



TRANSCRIPT OF ORAL HISTORY RECORDING

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BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE A.

Identification: This is side one of tape one of an interview with Sheila Gray about child evacuees recorded on 24th October 1990.

Sheila Gray where and when were you born?

In London in, when, 1926.

And the date?

Oh, 4th of June.

Tell us a bit about your family, your mother and father, what sort of people they were and what they did for a living.

Well my father was a dental surgeon and my mother had no occupation of any sort except to be a mother and run the home. We lived then in London in a flat in Kensington and then moved to one of the, I suppose, outer suburbs I would call, Sunningdale.

How do you remember your father? Was he a strict figure at the time?

I've hardly, I don't remember him as an early child at all. He was remote. We had, in those days, staff in the house and we saw him in the evenings and at weekends and that sort of thing. Strict, yes. A Scotsman with a fiery temper - a rather brilliant man actually. And my mother was very gentle. She'd had polio as a girl - known as infantile paralysis in those days - and had four children after that. She actually had polio before she was married, and then had four children, but in those early days there were staff around and so she didn't have too hard a time then.

Where did you come in that line-up of children?

I was number one, first one, and then there were three others.

Do you recall the sort of circumstance, the physical environment - was it inner urban and so on - of your early childhood?

Well in, I don't, I just vaguely remember the London flat and going in a lift which was always was very exciting. But I was about four when we left there and went - I think four - and went to Sunningdale to a big house in a large garden. I remember this enormous garden, and we had a nursery and we were supposed to stay in the nursery or our bit of the garden. We weren't allowed to roam around the house, but that didn't, I mean that was no consequence. There were four of us together and we had a nanny in those days and all that - totally different lifestyle to nowadays.

Had you started to go to school before the war?

Oh yes. I was thirteen when the war started and at a prep school. We had a governess in the early days from, I suppose I was about seven or eight or something like that, and then went to a prep school at nine, which I left to come to Australia.

Was that a private school or a state school?

Yes, it was something that probably isn't known in Australia - Parents National Educational Union - it was a private organisation, tending towards if that's the right word, on the arts. So we had things like picture study of proper painters and things at a very early age. And crafts too which, at that time, was probably less .... I don't know what the state schools were like at that time, but I rather think that we had an earlier instruction in that sort of thing than other schools had at that time.

Just immediately pre-war, had you begun to have any particular ideas about what you were going to do with your life at all?

Well I wanted to get some higher education which, in fact, the war prevented. I hadn't really decided. I admired a cousin of mine who was going to be an interior - decorators, they used to be called in those days - but no, I rather liked languages. But I was fourteen and I had a lot of exams to get through before that, and then the war intervened and we came here anyway.

Do you recall having a sense of there being a feeling that there was trouble looming just before the start of the war?

Oh certainly. 1938 I remember we moved from a farm house we were living in then outside Marlow-on-Thames. Do you know England at all?

(5.00) Well in a way that's incidental. You may as well describe the circumstance for us.

Yes. Which is a very pretty Thames-side town about thirty miles from London. My father was practising in London at the time and we were in a rented house in Marlow and I remember going to a swimming pool - the pool - which was part of the backwater of the river in fact, the Thames. And there was a whole group of children - teenagers older than I - from a camp, holiday, summer camp, who were German and Jewish - although there were some English Jewish there too who may have been the hosts. I don't remember the circumstances but a lot of German Jewish children, and they were much more sophisticated than I - but they were a year or two older which made a difference at thirteen. And I remember sitting with them while they were all talking about Hitler and learning about what was going on in Germany and, of course, a lot of them had come out of Germany just then, fortunately just in time, and were at schools in London. They seemed to be fairly affluent people and I was very conscious of my parents talking about the situation, the international situation.

Did it create a mood of anxiety? Did you have a sense ...?

To me?

Hm.

No, I remember on the day war broke out, I was in church in Marlow and people, and the announcement was made. I can't remember if they had loud speakers, but the announcement was made by Neville Chamberlain, which was expected, so perhaps there was a speaker in the church. One's heard it so often since that I can't remember. Anyway, it was announced that the war had started and people cried, and I sort of felt I ought to cry too. And that's the most I remember about it. I didn't realise the implications, although I believe there was an alert, an air thing went off straightaway that day in London, but that again is, I think, not a memory but something which has come up since then.

Do you have a memory of raids before the evacuation schemes?

No. We heard them coming over once or twice in Marlow. I remember that sound to this day of the German aeroplanes. But you know - I don't know whether it's with being a child or being stupid - I never really thought anything would happen to us - ever! - even when we learnt we were going to Australia. I remember saying to my father, `Suppose they sink the ship', and he said, `Don't be absurd! They wouldn't sink a ship full of children', which of course is precisely what they did - and we learnt about that at sea. And even then I remember saying, `But', you know, `Daddy said this wouldn't happen', and it never occurred to me it would happen to us. I remember that, and I've thought about it since, how foolish we were. Perhaps children are impervious to danger unless actually faced with it.

When did the evacuation scheme first come up that you can recall?

Oh a few months earlier my father said he'd thought he might send us to Canada where he had some Scot - he's a Scot - connections. But then Ruth Morton who was his secretary and had been with us on and off for seven years - an Australian lady - had to come back. She'd been in Europe so long and had one elderly mother, nobody else to look after the elderly mother. In fact she came back and became a senior WAAF here in Melbourne and I think is .... We don't where she is, we can't trace her - now incidentally, in case this ever goes, or you hear of her.

And so it came up some months before. I don't remember whether it was a year or what, but it must have been well under way by the summer of 1940 because we went to stay at my grandmother's house between Marlow and Henley-on-Thames in the Chiltern Hills, during the period of waiting to come out.

Was that for security reasons to...?

No. I think, no, it was just that my parents were going to move and I don't even know where. I think my father was going to Oxford to .... He was briefly with something called the Presteel Company in Oxford as a dental surgeon to them and I don't remember why we went to Granny's, except that it was possibly between changing houses, as well as waiting for embarkation.

Did you have any sense of what Australia was? Did it mean anything at all?

Well through Ruth certainly. She used to take a newspaper regularly which was pink. Now was it a country, to do with farmers - I always used to think it awfully boring.

Probably the *Herald and Weekly Times*.

Possibly. I don't remember what it was called and I used to look at this, but certainly we learnt a lot from Ruth about Australia and wanted to come. We were very excited at the idea. It's very difficult to remember what one is memory, and work out which is memory and which is collected since those days.

So how did the process begin? Do you recall packing and getting ready to leave ...?

