**enry Wuga – Life Before The War**

Henry Wuga describes his life at school in Nürnberg in the 1930s and as an apprentice in a Baden Baden hotel. He gives an eye witness account of Crystal Night (1938) in his home town.

INT: Henry, can I ask you first of all when and where were you were born and what was your name at birth?

H.W: My name at birth was Heinz Martin Wuga. I was born in Nürnberg, Germany on the 23rd of February 1924.

INT: OK. When did you arrive in Scotland?

H.W: I arrived in Scotland on the 5th of May 1939

INT: So what age were you then?

H.W: Fifteen and a half

INT: Yes. How did and why did you come to Scotland?

H.W: Well we came to Scotland because we had to get out of Germany – this is fairly obvious through what went on there especially coming from the town of Nürnberg where the notorious Nürnberg laws were promulgated in 1935.

At home I had a very nice upbringing with my father and mother, I’m an only child. But my mother, coming from a catering background (My grandfather had a brewery) my mother decided at the age of fourteen I would, I should leave school.

She said ‘You better learn something, you’ll need it’. And I became an apprentice in a very strictly kosher hotel in Baden Baden in the Black Forest, at the age of fourteen. And I was only there six months up until Kristallnacht. I learned a lot but that stood me in good stead.

INT: What about your parents Henry?

H.W: My parents. My father Karl Wuga came from Austria, my mother Lore Wurzburger came from Heilbronn, Württemberg. They, they got married in the early twenties as, after my, I believe my father was a prisoner in the First World War in Italy and then obviously they got married and I came along in 24.

My mother must have been in her late thirties by then, yes. I was an only child. My father had a small stationary business, a wholesale stationary business which he ran himself (and my mother helped there) and then of course when Hitler came things became very difficult.

I left by Kindertransport. My father died in 1941 of a heart attack in, during an air raid. Really, I don’t think it had anything to do with the air raid, he passed away, and my mother was left alone which was, of course, fairly horrible for her. We had neighbours behind, in the house behind.

[Fanny Rippel lived there, who was] a girl a year older than I was, very staunch catholic, she worked for Caritas this big catholic organisation in Germany and through her the chairman of Caritas (a very high powered, monsignor he knew my mother well), he arranged for her to be taken away to a village and hidden (I mean, money changed hands, there’s no question about that) and in the village she pretended she was a refugee from the east. You know, nothing Jewish was said otherwise nobody would have taken her in and she survived there. She survived there for a year and a half I think and then the Americans came and won the war and marched into Germany. The first contact I had with my mother, an American soldier, a Jewish-American soldier wrote to me and that’s how we got in contact.

So [my mother] with this Fanny went back to Nurnberg. Our flat was destroyed in bombing. My mother was a very forceful character, She simply marched across the road to a woman in her flat (who was a Nazi intruder) and told her ‘Right you go out and I go in’ – and she did, and she and that girl took over that flat and she survived there.

The problem was to get her out, the difficulties you have no idea. If you ever have anything to do with the Home Office, I mean you read the paper every day with all these incomers of the refugees, my heart bleeds for them.

INT: Did you ever go back to Germany?

H.W: Yes, yes. Good question. I certainly go back to Germany. Why? At the beginning we went back to Germany because the people that hid my mother saved her life, and they put themselves on the line, if they would have been found out they would have been shot, so I owed something to these people. They were very friendly, they don’t exist any longer, they’ve all passed away. The town of Nürnberg invited us, you know, they invite Jewish ex residents now and again. We’ve been there and Nürnberg of course is trying to transform itself from the notorious town where the party rallies were held to, to a community which will look after other people. I mean in Nürnberg there’s now a street with fifteen pillars for peace and friendship. It’s quite unbelievable how the town is trying to live down this horrendous history.

When the Nazi rallies were on. I mean, there were hundreds of thousands of these people and they were marching past our street (we were living in one of the main streets) and we had a domestic maid who was very left wing, a German girl, very left wing. And one day she opened the window and she put her hand out and she shouted out ‘The mustard is running over the brown shirts’

Now my father pulled her in, shut the windows. We would have been smashed to bits and pieces. Crystal Night, I escaped Crystal Night, I was in Baden Baden in Tannhauser as an apprentice. Well, I really learned a lot there because the chef was taken away to the German army.

I’ll give you another, I’ve got lots of tales but we got a new supervisor, a young woman. We had fifty pounds of spinach for lunch – do you know what fifty pounds of spinach looks like? So she picks up the first leaf and she examines it.

