times a day and went to shiur etc and then, during my engagement to my wife we decided that Lubavitch was for us and we got married halfway through my librarianship course. I studied librarianship in Newcastle and lived therefore in Gateshead. And when we came back to London after I finished my course, I got a job in a college library and at the time there used to be hook-ups when the Rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe used to speak in the middle of the week, they would relate over here by telephone link so we could hear it in the middle of the night, because he used to speak at half past nine in the evening which is 2:30 in the morning here.

And somebody came to me and said, the Rebbe is speaking and I see you didn't come the last few times, because I used to get up very early in the morning to go to South London to work, and come, you know you ought to come. So I came you understand and I chapped (realised) in the middle that the Rebbe was speaking about that every Jewish community should have a library. A library where people can come and borrow books and it should be easy for them to come and borrow books. And it should be every sort of Jewish book from Alef Beis (Hebrew Alphabet) to advanced learning, you know Gemora, Chassidus and that sort of thing. And that's something that should be done.

Well, I was a librarian, so there you are, it fell upon me. And we started with a small cupboard of books and it grew and grew and then we moved out from that building into this building, which is

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now too small, and that's how, how the library started and that's how I got involved in it, and that's how it is now.

00:08:23

When my grandparents lived in Dalston, there were a large number of Jewish people living in the area and there were lots of shuls, lots of synagogues, and besides the English style big synagogues, there were also a number of shtieblech, small synagogues in houses, especially in Sandringham Road with a Biale Shtiebel in St Marks Rise, around the corner from Ridley Road market, which I don't remember at all. But I do remember going in Sandringham Road to the shtiebel, we couldn't understand a word! And when we lived in Stoke Newington our street was about 30% Jewish. Most of the Jewish people there were not very observant, but they were to a certain standard and when we moved up to Stamford Hill, to Castlewood Road, there were on our block only two non-Jewish families, but not very many observant Jewish families or very observant, Sabbath observant families – majority of them were not.

In my teenage years most of my friends were Shomer Shabbos, that is where Sabbath observant families, but they were not the sort of people you find very many of in Stamford Hill nowadays. They were, they obviously weren't Chassidish, they were... They were English style observant Jews. Now Egerton Road synagogue which was very, very anglicised, orthodox but very, very anglicised, was on Saturday morning, was absolutely packed, you know, difficult to find a seat almost and we're talking in the mid-sixties and those types of synagogues have either diminished in size, as Egerton Road is still going but has let's say 20 people now and Crowland Road is still going in Crowland Road, at one time I went there every day... And those had prayers three times a day and those that are left are now much less active and they've been replaced by the Chassidish shuls of which I knew very little when I was young. Though I do remember, at least one childhood memory for you, I do remember when I was about four or five and we were living in Stoke Newington, I had an aunt and uncle who lived in Darenth Road, and on Rosh Hashana in the afternoon, we went to shul in the morning and then after eating we went in the afternoon to visit my uncle and aunty in Darenth Road. Walking up Kyverdale Road, I saw a shtreimel (Hassidic fur hat) for the first time and I turned to my father and I said, "Daddy will it eat me?" Because I had never seen such a thing, and you can imagine for some people it is very frightening, for us is an everyday occurrence, but in those days it wasn't very common at all. And as the thing changed, even for the last 20/25 years... I mean I know for example that the people who were brought up in Tottenham Adass, a very dramatic stroke Lithuanian type, their children all moved away because they don't want to be dominated by the, by the Shtreimlech... So they find the, the mannerisms difficult to put up with it, because of the change of the type of...

00:13:04

So I used to go regularly to the West Hackney synagogue, Rotzon Tov shul – Rotzon Tov means good will and it was comparatively small and on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the High Holy days, they had 250 people about, packed in like sardines. And we used to go on all the festivals we used to say what was known as Yotzros, which are a special poems added in to the prayers of

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festivals and other occasions. And I can remember we used to say the prayer, in all the English synagogues they used to say the prayer for the queen and I used to sit near my grandfather and he used to have his old Russian set of festival prayer books, Machzorim, which would have the prayer for, what we had was the prayer for the Queen, he used to have the prayer for Alexandra Alexandrovich and the Tzarina Alexandra Feodorovna and that was printed in Hebrew in his Machzorim, his festival prayer books.

Friday night, we used to go to the Montesquieu Road synagogue which was very large and comparatively more Heimish, which means more traditional, bit less English, but the synagogues by then were all dying, on their way down as the people were moving out.

After my Bar Mitzvah, I joined the choir in Shacklewell Lane shul which was around the corner from us and I sang in the choir there for 7-8 years and that is where I really learned to daven (pray) and that was a bit more English. But as I got older, sometimes I went to, as we were living in Castlewood Road and Egerton Road was around the corner, so sometimes we used to go Shabbos morning to Egerton Road synagogue which was absolutely packed and that was even more English, very much more English, in fact the most English shul I know, most Orthodox English synagogue I know, we still got it, was in Brent House Road in Hackney, past Hackney Town Hall further south, further towards the East End and that was very very, very English and I think they sang the National Anthem there every week, but it was Orthodox, you know the men sat downstairs, the women sat upstairs... and the davening was the same seder of davening as the other shuls had.

And...But I went to a lot of different shuls on occasions, the only one in that area that I never went to is in Walford Road, which is the only one still in existence. I was about 35 by the first time I ever stepped foot there for some reason or other, and that is still going. And interestingly enough, although it was an Ashkenazi shul a lot of the people who go there regularly are Sephardi, because Stoke Newington has a... has a large Sephardi population. I don't know why they settled around that place, behind the Police Station.... So they go there, that's their local shul.