I remember nothing of packing, although the other day at the reunion I was given a card with my name on and a number which was CORB - Children's Overseas Reception Board - 1990. That number rang a bell and I think that was the number. We were certainly allocated, and I think that's what was put over our luggage everywhere. And I think it was the same number for the whole family, though I'm not sure of that.

(10.00) Do you recall leaving the home?

Leaving the house I don't remember. I remember leaving .... We went to a place called High Wickham to catch a train to Liverpool, though we didn't know where we were going at the time, and the escort who met us - there was one woman just for the four of us - didn't tell my parents, obviously, 'cause that was by then, security was - August 1940. And we got on that train and I remember being very conscious that I was in charge of the other three and I had this tremendous responsibility. I remember thinking I had to think like my mother, which was a bit difficult, but very much in charge of the others because the youngest was nine.

What were the ages of the others and the sexes of the others?

Well Brenda, the one next down was Brenda, my sister, who's in America now and she was twelve; and Ian was, well they were born in 1928, '29 and '30, and I was '26, so down like that - and the youngest was nine.

Do you remember saying goodbye to your mother and father?

Only vaguely. I remember we had our gas masks and I just remember getting into the train and feeling .... I didn't really want to go at that moment, but I don't remember any anguish. But we must remember, and I think people still forget, that nobody knew how long that war was going to last, and in those days .... Well certainly when we were first told, perhaps a few months before Dunkirk, that we would be going to Australia, everyone thought the war was going to last a year or something, and it was possibly just a long holiday. Nobody thought we'd be away for five years.

Do you have a recollection of arriving at the dockside and seeing a big ship?

No I don't remember that at all. I remember we were housed in a school, I believe, and we had grey blankets on the beds and dormitories, and we thought .... I'm told since that I think it was three nights we were there, though I'm not sure about that now in retrospect. I didn't like it there. I don't remember food, I don't remember anything about that, just these grey blankets

(laughing) and the awful institutional feeling. I don't remember even getting on the ship, but it was a magnificent ship of one class. Well you've probably heard that already.

Well, go into, whatever you ...

Okay, fine. It was one class and luxurious and I know that since, having travelled a great deal by sea in our life since that, it was super. And I shared a cabin with my sister, and the boys were elsewhere. I remember that we had to sleep in our clothes the first night and we had to have, I think it was chocolate and stuff my parents had given us - which they were required to give us - in case we were shipwrecked. But I remember never imagining for one second that this would happen to us, and I remember my brothers coming to me and saying of course they didn't need to have baths, which they were supposed to do every evening before going to bed, because they were going to stay in their clothes. And I said, `Nothing doing, you've got to get bathed and put your clothes back on', or whatever.

Oh and the other thing was .... One thing we were told before we left was that we were not to know about Ruth Morton, and we weren't very secretive children, you can imagine. And we were not to ask for her and to greet her with surprise was what we were told, because this had been something of a put-up job.

What do you mean by that? What was happening?

Well it was principally for poor children - poorer children from poorer backgrounds - that the thing was conceived, the scheme of sending children abroad, as I understood it. And how we got wangled in on it - and I think rather late as well - was through Ruth's connection with the High Commissioner in London. That is what I understood at the time. I hope this is fact. And so we were told we had to greet her with enormous surprise when we got to the ship and saw her, or whether we did see her.

As soon as we got to Liverpool we met Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare before we went on board - that comes back to me - and a lady called Thelma Cazalet-Keir who was an MP. And they gave my sister a little stuffed pig, toy, and I was madly jealous of that. We got nothing, the other three. And anyway, John the youngest, aged nine or whatever he was, not quite ten that's right, was rushing round saying, `I want Miss Morton. Where's Miss Morton?' because she was very close to us all and stayed in our house, lived in our house and so on.

Was she your actual escort? Was she in charge of you?

No she wasn't actually. No, we had a girl called Joan Fieldgate who very sadly died. I believe the ship she went back on, I understood - and I can't remember who told me this some short while after we got here - went down, and she went to a German prison camp and died soon after. But how that was ever known, I've tried to find out since this reunion, but nobody seems to know.

What do you recall of your escort and the relationship in terms of maintaining discipline and so on?

Well she was a charming girl. There were only eighty-odd children on our ship, don't forget, and there were several escorts - I don't remember how many, though I'm sure we could find

out - perhaps half a dozen or more. And she only had a few of us in her charge and she was absolutely charming. I was very impressed because she was beautiful and I was a teenager aspiring to be glamorous. She was a glamorous young woman who had some connection with the stage - I don't know if she was somebody's understudy, but she claimed friendship with the Oliviers, which impressed me enormously. I think I remember she was not all that involved with looking after the children, but not that it mattered. I think she was rather socialising around the ship. But that's just a vague impression I have.

(15.00) I remember a little boy in the cabin next to me who was called John Vickery and he was only five. I helped him unpack, and when I look back I don't why I had to do it - not that I minded - I thought he was adorable. And he had a photograph - I remember putting on the dressing table for him - of a younger brother it turned out. I said, `Is that you when you were little?' - he was five - and he said, `No, that's my brother' and his Devon accent, I remember. 'And he died when he was three.' And there were only the two of them and I was astonished that their mother was sending this little thing on his own to Australia. I think he was going to relations - I'm not sure about that, but I seem to remember he was - in Bendigo. And I never heard any more about him. So I remember little of Joan Fieldgate except enjoying conversation with her, and I don't even remember how many children, other than my sister and me and John Vickery next door, I don't remember any other children in our group even.

Do you have a sense of other passengers and what sort of people they were and so on?

Vaguely. There were a number of children called Wills whom we understood at the time - again rightly or wrongly - who belonged to W.D. & H.O. Wills family, the tobacco people, and were in charge of a nanny. They were delightful children. That's all I remember of anybody, other than the ones we were involved with - the eighty children - that's all I remember.

Were you having lessons, can you recall?

No, I don't remember anything like that. In fact, Ian Paterson, who was one of the escorts, showed me a picture - in fact I've got photographs he gave me very kindly - of gatherings and some kind of a party which I have no recollection of. And he gave me a copy of an old menu which, looking at it for a children's tea party, I do sort of vaguely remember jelly and stuff on it, but only vaguely.