I said ‘what do you think?’

She said ‘I’m looking, I’m looking, I have to examine it’ [for insects]

I said ‘I’m sorry, you cannot, [do this one leaf at a time] it will not be ready tomorrow’.

I mean I was fourteen and a half. We washed it four times in salted water. She accepted that but just shows you, you know, it’s absolutely, that was that hotel, very strict, very strict.

I also learned a lot there but again Crystal Night came. I worked there for six months until I went home on the, I think on the 2nd of November. I worked for six months, six days a week/six and a half days a week. I got a half day off, ok? That’s how it was in these days. Not only that, you had to pay them to learn [a trade], you follow? Very strict. So after six months I said ‘I’m going home to see my parents’

[They said] ‘You can’t do that’

I said ‘Well I’m sorry, I’m going to see my parents’

In Baden Baden the whole community was locked into the Synagogue and was set alight. Nobody lost their life, nevertheless I went home. I was at home on Crystal Night but they didn’t come to our house. They came to all the houses around us and they… I saw people getting beaten up, I saw a piano flying out of a first floor window smashing on the pavement – unbelievable. We had to leave, it was quite important that we had to leave. When the Nürnberg Laws came out, when Hitler came. I went to the local school and then there were three Jewish boys in the class. You were sat at the back, nobody would speak to you, neither the teachers nor anybody else. Nürnberg and Fürth was like Glasgow/Paisley – a smaller town. This side Nurnberg, a frum town, now, a bit like Gateshead. Now, Fürth had a Jewish Grammar school, had a Jewish old age home and a Jewish orphanage.

So we went to school in Fürth, Israelitische Realschule, in Fürth- a very good school [Henry Kissinger was in the year above me]. The only trouble is there were fifty-two in the class. Because that was Hitler time. We went there by tram, back and forward; it wasn’t far. It was an excellent school. One of the teachers had to be non-Jewish, you know, they’d have them, the government insisted so they could see what was going on. But it was a very good school the only thing obviously, in the morning, Chummash you know, the Rabbi was very strict. So [a] typical Jewish school. In the tram car, there were two trailers; boys were to be in the back, girls in the front.

But it didn’t work like that. We had some very good teachers, some very intelligent teachers, very good, but we also weren’t always very kind to them. For example, you know when the teacher was bit weak he was immediately sidelined by the children, it was horrible. But it was a very good school, excellent school I must say and I was taken away from that school unfortunately to go to Baden Baden, to learn something which, in retrospect, my mother was clever, you know

INT: Yes

H.W: Was quite clever, it stood me in good stead

INT: Yes that’s right. Maybe she had prescience

H.W: Yes, I know. Life is, well I’m lucky to be fit and able and very happy to be here

**Henry Wuga – Life During The War**

In this section Henry describes his life when he reached Britain as a Kindertransport refugee. His first placement when the war broke out was in a farm in Perthshire but fairly soon he found himself being treated as an enemy alien and was interned in various places, eventually on the Isle of Man.

H.W: Now, I went back to school and then war broke out. Remember we were friendly enemy aliens due to religious persecution; this was our standard. But the minute the war broke out, the police came. There was a curfew, I had to be in by ten-thirty; being an enemy alien.

And the police came to the door but there was no problem, we weren’t hounded, I mean people were friendly. Only certain things you had to do. I went back to school for two days then we were evacuated. From Queens Park Station I was evacuated to Perthshire, a little place called Guildtown. On a farm, I was very lucky. We had two children, a big farm, six hundred acres with a tractor, horses, a bothy so I learned to speak Scots ‘You know Tatties and stuff like that. We did potato picking obviously and we worked quite a bit on the farm which was great and there was no shortage of food.

We had cream (I mean it was a farm after all) there were tinned peaches and there were pheasants – it was absolutely wonderful and I went to the local village school in Guildtown and then I was transferred to Perth to the bigger school Perth Academy. Perth Academy did not accept me; my English wasn’t good enough, ok. I was sent to a Junior Secondary school Balhousie Boys School, Perth.

These things stay with you because you’re young. Now, I’m quite glad that Perth Academy didn’t accept me. Balhousie Boys School, the headmaster Mr Borthwick. He was very kind to me and I was the only foreign boy there in Perth. [The school was] opposite the Black Watch Barracks.