But then something rather interesting happened. We got to Capetown, eventually - we were in convoy of course, zig-zagging which I thought was terribly exciting - and then left the convoy and went on down to Takoradi on the Gold Coast. But we lay off because of some illness problem - yellow fever or something - we weren't allowed in. And then we went down to Capetown and I had an uncle, an aunt actually - an uncle by marriage - and my father had said, `If you go round the Cape ask for your uncle who is the Reverend John King'. And as it happened the Mayor of Capetown greeted us and we were taken to what I think was Government House, all of us, for a day. But anyway, he asked, he made a little speech to us on the ship and asked if anyone had anything they wanted to talk to him about. So I went forward and said, `Yes, would it be possible to find an uncle of mine called the Reverend John King', and he said, `Oh he's a close friend of mine'.

And the next thing we knew we got to Government House - I suppose in a bus, I have no recollection of how we got there - and we were wandering about under the trees in a beautiful garden, and the children were called together at some stage. There were steps up to the rather splendid building and a voice said, `Would the four MacLaggans stand out please?'. So we all stepped out, and there was my aunt and uncle and their eldest son who was in the navy, in uniform, and a younger son who was at school, and daughter who was fifteen. They were all older than I was obviously, and they were waiting to take us off for the day. So we had a day with them instead, which was splendid.

Do you recall what you did?

Oh we went up to .... We went in two cars as far as I remember. Jock took us - the eldest son had got a day off from the navy, must have been rather clever of him - up the mountain, part of the way. We had lunch in their house and my aunt was so like an aunt who was in England, a widowed aunt, I felt I'd known her forever. And she was very cross with my father because she would have had us all and she was quite highly indignant, and most of it was indignation about my father in not sending us to her - which would have been a different life story.

Do you have a recollection of being seasick or homesick?

No, we're not seasick people in our family. Homesick, not at all do I remember that - at that stage - not at all. Isn't that awful? (laughing).

Or any recollection of other children being particularly miserable or bedwetting or that sort of thing?

Oh little John Vickery next door was desperately seasick, but I'm told - though I'd forgotten - that we went through the Roaring Forties. Ian Paterson reminded me of that and I remember - it was a long voyage of course - and I remember it was rough but again, we've been in rough seas. But we don't suffer so that's something that wouldn't be a great memory. But I believe it was very rough.

(20.00) So the *Nestor* didn't go on to Colombo and Singapore? It came south ...?

We came south, well south of, Durban we went into and we spent a day there, and I remember going to some, the Valley of the Thousand Hills which is in the Drakensberg Range. I remember spending a very happy day in Durban - and of course it was so exciting! It was tropics, it was abroad. I'd always wanted to travel, perhaps in the Scots blood, and even going to the Isle of Wight, which was the sum total of my travel up to coming out here then, seemed to me to be going abroad.

And then we went to Perth which I thought was absolutely fantastic and have only seen once since, on our way back. Beautiful city I thought and would have liked to have stayed there, I felt at the time. I think perhaps one wanted to stay wherever one was at that time. I would have liked to have stayed in South Africa at that time. But then we came onto Melbourne by which time I was terribly ill with measles and not caring much about where I was.

To that point had you still continued to feel that you had to look after the children, keep them in a group and that sort of thing, or aboard ship had you let them go somewhat?

Oh as far as I remember I always kept an eye on them and said good night to the boys and played mummy, yes certainly. I was very fond of them anyway. I would never have neglected them. And I've got, no, certainly, we were all pretty close.

Did Australians seem and sound different when you first encountered them in Perth?

I don't remember in Perth, that at all. I don't even remember if we did - perhaps we didn't. Perhaps we were taken in a group to .... I don't remember much about Perth except driving in and thinking it was absolutely beautiful. I don't remember what took place there at all, how long we were there even. So no, not till I got to Melbourne was I conscious of perhaps some differences, yes. Not so much speech. I didn't seem to remember particularly noticing that.

So how did Melbourne look when you arrived? Was it wet or sunny?

I, no it wasn't wet, I think I'd remember that. We were taken to the .... I was in bed for days before and I got 104 temperature, so really I wasn't *compos mentis*. We were taken to either the Elizabeth or Russell Collins, which was a restaurant in those days, which I longed to see when we came back here on our first visit in 1982, and they'd gone of course. Height of sophistication for me - where we went subsequently often, for salad lunches.

Who took you? Who was looking after you from the moment you arrived?

Well my guardian who's still living - is eighty-six now - met us. She drove us pretty fast, I think. I mean pretty fast, pretty quickly away from the place because I was ill and I was telling her all about the voyage. I remember driving out to Croydon and I remember the first sighting of the Dandenongs when we came round a bend. And she said, `We're going to near the foot of those hills there'. I remember that and I remember thinking it was lovely and beautiful. It was a sub-tropical compared - or the Mediterranean I should say - vegetation that struck me most, and still does.

So what sort of people did you find yourself living with?

Well Uncle Claude, as he was - he sadly died about five years ago - was an advertising, had his advertising agency, known as Claude Mooney Advertising, and his son is also an advertising man himself. But that firm was taken over by an American - I think - an American organisation some years ago. And he was very busy. He was also working with, then, Mr Reginald Ansett closely. In fact he went towards him and his - Uncle Claude's wife, Aunty Pat, as I'd know her - ran the business during most of the war. Obviously he must have still been involved, but he spent most of the war involved with - and I don't know in what capacity - very close to Reg Ansett, I think as his number two or something. I'm not quite sure.

Had you formed any friendships on the boat? Were there people you were sorry to say goodbye to?

Well there was at the time. There was a girl called Theo Voss whom I hoped would turn up, but nobody seems to know what happened to her, and another one called Mary Freeborn, who curiously enough I think is the one who had a connection with the town where my parents finally settled in Wiltshire. There was a girl on that same ship whose father owned - though I never met him - a paper shop which he sub-let to somebody, which is still a paper shop, in Corsham in Wiltshire, and I never tracked her down. I rather wanted to. So I didn't remain in touch with anyone at that time.

Were you sorry to lose them at the time? Was there a sense of loss?

I don't remember. There was one reunion I went to, somewhere, and we walked in the Botanical Gardens as far as I remember, but I didn't seem to be .... No, I wasn't in touch with them, no.

How did the new environment feel as far as being family? Did it feel like you were with family, or were these people in a sense total strangers and felt like strangers?

(25.00) No, we were with a family very much, and Uncle Claude's sister, one of his sisters I'm still very close to. She's up in Benalla - they've moved up there. Their name was Daley and they had three evacuees from the *Batory* but two of those sadly died young. They weren't a very strong family and the other one went back to England. She had three boys. In fact it was through her that we've got grouped with the Mooneys who were related. I mean Uncle Claude's sister was the Daley who had the three boys, and I'm closely in touch with her. We saw her a few weeks ago. And they were a very loving, kind family. They privately educated me and my brother later was privately educated by my father, again as I understand it at, he went to Mentone Grammar and I ...

So where did you start your schooling?

Well, at a school called Warwick which no longer exists, which was in East Malvern. Warwick Ladies' College it was called, which is a bit anachronistic these days. But I left very young and didn't .... I went to Stott's Business College. I left at fifteen. In fact I virtually lost a year's schooling anyway because of the gap between the Australian scheme getting under way and a loss of a month. I worked at home when I was in England, for the last term or so of 1940.

How was that brief period at school? Do you recall how you were received by the other girls there?

Oh absolutely no problems whatsoever. Well, one friend has died, and Barbara Daley, who is the one in Benalla, in fact, she's in Benalla too. I'm still, not so much in touch with her because she was four years younger than I, and since then I've seen very little of her - except through her mother. But her mother, I'm still in touch with as I've said. But no, it was great. I don't remember any problem there.

I always felt slightly an outsider and slightly a newcomer, as with my group of friends in Croydon - because we lived in Croydon. I was actually the youngest of the group, so that

always makes you feel a bit, as a teenager .... Uh, I felt tentative towards people because I was the youngest partly, and because I was a Pom.

> What about manners here? Did you find that there was less formality or less courtesy? Was there a discernable difference in the way, you know, people responded to children?

No, I don't remember anything like that at all, nothing. I don't think there was any difference. What I do remember as being different were customs slightly. Lunch seemed to be a much more snacky meal, where as children, our main meal was at mid-day. As we grew up it was a lighter meal, of course. In England, it's still, but people do tend to sit and eat to lunch in England, where I found they might have bread and butter and peanut butter and jam, which I wasn't used to. Slight customs - I'm assuming that was a custom, because we eat English-style here of course, now.

Having only been here four years we haven't adapted to any Australian customs except insofar as entertainment would go. We might have a drinks party a bit earlier because they are earlier here, depending on circumstances. Those are slight customs differences I felt.

> What about at school? Were there discernible differences at all in the manner or style that you recall?

No, we were very formal at that school. We had lunch at mid-day - lunch there with a vengeance - with white damask tablecloths and white napkins and the rest of it. And I do remember them not liking, most of the girls didn't like pumpkin which was always the third vegetable. And we had roasts of course, two or three times a week, and I was the one made to eat the pumpkin because I liked it, and I think because I was the Pom. In that way I did perhaps - I can't say `suffer', but (laughing) felt a slight difference at being a Pom amongst .... And I think I got teased for my accent slightly.

> What about your brothers and sister? How did they respond to this new environment?

Well as far as I was aware of it, 'cause two of them went to another Daley family up at `Kenloch' in Olinda and lived in that splendid mansion there, so I didn't see them so much, and Brenda was at Warwick with me for a while but in a younger form, and then went to Melbourne Grammar. When Warwick folded she went to Merton Hall with the Daley children. And Ian - who sadly died recently - was up in the Dandenongs at school as a boy, and John went to local state school with Bryan Mooney, our wartime brother, here in Croydon - and then Mentone, sorry.

END TAPE ONE, SIDE A.

BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE B.

> Identification: This is side two of tape one of the interview with Sheila Gray about the child evacuees recorded on 24th October 1990.

> Did you miss the close company of your brothers and sister?

Yes, that did distress me somewhat, and it had a lasting effect - I think those things do. I don't think the scheme now, as an adult, was at all a good thing - not just from our point of view, because it didn't harm us. It opened up a new world to us for which I'm eternally grateful and I think it's been fantastic. It didn't do the family relationships any good whatsoever and I think this is just plain common sense in view of the five years which were involved, and I couldn't imagine sending my children .... Although, in fact, our life caused us to have to send one to boarding school in England while we were in Africa, but that's another matter. In these modern times she flew out for the holidays and all this sort of thing - and she was a teenager anyway.

I think it was harmful psychologically to a great number of the children, from what I've learnt especially in the last couple of months, since we've been conscious of the numbers of evacuees here. I had no contact with any up until this year, in any part of my life. Um, and I'm sure it wasn't good in the event, but that was nobody's fault. As I said, we have to remember nobody thought the war would last so long, or would have known the psychological, possibly in advance, of the problems that could arise and did. But I do feel strongly that we have to remember how other people suffered during the war, and how the Jewish people suffered, and that we had absolutely nothing to complain about. It was war.

How often were you able then to make some sort of contact with your brothers and sister?

I can't remember in detail. Of course, when we were at school still that first year I saw Brenda every day. She was boarding incidentally, on a weekly basis, at Warwick.

Were they happy? Did you have an impression that they were ...?

Oh I'm sure they were. They were with, they had a very lovely life. Ian was very keen on horses and he looked after the horses up at Olinda for a long time - that's three or four horses which seemed to spend their time escaping and he seemed to spend his time going round on the bike looking for. And he rode in gymkhanas and things, and in fact made his life in America, possibly as a result of the open life he had here. My sister is also in America. And the other brother sadly disappeared in British Colombia. I don't .... He hasn't been heard of for years and years. He was the youngest you see, and the youngest possibly suffered most.

Did you ever have a sense at all that they were, in a way, slightly becoming strangers to you? You could sense a loss of the closeness that you'd enjoyed as time went on?

I hadn't thought about that till now. I suppose simply the daily, the daily routine being apart, our daily lives being apart, caused, yes, in that sense, I suppose that's right. I mean, we couldn't perhaps talk about the same things we would have done if we'd been all together. But I didn't feel that `blood is thicker than water' bit and I'm very certain about. So, no, in that sense, no. But we might have grown up with different ideas about life slightly.

What about correspondence from home? Were you being encouraged to write and were you starting to get letters?

(5.00) Oh yes, that was very regular. There was a thing, a telegram, we sent each month which we had a choice of. We used to make a bit of a joke of going to the post office - in those days it was much more informal, the post office arrangement here of course - and we'd go in and, `I am well. How are you?' sort of thing, or `I've been very ill and wish you were here', or whatever. I don't even remember these things and we'd tick which one we wanted to send. But that was silly in a way. It was just saying we were all still alive and kicking. Otherwise we sent things called aerogrammes, which were photographed and mimeographed - is that the word? They were made tiny, and I can't remember whether there was this restriction or whether we only did one a month, or whether I am imagining that. And ordinary letters, which might or might not arrive. Whether they were air mail - now I think they weren't, were they? I don't even remember.