I was there about three months. [We] did one [of] Shakespeare’s plays, Macbeth. Now that, funnily enough, I got to grips with. I can still quote you whole passages of Macbeth to this day and they were very kind. Certain exams I could sit in German and somebody would translate it into English and I got a leaving certificate eventually. I got fairly good marks only being there after a few months. We were transferred from that farm eventually. We were transferred to the other, the other side of Perth; [to] a village by the name of Forgandenny near Bridge of Earn. The house of Colonel Sir James Hutchison, a country estate, was taken over by the Glasgow School system and we were lodged there with thirty or forty other children.

There were another two Jewish children. So we stayed in this fancy house for wee bit then we took the train into school, there was no problem. It was very nice, it was well catered for.

This was the time of Dunkirk, so there were road blocks, I mean you know, they put cement bollards over the road; the tank could have gone round the field, it didn’t matter. In any case road blocks so you had to show identification. I had an alien’s book. So the little soldiers, they were looking for German spies. Here I come on my bicycle [going to school], there is written down ‘nationality – German’.

Well, the soldier, I can only tell you he nearly wet his pants. I mean, he sent for his corporal, the corporal sent for the sergeant, the sergeant sent for the officer.

He said ‘Let the boy go to school’ and it is quite [true], this remains in your memory. Yes. So that, it went on like that. No problem.

I corresponded with my parents. That became the problem afterwards and as I, when I became sixteen I should have registered. That was after Christmas, [in] February, I forgot to register and [Perthshire] became a protected area.

You may not be aware of that, the whole of Great Britain ending within five miles of the coast or certain parts of the country where they stored ammunition or they had army barracks were not allowed for enemy aliens of any kind to stay there. So, I had to leave.

I had to leave school and I was sent home to Glasgow, back to Mrs Harwich because this became a protected area; you simply could not stay. Edinburgh was protected, you couldn’t stay anywhere near the coast.

So I came home to Glasgow and it didn’t last very long, [Now] I have a different story. I was then arrested for corresponding with the enemy. May I, may I explain to you. I wrote to my mother and father. When war broke out, of course, this postal service ceases completely but I had uncles in Paris and in Belgium and I wrote to my uncle in Belgium Salo Wurtzburger, and he sent the letters to my mother – the letters were censored.

I was accused of corresponding with the enemy which was an [offence], in war time you know, we’re laughing about it now but it was a very serious offence. I’ve got, if the archives are in there, I’ve got these letters etc here. In any case I was told to come to a tribunal in Edinburgh, the committee arranged a lawyer for me. We went to Edinburgh, the lawyer was not allowed in so I’m here, I’m sixteen years of age, I’m standing in the High Court in Edinburgh, Sir James Strachan – [who] became Lord Strachan later – and two assessors. Who were well informed, they even knew that my uncle in Paris had changed address so they were, I was amazed how well informed they were. I committed this offence and I was found guilty of that offence.

This was the problem, they didn’t know what to do with me. You are underage; I was, I wasn’t handcuffed – thank God for that. I was taken from the Court to Haymarket Station, Edinburgh. I was locked in a compartment to Queen Street. And at Queen Street two detectives came on the train and opened the compartment, took me to Queens Drive to Mrs Harwich. I was to pack a case. I had two phone calls, I was allowed two phone calls and I was taken away. They were very kind, I mean traumatic yes, I mean but you’re sixteen, you’ve just got to cope with it. Traumatic it was I grant you. Nevertheless there was no ill treatment, no abuse or anything like that. The two detectives were very, you know, they’ve got a kid there, what are they to do?

Got to St Andrew’s Square Police Station which in these days was..

The sergeant said ‘Canny take him – nae laddie under seventeen is allowed in a cell’ Very civilised country, Scotland.

So they didn’t know what to do with me. They sent me to a remand home in St Vincent Street. Now, a remand home which contained young children from other remand homes who are to appear in court the next day. So I got to this remand home, I must have been the oldest. [The others were] twelve year olds. The first thing he said ‘What did ye dae?’ I didn’t dae nothing you see! So I ended up at the bottom of the pile and the, the commander, the chairman, no the manager of this remand home, he was very kind but very naïve.

He was very naïve, even I knew better. You know, in these days we all smoked. You just smoked. You weren’t allowed cigarettes – he said ‘You must leave the cigarettes in my office and if you want to smoke come to my office’

Now, I knew better. I mean you’re in, you’re in amongst the lot you don’t go to the manager’s office for a smoke. You would have been absolutely… I knew better than that. I was there for three days then they decided they had to take me, they took me to Maryhill Barracks which doesn’t exist anymore. Maryhill Barracks, in Maryhill Road.