Were you getting letters? Can you recall that being important?

Yes, oh certainly. Oh very. I lived for my mother's letters and she was a good writer.

Was there a sense of pain or loss there, did you discern? Or can you recall having a sense that your mother sort of was missing you?

I don't remember her feelings. I think I must have been too selfish. I remember missing her terribly, and I remember the first few days here standing in the bedroom I had. We lived then on what is now the Maroondah Highway off Dorset Road. Sorry, Whitehorse Road it was, and looking at the mountains - a most lovely view - and thinking, `I hate it. I'm going home', but as I was thinking it I remember thinking, `How can I go home? What a ridiculous thing', and thinking `Well I've got to enjoy it'. And my guardian very kindly got hold of a girl who was at Warwick - who has also sadly since died, but we were in touch with, she came to see us in England - who rode, and she had ponies and lived out at Wonga Park, which was then nothing. It's all built up. And she taught me to ride, so I was very much occupied with riding in the early days, which was absolute bliss, and I loved it.

I loved this land. I took, I had a great feeling for this land, which I've still got, which is fortunate for me that my husband feels the same and loves our life here, because I think it's a most fantastic land, and we've travelled very widely from South America to the Far East and Europe.

With the idea of going to Stotts, what did you have in mind there? What did you suppose would come of that?

Well, what did become of it. I became a secretary - stenographer as they're called nowadays, I think, if they are still ...

How was the difference when you arrived in terms of going to school as compared with going to Stotts?

Oh I felt very grown up. I think I was wearing lipstick and high-heeled shoes and mixing with people who seemed to be what we call teenagers now. I felt quite sophisticated, no uniform, and I enjoyed it. I didn't enjoy book-keeping particularly, but I remember enjoying becoming proficient at these skills and they've never, they've always been useful to this day.

Apart from book-keeping, what sort of things were you doing?

Oh just shorthand and typing, and that was it. And then I went to work at 3XY, which was very different then from what it is now, and worked for a man called Alwyn - I've forgotten how he called it - Kurts, who's an actor. I haven't ever seen him, I don't know if he'd even remember me. And feeling very junior of course, because they were very tough ladies around who smoked and swore and all those things that teenagers would notice in those days.

What did you do there?

Oh I was his secretary and enjoyed it. He was a producer and I remember mostly being involved with something which happened on Sunday nights at the Princess Theatre, a sort of musical thing, and dealing with live artists. Some were quite famous and that was very exciting. And, incidentally, where I met Milton - well I'm told we met. He was there - Milton, oh, from the ABC.

Oh, Stevens?

Yes, Milton Stevens. There's a famous man called Milton Schulman in England who's a journalist and it threw me for a second. And he was there then. And then from there I got a job at the Princess Theatre. I'm telling it the right way round, that's right. I went and worked for a man called Garnett Carroll as his secretary, who .... It was called Benjamin Fuller Theatres in those days. It's been various things hasn't it - the Princess Theatre. I don't remember. It was a big organisation. I think New Zealand, wasn't he I think, Benjamin Fuller was from. I can't remember whether he was still living or not. But Garnett Carroll was the managing director, and it was a cinema, except on Sundays in those days during the war. And I loved it because I was able to go and look at films free, and that's a fairly vivid memory.

What about at the end of the war, do you recall where you were when ...?

Well certainly because then I joined the WRANS after .... As soon as I became eighteen I whizzed off to the Navy Office in Melbourne, on my birthday, to ask to join up. And that was a funny experience because there was a blonde girl looking rather jazzy in front of me - only she and I were there - and the person - it was a woman recruiting officer, whatever - came out and said, `I'm afraid there's no vacancies at all', to her as she went in in front of me, `and there aren't likely to be'. And I said, `Oh dear, I'm terribly disappointed'. And she said, `No, no, come in, come in'. And to this day I don't know why she said that.

(10.00)I was recruited as a coder and did the course, the initial training course, at Port Melbourne which was two weeks as far as I remember. We learnt to march and all those things, and wear the uniform. And then to Sydney to HMAS *Kuttabul* to become, to do the coding course, and I stayed there for a few months after completing the course and worked in the signal distributing office, it was called, in the coding bit - watchers - which was exciting. I lived with another girl who is a friend to this day, but had moved to London - Australian girl. For a while there was no room in the courses and she and I were chosen to go and live in a women's officers' club in - is there a Ranelagh? Is that a suburb of Sydney? I can't remember. One of the little places round the corner from Kings Cross. Lovely club it was. From there I came back to Port Melbourne, spent a few months and then up to Townsville, which was exciting because in those days .... At that time there was a bridge down on a river

- I'm ashamed to say I don't know what river - between Brisbane and Townsville, and we had to go by train which took three days (laughing) to Longreach and out again. And there were about six of us WRANS in the compartment, two, four, six - that's right. And one tiny girl slept in the rack, and two of us slept on the floor, and two, three, four - perhaps there were five - and one on each seat. And it was a bit .... That was quite interesting. I can't remember about the food, though one friend tells me - or has told me - that we got out and the WRANS had the privilege of going in front of all the other troops. It must have been a troop train, I suppose, because there were some, two prisoners in a compartment next to us with some guards and I know we were slightly terrified. But I think they were nothing more than deserters.

> Had you felt it necessary to get permission from your parents or consult them before you made that move to join the WRANS?

To join the WRANS? No, I don't think I did. I think they were really in parent, er, what's it, *loco parentis* - I can't remember the Latin - my guardian. I must have had to get permission from CORB I suspect, but I don't remember. But what I do know is that if I hadn't I'd have been called up. I was treated as an Australian child.

> Were the people you were living with prior to that, were they happy about the move?

What, as my joining? Oh yes. I had no problem whatsoever there. I think I wanted to do it and wanted to do, I felt very patriotic as we did in that generation at that time I think - most people - though obviously some didn't.

> There had been some quite real tensions between Australian servicemen and Americans in Australia. They were resentful of the pay differences and I think the term was, `over sexed, over paid and over here'. Did you see anything of that sort of hostility?

Two instances only, which were both at the time, one upset me and the other I thought was terribly funny. One was that a sailor .... In the evenings in Townsville, we were on watch and the dogwatch is from, what is it, four to six and six to eight, and I think when he came on at eight he was often drunk. And we used to hide him (laughing). It's ridiculous - about five of us in the office perhaps, and we'd put him under some desks, some table tops we worked from, and by then the flag had been hauled down and we'd cover him with this flag so that the officers wouldn't see - which they probably knew quite well he was there - and made excuses for his absence while he slept. And he always called me `Kipper', this young man. And one day, after a long time - I was used to being called all sorts of things, `Pommie' and whatever, and they used to tease me about goanna farms and things like that and try and make me believe things - and he'd called me Kipper for ages. And I said one day, `Why, what's this Kipper? You're the only person who's ever called me Kipper', and he said, `Oh you English, you smell, you've got a yellow streak down your back and you're two-faced, and you've got no backbone'. Actually he was wrong on that 'cause there is a backbone in a kipper (laughing). And I thought that was quite hilarious at the time, and I still do. No, the only time I heard that one.

And the other instance was at the end of 1945 I had dengue fever and was supposed to go - in Townsville still - to Magnetic Island where we had a convalescent home. But I didn't want to go because VE was about to happen - Victory in Europe - and indeed one morning we all rushed into the mess, or whatever we called it, for our breakfast very early and put the radio on that was in there and got the overseas news that war had ended in Europe. And I remember one girl I better not mention by name, whom I didn't particularly like - an enormously fat girl - coming in and saying, `And thank God for that. You Poms can come over and help us out here now after sitting on your backsides all this time.' And that didn't amuse me, I was terribly upset, and then thought, `Well I must ignore this', you know. But those were the only two instances I ever had of anything like that.

(15.00) What about hostility between Australians and Americans? Did you see any evidence of that?

No, again I wasn't aware. The only time I met any Americans was we were collected - terrible, like cattle! - to go to a dance in Townsville, a group of WRANS. But that was quite amusing because there were two of us and we decided we'd stick together because we were both pretty scared of this, I think - half feeling rather daring at going out like, in this way, to an unknown area of life, because we met these young men. And I remember they both had bottles - American - of course soldiers, or whatever they were - they were in uniform, in khaki uniform - they had bottles stuck in their pockets, beer bottles. And we didn't drink in those days - not she or I - I can't even remember her name. And they had one idea only and that was to get us into a dark corner of wherever they were. I don't really remember even dancing, and we decided we weren't going to play games like that and asked them to take us home. We put it to them that we should go back to our quarters and they could find (laughing) somebody more amenable. And so we got out of it that way. We came back. It all seemed rather terrifying at the time.

That was the only time I ever knew anything about Americans, except once in Kings Cross, going back from .... Our highest point of our days off was to go and have waffles and ice cream with caramel sauce (laughing) in Kings Cross. Height of sophistication, and - 'cause only eighteen you see - which in those days was young. And so we were walking back, a few of us, after this and a group of Americans strung themselves across the pavement to try and stop us going and chat us up. But that's the only thing I ever remember.

With war's end, while you're still in the service, there was I suppose the possibility of returning home. What were your feelings immediately about that?

Well, in our case again it was slightly strange because my youngest brother hadn't settled too well, and it was decided that he should go home - by the CORB people - I guess. I don't know whether my parents and/or guardian was involved in that, but anyway, it was decided that he - and there were others, about fourteen - should go home, even before the Japanese war had finished this was.

I was in Townsville, and I was hoping to join the English WRENS where I had an aunt I'd been in correspondence with who was a senior recruiting officer in London in the WRENS - my mother's sister. And in fact, it was very difficult to get out of the navy. That was the biggest problem, the WRANS here. And the CORB people had to write to - Children's

Department, it was called here, who looked after us. A man called Mr Pittard had to write to the captain of HMAS *Magnetic* requesting that I'd be released. And at the time I was expecting to join the English WRENS, and that helped them to allow me, to allow the release, because they really didn't let anybody out - as I understood it then, I think I'm right in this. And it was quite an adventure.

I was to fly to Melbourne and for - oh, they wouldn't discharge me even in Townsville, because that was (laughing) against the rules, and I had to go back to my port of entry for discharge. So my guardian suddenly rang me up and said, `You're sailing from Sydney. At all costs don't come to Melbourne, there isn't time. And I'll meet you there with John.' And so I went to - that's my youngest brother. So I went then to somebody, a chaplain, I don't know who, who gave me a pass and passed the buck to Sydney, and I went to HMAS *Penguin* where I met somebody called Lieutenant-Commander Hinchcliffe. I've never forgotten him and he was absolutely marvellous. He whizzed me round - the procedure for getting out was messy - and took either all of one day or two days. And while I was in the process of that, another phone call came from Melbourne saying the whole thing had been postponed and we were sailing from Melbourne, and would I return to Melbourne. And so I had to go back to this nice Lieutenant-Commander who gave me a leave warrant. He said, `Nobody'll know you're actually out of the service now. You're in uniform' - I had no other clothes anyway. We weren't allowed to wear civilian clothes in Townsville - and he said, `So I'll give you this leave pass, and you'll just hand it in to ...' - wherever I had to hand it in to on arrival.

And so having got to Melbourne, no sooner were we there and packing and saying, having farewells. I was given a nice tea party at the Windsor Hotel - afternoon tea party I mean by that - we had to go back to Sydney because it was all changed yet again. Nobody knew what ship or anything till we got on board, and it was the *Andes* - she was a troop carrier. The administration of it was done by the RAF - RAF, not RAAF - and we went, sailed from Sydney. And then the bomb was dropped, when we were at sea, in Hiroshima.

> For you was there a feeling you wanted to get back and do your bit for England?

(20.00) Oh yes. I, by then I was longing to get back to England. It'd become probably totally false in my imagination and different from what it was in reality. Certainly the food rationing and the feeling of, oh, it was awful! There was no heating, it was a very sad country to go back to, and specially to winter. It was a devastating shock to go back - but largely climatic I must say. It was this climate against the English climate that hit us at that time - with no fuel available. In fact, after my parents - we got settled - I had to go to my grandmother's house. Oh, it was very sad. My brother and sister followed from here in December, my grandmother was then eighty-nine. She died in her own cottage there, and she had an old family retainer had been with her since before my father was born. So that was a long long time - seventy-odd years. And my parents removed her for a little break away from all this anguish and my sister and I looked after the house - empty except for us.

It was a large cottage, is the only way I can describe it, but no central heating, just solid fuel. And we didn't know coal was rationed, and I remember we burnt in something like three days a month's ration of coal, because nobody told us. They didn't think to tell us. And so the Coal Office was very kind and let my father have some in the circumstances, but it was desperately strictly rationed. So after that my brothers would come and stay and chop down

trees, which they weren't allowed to do, all over the - this was in the country of course - and drag them in and chop them up and we'd light roaring log fires in an open fireplace. But those sort of things struck our memory more than anything I think.