I was put in an underground bunker with twenty, well I can’t say German soldiers, German merchant seamen. I don’t know if you know or remember, there was the Icelandic Blockade. The British Navy would not let any, any foreign ships come, to supply Germany. So when they captured the ship they interned the crew. So these were German merchant seamen who I was interned with in Maryhill Barracks for at least three weeks, which wasn’t pleasant I can tell you. Some were very anti, one or two were quite kind and we were there for several weeks and then we were transferred to Donaldson School in Edinburgh; you know the deaf and dumb school?

That became our internment camp where we were interned there for quite a while.

I’m now going back to the internment camp in Edinburgh. The, I can remember the commander of that camp (Well, camp is strong; it was a school, there were only these twenty German merchant seamen and myself) and he said ‘Is there anybody here that can cook?’

Well I, even then I learned, you know, any volunteer for something, even if you’re in a prison camp, it always helps you. I said ‘Yes’ Well, I was put in charge of the kitchen but I had these German sailors as my kitchen staff. One called me a dirty Jew and another one knocked him out or whatever. In any case the commander said to me ‘You have to prepare a meal for two hundred people arriving within the next seventy-two hours’

Because by then general internment of friendly enemy aliens was decreed in the Cabinet. nothing has changed [since]. The tabloid press, ‘The Express’, particularly ‘The Daily Mail’ you know, ‘Intern them, intern them – they’re enemy aliens!’

And Churchill got fed up, and he said ‘Collar the lot’ and he banged the table in Cabinet and we ended up, we ended up eventually on the Isle of Man.

So I came from there to various other camps. It was very traumatic but you learn; you learn a lot. Eventually I spent ten months in internment in the, in the Isle of Man.

On the Isle of Man where we were very well treated but it was a high powered learning curve for a young boy. I mean, I must have been amongst one of the youngest.

Most people were in their mid forties and whatnot. A lot of academics, a lot of, I mean a lot of music. The Amadeus Quartet, Lord Weidenfeld. All the winners of prizes. Of the Nobel prizes, of prestigious prizes, Rudolf Peierls the atomic people, they were all there. This was a high powered learning curve. I remember these men playing chess, you know, they had, I mean they had wives and children ashore. Playing chess with their back to the table. You were allowed five seconds for a move; call out the square. So it was, this was the kind of place it was.

The problem was I got a new roommate and he tried to get me drunk a few times he said he was an officer, a German army officer working for the British Aluminium Company in Fort William, which was quite true. But he wasn’t; he was an MI5 man. His German was perfect, his English was perfect – fantastic.

So he pumped me for information – I didn’t have any information. All I can say, I really think they did suspect me of writing these letters. You know, a child, letters can be used to communicate with the enemy quite simply.

In any case I was released. During my stay in the camp I was again before tribunals and I went from ‘Enemy A’ (dangerous enemy alien) down to ‘B’ then I became ‘C’ and when I became ‘C’ (friendly enemy alien) the commander said to me, he said ‘I’m sorry, you are under the age of internment; we have to send you home’

Now, after ten months interment the worst thing was being sent home. You were given a ticket and then you’re in the open wide world.

You’ve been with your group of people absolutely, you know. Be it army or prison- it doesn’t matter. So here you go, you have to change trains in Preston. It was all…you managed but it was quite, was quite frightening

INT: Yes

H.W: Only two years ago I say to myself, this story – I mean did they really suspect me? C’mon. So I wrote to my MP, I said

‘What can I do?’ he said ‘Well, write to the National Archives’

Well lo and behold, it’s all there. They sent me stuff. They sent me stuff which has to be secret for another twenty-seven years.

I said ‘Do me a favour’ But because I’m the enquirer and I’m the subject of the enquiry they released all these things for me and I’ve got all the correspondence from the National Archives. I mean when you think, seventy years later it’s all there and you can access it under the Freedom of Information Act.

INT: Yes

H.W: It’s quite amazing

INT: Yes. And did that explain?

H.W: It did yes. Oh yes it explained to you; I can show you. I’ve got all these things, I think I might give them to the archives in Glasgow

INT: Yes. You can scan it I think yes

H.W: They can scan it, they can look at it, yes. It’s very interesting – all this correspondence

INT: What does that reveal about why you were there?

H.W: What does it reveal? It only revealed…it, it didn’t reveal anything. It said, one, yes, one chief constable said ‘The boy should not be left in freedom, he is a danger, he should be interned.’