> At the point of leaving, were there plans in hand for your brother and sister to follow, or were you a bit anxious about what was going to happen?

No, I wasn't worried because they would follow as soon as the war ended. And of course, you see, in those days, again the innocence of youth, it never occurred to me that the war wouldn't end quickly after, any more than it ever occurred to me during the five years, and during the worst of the Russian struggle against the invading Germans did I ever think that the war wouldn't end on our side. I think it's incredible that that was the attitude - whether the grown-ups thought that I don't know. But there was never any sort of defeatist talk that I remember, not in this country.

> As you were going back were you able to establish what it was that had made your brother unhappy and not fare particularly well?

No, I think he was just too young. He was nine, he wanted mummy, and he was the baby of the family and I think it just followed. This is life, isn't it, that a young one .... I was told incidentally the other day by one of the other evacuees when we were trying to track your telephone number, that .... This lady understood that most of the smaller children, or a lot of the smaller children I think was how she put it, didn't, they rejected their parents on return. And that I understand as a mother ...

> What about your own reunion?

Well I mean I was thrilled to be home. I remember we had lunch at Waterloo station before we drove down. Characteristically my father was an hour late. I think he'd had a flat tyre. He had a big old Armstrong Siddeley and I remember being furious with him, because this is how he always was. He used to miss trains, or nearly miss trains, constantly and I remembered that from my earlier years. And they were an hour late. And I felt, it was really weird. It was like meeting strangers in a way, and these apologies for being late (laughing) - after five years. I thought it was very funny.

My youngest brother was fuming, walking about saying, `What are we waiting for? Why should we wait?' And the escorts had to leave us. They couldn't stay after an hour at Waterloo. Not that that worried me - I was nineteen by then feeling full of false confidence I'm sure. And eventually they arrived. I recognised them straightaway, but they had glasses. I don't mean on them, but they were using glasses. These were the things that struck me.

We went to this little pub which was crowded and horrible I thought, and was full of smoke - but I smoked - and I was scared to ask my mother if I could smoke and she offered me a cigarette, which was another very poignant thing for me to think that my mother was saying, `Do you smoke?' to her daughter. And that almost upset me actually. And so I smoked. And father, I remember he was a non-smoker and really hated people smoking. We didn't know about lung cancer in those days, and as a dentist, he saw it, he didn't like it. I always remember him saying he'd rather I drank than smoked (laughing), which I'm sure he wouldn't have said now. But he died in 1963 and, yes, my mother said, `Do you smoke?' so I said,

`Yes', highly relieved that I was able to do so. But he didn't really approve, but he never stopped me or tried to stop me.

> Did you at all get the impression that you could see that from their perspective you were nearly strangers?

(25.00)No. They were both too interested in telling me things that had happened in the family, and no, I didn't feel that. I think, I found, I tell you I found it much easier with my father than I did as a child. He was talking to me as an adult straightaway, no problems there. But he always did really I suppose, that's not fair. But I felt totally, as they say nowadays, related. I felt tearful the first few days. They were still living in a flat, in a vicarage, which had been their wartime ....

My father would join something to do with the Admiralty called the Small Vessels Pool, and you used to go with other retired people - although he was not, anything but retired. He'd been in the army in the first war. And he used to go as an engineer or as a cook, delivering small ships to Malta, and they had wonderful stories to tell. There was a retired general who was a captain once, and they all mutinied because he would change course at Double British Summertime instead of GMT - absolutely hilarious stories I learnt about his wartime activities. And then he was fire-watching and doing all these things.

My mother, because of her lameness, all she did was collect, I think it was for something called National Savings. She collected money. I don't remember what it was officially, but it was some wartime national savings thing, and they lived in this vicarage and helped look after the old canon who was living, he was unmarried with a housekeeper there. Then eventually we moved down to Wiltshire after that. And they didn't want to be too far, at that stage, from my grandmother who was so ill and all her other children were abroad, or dead. And so that was a strange thing 'cause we lived .... The flat wasn't all that comfortable in the vicarage that we were in. Simply because it was a huge old Victorian place with gaslights. I remember gaslight, the only time I met that. There was hot water and plenty of baths and that sort of thing, but pretty primitive.

> Did it occur to you at the time that, in a way, you'd lost your childhood? Did that strike you?

No, only much later, since that, have I thought in those terms. Only very recently actually, since my brother died and a friend wrote to me from England, and he said, `Of course you must have felt terribly responsible for them when you were young'. And it then occurred to me that I really lost the teenage years, in a way yes, certainly, being the eldest. Yes, I would say that. But I don't mind. I mean, as I say, we can't expect life to be all perfect by any means can we, and we've had a very very good life.

> What about leaving Australia? Did you have a feeling that you would come back?

Yes. A reporter got on the ship and asked me things, and I remember saying, `Oh I certainly hope to come back'. Yes, and then we did. My husband was in the diplomatic service and we used to ask for (laughing) Canberra. We filled out a thing called a post-preference form each year - or he did - and we'd decide where we'd like to go, which was always a bit of a joke.

Unless you put down somewhere like Ulan-Bator and you'd be sure to go there (laughing). But we didn't get here obviously.

So after he retired we made a trip back in '82 for seven weeks, and my guardian, Uncle Claude was still living then. Had a tremendous reception, reunion - although we had met them in England over the years once or twice. And loved it. And we said, `Seven weeks is ridiculous'. We were not, you know, `This is absurd. We've got to go back for a longer one.' And we heard suddenly about a scheme of exchanging houses, and we had a 200-year-old country cottage which we lived in in Wiltshire in a village - beautiful bit of England - and we had no trouble whatsoever in getting a swap with Australians for six months.

END TAPE ONE, SIDE B.

BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE A.

> Identification: This is side one of tape two of the interview recorded on 24th October 1990 about child evacuees with Sheila Gray.
>
> Having got back to England, was there a sense of missing Australia? Did you start to sort of feel a bit ill at ease in a way?

No, not straight away, no. I think, although I'd always hoped to come back, I did want to see other places, and first of all joined the WRENS as I'd planned. But before I'd signed on - it was a different system there, we didn't sign on for X number of weeks as far as I remember - it's '45, it's a long time ago. My grandmother became ill and so my father rang up and asked me if I could come and help out at the house. He didn't want Agnes, our old retainer, to be alone with her. And it was very important because the others were about to arrive and nobody was sure when - it was still just after the war - in Liverpool. I don't remember where they were arriving, the other two back from Australia, and my father had to meet them, and my mother was lame, and so he wanted me to go. So I left the navy straightaway and went to my grandmother and stayed there until that estate was settled up and we quit, and finally went to Wiltshire. But that's another story. But no, I didn't feel that at all.