And when they examined me again it said, he said ‘Excuse me, the boy’s of above average intelligence and he should return to Mrs Harwich in Glasgow’

So you see how it changed over the period. It was very interesting

**Henry Wuga – Immigration**

Henry describes how the Kindertransport system enabled him to leave Germany and come to Britain. He was initially looked after by relatives of his mother who lived in Glasgow. These relatives and other Jewish families helped him to settle in.

I came to Glasgow on Kindertransport. My mother asked the committee [who] found a place for me on the Kindertransport but we had a connection in Glasgow.

In Glasgow my mother’s cousin, Mrs Gummers, Gummers the dentist; they emigrated to Glasgow from Germany so my mother asked Greta Gummers could she find a place for me and then the committee in Glasgow, the Ladies Committee – Mrs Thora Wolffson and Mrs Thelma Mann found me a place and I came by Kindertransport to Glasgow.

INT: Can you tell us about the, your experiences when you were coming to Glasgow? Coming on the Kindertransport?

H.W: Yes well it’s traumatic to start with. You’re taken to the station, you wave goodbye to your parents, you have no idea whether you will ever see them again. It was quite traumatic really. On the other hand, may I tell you being a boy, and being somewhat adventurous I was always interested in travel and where to go and what to do.

I fully understood, coming from Nurnberg, I meanI was politically aware of what, why and where and how. I said to my mother ‘Why must I go with this train straight into London and then into Glasgow? Why can’t I take a train via Paris and stay with my cousin for a week?’

It wasn’t, it wasn’t like that but you understand?

INT: Yes

H.W: In any case, we, you’re in the train with all these other children – some very young, some very traumatised, crying whatever. When we crossed the German frontier things became easier.

The German soldiers left the train. We were in Holland and you were – everybody will tell you from the Kindertransport – in Holland, whenever the train stopped at the station there were groups of women, Dutch women, with chocolate and apples and sandwiches – it was really quite amazing. Hoek van Holland, overnight in the boat. The first time I crossed the channel – the first time I’d seen the sea – mind you – it was night time.

I arrived in Harwich the next morning, again onto a train, taken to Liverpool Street Station, underground, a huge waiting room, I mean down below. A black hole, there must have been about two hundred children in it.

All the paraphernalia of the committees and children being collected and myself and another two children were kept there. We were sitting there for hours. Everybody was collected; we were not. We were going on to Glasgow the next day so we stayed in London overnight at some Hostel. So you’re sitting there for hours, it was quite, quite horrendous. But next day we left, we left for Glasgow.

We were taken to Euston Station by the Flying Scotsman, never having been in a compartment with upholstery before. I mean in Germany we travelled third class in wooden benches. It was quite interesting and we were taken to the dining car and we had waiters.

I mean the waiter had white gloves [and there were] silver teapots and I remember that little girl wouldn’t take this or that, she wanted hot chocolate – well, she got hot chocolate so that was quite an experience coming here, quite a… Arriving in Glasgow of course I was collected by my second cousin and taken to my new lodgings.

INT: And what, who did you lodge with?

H.W: The, the lady that took me in was a Mrs Eta Harwich. She lived in Queens Drive; 169 Queens Drive. The lady must have been in her mid sixties; her children were all grown up, obviously no longer in Glasgow.

One daughter was in Glasgow, her son who ran the factory (she still had an upholstery factory) he was still at home and they took me in. She was a wonderful lady, very, very intellectual lady, I must say. She took me to the theatre, she took me to music and she made me feel very much at home.

It was very, very interesting; very kind people.

INT: But it must have been traumatic for you Henry?

H.W: It is. The language is different, the food is different – everything is different, but well you just have to cope with it. It was traumatic but, I mean, I did manage to get through it. Some of the younger ones found it rather difficult

INT: What age were you when you arrived in Glasgow?

H.W: Fifteen and a half

INT: Fifteen and a half and what, did you go to school then?

H.W: Yes. Well, the first thing that happened, Mrs Harwich had grandchildren and friends in the West End and I met with them; I was taken there obviously. The Sassoons of Kirkcudbright, the family Sassoon. David Sassoon and his wife Vera lived in Kirkcudbright with two sons. They invited me on holiday. So I came here, I was taken in, Mrs Harwich insisted that I should go to school, which was, I went to Queens Park School – only for a few weeks because then the holidays intervened. Yes, the summer holidays. And then I went to the Sassoon’s for four weeks.

INT: Was that a relative of Siegfried?