It was another adventure at that stage and I got a job at the BBC after all that. Having been at 3XY, rather liked that, but having no other training but secretarial I went to work for the engineers, which wasn't the most exciting. But I've had links with them up till the '70s, and worked there three times altogether in my life, in more interesting areas to me than engineering was - although they were design engineers who designed the equipment, for all I know, all the stuff we're using now I dare say, a lot of it. Then after a few years - 1949 - I thought `I must get abroad'. And again, fortuitously through a friend, a friend of my father's was coming to stay with him who was an undersecretary in the Ministry for Labour. And father was ragging me around and bullying me about as usual and Uncle Charles, who was a school friend of his, had been, said, `When you are tired of being bullied by your father, come to me and I'll get you a proper job'. And I was helping in the surgery generally. And so I said, `Well what I'd like to do is go abroad'. And they were just - he and his wife - were going to Switzerland for a holiday and so he said, `Would you like to go to Switzerland?', and I said, `Yes, but what can I do there? They have work permits and I'd never get a job as a secretary with only English'. And so they said, `Well would you like to do *au pair*-ing, which I'd never heard of till then, and I said, `Well I'd do anything. I'd love to go to Switzerland.'

So it was all sorted out and I went to a Swiss family who are close friends till now, this day, for two years and then got a job in the embassy there - our British Embassy - working for the military attaché, and met my husband there. And so I had four years in Switzerland and from there we, of course, never looked back with out travels, but coming full circle to Australia in '82. So it was a long time we were travelling around.

Did your mother ever speak to you about the program and wonder whether she should or shouldn't have had you sent off?

Well no, she didn't. I don't remember that at all, but I think that for many reasons she felt it would be good for us to .... One of the things she did worry about in England was that the first war food was very short, and I don't think it was properly rationed - I'm not sure about that. But she was terrified of two things - air raids and looking after, not me so much obviously because I was older, but the boys who would run about, and she always felt at a disadvantage with us if we were naughty. I remember one thing with my mother, because of her lameness, was just to run and we could get away. And we also knew that with a fierce father she didn't report things to him. We were very naughty I'm sure as small children, though she assured me later on we weren't.

But she felt it was a tremendous opportunity and we must always hang on to this five year - nobody knew it would be five years bit. And Ruth was coming out, and so she felt we'd be looked after from that viewpoint. She'd been seven years with us, which was a long time in our childhood, so no, I don't remember that she was concerned. I think that afterwards .... I don't remember that she was.

(5.00) Coming back to Australia in 1982, was there a sense, for you in a way, that somehow or other it was sort of bringing it all together? Did it have a sort of sense of resolution about things?

I don't remember feeling that. I was absolutely overjoyed. Yes, in a way, perhaps it did. I was overjoyed to come back and see it as an adult. That's what I wanted to do. And the more I saw of the world the more I wanted to see Australia again, certainly. And South America, Chile we were in for three years reminded me very much of this area - I mean from a point of view of vegetation, nothing else - and climate. Everything else entirely otherwise, of course. And so Chile, oddly enough, going to Chile in 1956 where our eldest daughter was born, made me particularly want to come back. That was when I first had a raging nostalgia.

I went riding with friends we were staying with one weekend and went riding fast up a path in what we'd call the bush here, but it was a farm - a *fundo* they called it - on their land. And suddenly came to a glade, if you could call it that, of eucalyptus trees, of gums, and the smell of the gums and the heat and I nearly wept. I said, `Australia', and Harry, who was our host - he was of German extraction, Chilean - thought I was mad (laughing) I'm quite sure. And I couldn't wait from then on, and so when it became possible for us to do it financially we made that trip, and it was wonderful. And that's why we both agreed we must do this six months.

You mention that you've met other child evacuees for whom that process really didn't break up their sense of their family life. But what about for your

brothers and sisters? What impression do you have as to what they felt about it all ultimately and the impact it had on them?

The only time I've ever discussed that was with my sister who came to see us. We were living in Belgium in '69 and she came over from America - I've only seen her twice - and I was talking .... Oh, my guardian's son, my wartime brother, just visited us in Brussels and stayed with us, and I was talking about that and how nice it was. And she said, `I can't understand why you're in touch with those people still out there', and I said, `Why ever not?' and she said, oh, she didn't like it and she didn't .... I couldn't discuss it with her in fact because I didn't understand her attitude. She didn't like it and she couldn't understand what their motives were in taking us in, and so this discussion didn't go beyond it because obviously I had a totally different attitude. And I think that could be because I was older, and I think that may have been crucial in the effect on children coming out here during the war. She was twelve and I was fourteen and maybe that was just enough to make the difference, because she also broke away from home on return to England and went straight to my godmother, and then went to America.

She became a nurse and went to America to nurse there, and met her husband there and stayed there. And has no time for England or Australia or anything - so it did break children up. And I'm sure that was the .... Nothing to do with being unhappy in the home here or anything like that. It was the break of 12,000 miles at a time when we couldn't telephone as we do - ring our children up all the time here, they're still in England and grandchildren and all that. I mean, it's a different world, and it is not 12,000 miles away in that sense, only financially.

So to you, there's not then a sense of `What if ...?'

If we'd stayed in England?

Hm.

Only from the point of view of education have I ever regretted that. I feel I would have had the education - I might be wrong. How do I know what would have happened? But certainly my father was keen on education but not keen enough to take his responsibility seriously enough to see that we got it out here, which was naughty. But, anyway, that was the way it was. That certainly is my only major regret of my life, is that I have had no proper education, and somehow I suppose one could say I could have studied. But I've always had my Leaving and then I was married and had children, and then Les's job - the wives were very much involved always, of course. In the diplomatic world we always had a lot of, we were never not on duty. So I perhaps don't have the sort of energy and drive that would allow me to study as well as carry on the duties of a normal life - enough to have acquired that. That's the only regret I've got in my life. But that's heavily compensated for what's happened.

If it hadn't been for Australia, if it hadn't been for the war, I wouldn't have gone to Australia, so that's a terrible thing to say really. If it hadn't been for Australia, I wouldn't have gone to Switzerland, because I might not have had that urge. At that moment I'd been home four years and had itchy feet again, and then from there it went.

(10.00) END TAPE TWO, SIDE A.

NO SIDE TWO. - END OF INTERVIEW.