H.W: Exactly, a relative of Siegfried, a brother of Siegfried, yes, oh yes, a brother of Siegfried – David Sassoon a painter, who moved to Kirkcudbright with his wife and two sons. He didn’t have anything to do with the banking and the horseracing.

He moved to Kirkcudbright his son still lives in Kirkcudbright (he’s Joey Sassoon, still a very good friend of mine).

That was interesting; they had a huge house in Kirkcudbright – lovely. Carpets and paintings and whatnot but we lived on Carrick Shore in a hut, no electricity, no water, tilley lamps, I mean that’s how it was. My first connection with the sea, now I don’t know if you know the Solway Firth?

INT: Yes

H.W: The tide goes out for three miles so, you be careful you’re not caught by the tide. It was very interesting for me; wonderful time to be had with another friend, we stayed with them for three weeks, and I’ve been friendly with them ever since.

When we came back to Glasgow I went back to school.

INT: Yes

**Henry Wuga – Settling In**

In this section Henry explains how he trained as a chef and finally set up a successful catering business. He talks of the political, musical and other interests pursued by the Jewish refugee community in Glasgow. He describes how orthodox religious rules in Glasgow caused him some problems as a caterer.

INT: Yes. So when was it you were released from internment then? What year was that?

H.W: Internment, must have been 1941

INT: 1941

H.W: Yes

INT: And by then you were aged what?

H.W: Sixteen and a half

INT: Sixteen and a half, so you went back to Mrs Harwich?

H.W: I went back to Mrs Harwich and then we decided what I should do. I was offered, I could have gone to study, I could have gone into their upholstery business but I decided to go back into catering and I, I found a job in John Smith and Company; the Grosvenor in the Corn Exchange. Big Glasgow catering company and I worked; I worked in the Corn Exchange Restaurant under Chef Hausdorfer in the Rogano and in various places.

Eventually I went to the Beresford Hotel. While I was in the Beresford Hotel I started off as a, obviously, as a chef de partie and I became sous chef and eventually in the Grand Hotel I became head chef; I was in charge of The Grand. The Grand Hotel in Sauchiehall Street which is that 1930’s building, you know it’s now student residence. There’s modern this, you know

INT: Yes

H.W: Opposite Elmbank Street, you know

INT: Yes

H.W: That was the Beresford not Grand sorry, Beresford Hotel. Then I went on from the Beresford Hotel to the Grand Hotel which was at Charing Cross; it is now a motorway. That was the big Grand Hotel; belonged to the co-operative. I became chef de partie there, I became head chef there (chef de cuisine.) my whole career was there and eventually I left there and went to France

INT: When was that?

H.W: 1953, I went to France and worked for a few months in France by which time I was married and then I came back here and then I went back to the Grand Hotel. But after that I went out of the Grand Hotel; I did other things.

So that’s quite an interesting period. I, you know catering in these days; when I started it was war time and rationing was fairly strict. You could buy so much fish and when it was finished it was finished – there was a limited supply. Nevertheless there was only a price restriction in, in Great Britain. There was only a price restriction. You could not charge more than five shillings for a meal. You didn’t need coupons like in other countries, [You did not need your ration book] You could go to a restaurant. This country was quite different from other countries. You could go to a restaurant during the war here if you had the money and if there was enough food. It didn’t, it had nothing to do with your rationing. is another story, it’s fate.

We all wanted to do something. I wanted to join the Merchant Navy. I wanted in the Isle of Man in the internment camp we were given, if you wanted early release, you were given the chance to join the Pioneer Corps.

Well, the Pioneer Corps was the lowest of the low. We wanted to fight, we wanted to fight Hitler with something better than the Pioneer Corps; so I didn’t join the Pioneer Corps, I was released.

When I came to Glasgow I went to the Labour Exchange in these days known as the ‘Broo’ in Waterloo Street.

INT: Still

H.W: Still the Broo I wanted to join the Navy (I didn’t get [in]). I wrote letters to my MP (didn’t get). I wanted to go to Hillington, you know to make munitions, whatever. In the Labour Exchange at Waterloo Street sits this young boy, I don’t think he was a year older than I was and he looked at me and he said ‘Specky’ (He called me ‘specky’) ‘Specky’ he said ‘You’ll go naewhere, we also need people to cook for the public’

Now, this seventeen year old clerk in the Labour Exchange, any application I made he tore it up and threw it in the bin. Incredible. So I spent the war here in Glasgow in, cooking for the public so to speak and in the Grand Hotel eventually I was responsible for starting kosher catering.

INT: At the Grand Hotel?

H.W: Yeah, the Grand Hotel

INT: Yes. And then you started up your own catering business?

H.W: Yes, yes I first went into business with somebody else with pet foods and birdcages (that didn’t work out) and then I started up my own catering business

INT: When was that?

H.W: That must have been, let me see, 1960, yes, ’62, something like that. So that was quite successful

INT: I’m sure you catered for my Bar Mitzvah

H.W: Yes I did. Oh yes definitely

INT: That was 1961

H.W: Well, there you are. Yeah, you were one of the first. Your mother

INT: Was I one of the first? Yes

H.W: I remember your mother lived in, in the West End

INT: Gardiner Street

H.W: A steep street, I remember that

INT: Yes that’s right. A hill

H.W: I remember that very well

INT: That was between 1960 and ’61

H.W: Yes, that’s right, there you are

INT: So yes you catered my Bar Mitzvah

H.W: Yes that was at the beginning, yes

INT: Yes, that’s good. And how long were you a kosher caterer in Glasgow?

H.W: Until 1990

INT: Until 1990?

H.W: Yes, 1990 that’s right

INT: And what can you say about your experiences as a kosher caterer?

H.W: Experiences, my experiences as a kosher caterer were very interesting, you know. People say – how can you do that? Very simple, of course, if you have to earn a living you can do that. It was interesting in the respect that you got to know a lot of people and you got to know people, you know, you are doing a function for them. You had to go discuss the menu. It spread by word of mouth; it moved very, very quickly because obviously what we did was the right thing at the time. It boomed very quickly and it, I didn’t have to do any advertising. Within two years it absolutely, it grew out of all proportion because we tried to get away from chopped liver and chicken soup; we tried to broaden things out, you know.

Obviously I had different background because people, let’s face it, in these days here, they were extremely blinkered, absolutely blinkered. I mean anything out of a can, you know it didn’t…. It might not be kosher you know I mean, I remember the supervisor went to me

‘You can’t give mayonnaise’

I said ‘What do you mean I can’t give mayonnaise?’

‘But it’s white in colour’

I said ‘It has nothing to do, it’s not made with cream or milk’ you follow?

INT: Yes

H.W: They had no knowledge that mayonnaise is made from eggs; but people had no knowledge. They were rather inhibited. So we broadened that out.

We also, but interesting experiences obviously. Most things, with most people I had very good relations. It went very well, people paid their bills, one or two didn’t pay their bills. At the very beginning somebody didn’t pay their bill so I took them to court. I was told you don’t do that. I said, well, I said ‘Watch me’ I’m not, I mean…

It established, after that I had no trouble. No trouble whatsoever. People are people, look at it, I mean

INT: You say you were bringing in more continental styles of catering to Glasgow?

H.W: Yes. Yes, oh yes. For example this is how somebody said to me ‘Look, can you not do something like prawn cocktail?’ So we used salmon, you follow?

People, you know. Other people, then people came back from abroad – ‘Could we have crudites on the table?’

Ok. Half, half of them go ‘Henry, what is this? Have you no time to cook the vegetables?’

You know, it grew and people grew with it and people began to learn. But at the beginning it was very, very restrictive, very restrictive

INT: So you were educating?

H.W: Well in a way yes

INT: The community

H.W: Well, we brought in different things and that’s how, that’s how it is.

INT: How did you meet your wife Ingrid?

H.W: How did I meet my wife Ingrid. When we came to Glasgow (Ingrid came to Glasgow later). When we arrived in Glasgow I was with a Jewish family, most people were with Jewish families but some weren’t. But when you are young and you are refugee and you have a problem with language etc, first of all you try and get together.

So there was the refugee centre, the House on the Hill in Sauchiehall Street which was a most important place. We were very active there, yes. There were discussions, there were theatre groups. Most people, of course we were the young ones. We had a choir and we were very politically active, of course, that was very much so. Very left wing (as it was in these days) we marched on the 1st of May, we fought, we performed all over Scotland. In the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, in Aberdeen for Mrs Churchill’s Aid to Russia Fund to raise money for a second front or whatever.

It was also very, very left wing… very big communist influence as well, there was no question about it.

I mean I wrote pamphlets with Heini Prais and it was an amazing, amazing group of people. Fairly, fairly intelligent, some of them very clever, very high powered. Very politically active. My Ingrid’s father wasn’t keen. He said ‘You shouldn’t get involved in that’

Well, yes you see, now when you are older, you look back on this and of course you get involved in that. But there is such a thing as MI5, let’s face it. You know, you might be sent back if, if you, if you misbehave. But we were very politically active and this is where I met Ingrid. It was on a Sunday we went rambles, I mean remember, none of us had money, most of us had no jobs (we were still studying or whatever).

On a Sunday we went out on walks with the number 4 tram to, to Clarkston and Croftfoot and up in the hills. But we all, well you brought a sandwich or something but as we were very egalitarian you weren’t allowed to eat your own sandwich because you had money and others didn’t so they were thrown in the middle and you took lucky dip. This is, this is how things were. There you are.

This is where I met Ingrid and met lots of people who we were very friendly with and stayed friendly. How did we integrate into the larger community? Well, that also came later. I mean we joined the Music Society and people ask us ‘When you come like that, you can be accused of being clannish – you stick to yourself’

Well alright you do. As a group of refugees, the foreigners in a country, of course you stick to yourselves. If you don’t want us to stick together you have to invite us we can’t knock on your door ‘Let me in’. You have to do it, it has to come from the other side. It, it takes a long time but it did come and we became very integrated obviously. But, you know people said ‘You’re clannish, you all stick together’ and I always said to them, I said ‘Look. Scots emigrate to Canada, what’s the first thing they do? They join a Caledonian Society’

I mean this is, that’s how it is, yes. And then of course they come back home on holiday. We had none, this home for us did not exist.

While I was in that refugee centre there was something called ‘Free German Youth’. It sounds terrible but the Freie Deutsche Jugend was this left wing push; people going back to Germany trying to rebuild after the war. Well we never, ninety percent of us did not have this intention; ten percent did. Well obviously some people went back to help re-establish a new country. When I was in Berlin at the Jewish museum the other day, last year, it produced a booklet written by a chap who came to interview me once, years ago and when I see my name there – “Heinz Wuga”, I was the, the Gauleiter so to speak for Scotland. I mean it, you know, if MI5 gets hold of this, of this kind of thing you are not allowed you get expelled.

So it was quite tremendous what went on but none of us, I mean, from all the people we knew here I think only four or five went back to Germany, to, to Austria or Czechoslovakia to rebuild democratic systems.

Fine, but we had no intention of doing that.

It took me, 1945, it took me until 1947 to bring my mother to Glasgow. The amount of affidavits you needed and I mean and you had to sign that she would not fall on the public purse etc. But eventually she did come here, safe and alive. She came here. She hated Glasgow, even though I was her only child she absolutely hated Glasgow.

What she didn’t like either, that I was married. You see, one son, this little boy and all of a sudden he’s a married man. Now, she liked Ingrid as a person, not as a wife. So, well true. But she was my mum, I mean a wonderful woman, my mother nevertheless.

She, I mean, I tell this quite openly, she never said a bad thing about Ingrid. She really, she respected Ingrid but not as a wife. So after two years my mother left Glasgow to live with her sister in Brooklyn, would you believe that? Absolutely, so much so and she was a very tough lady. In Brooklyn, she started working in restaurants and hotels.

She made a life for herself; she lived there for over twenty-five years. She even got a social security number and a pension; she became an American citizen, a very proud American citizen. She said ‘In the United States nobody asks me where do you come from, they ask what can you do?’

She has a point, you see here a woman in her fifties/sixties trying to get a job in Glasgow is fairly impossible. She worked for another refugee people making stuffed animals but she hated it and she went to America. Every year we with our children, we went to America one year and she came here the next year so we had constant contact.

Then eventually when her sister passed away she came to stay with us in, in Pollokshields and she passed away here in Glasgow aged 89 so… tough but she did it.

INT: What would you say was the attitude of the Scottish people to Jewish people when you were here?

H.W: The general Scottish public I don’t think I ever (apart from the odd anti-Semitic remark) I never had any problems. I think only once in the street was I accosted and possibly not because I was Jewish, possibly because I was foreign.

But I must say, people on the whole, I mean, Glasgow’s a tough city I know that, criminal city etc but really I had no problem, I had no problem with that whatsoever.

INT: What about your involvement in the Jewish community in Glasgow?

H.W: Right, the people I stayed with were a Jewish family; they took me to, they took me to Queens Park Synagogue. I became a member of Queens Park Synagogue with the family and when, when we moved and when I got married we moved to Pollokshields we then went to Pollokshields Synagogue; which doesn’t exist any longer. We got married in Pollokshields Synagogue and we, we had lots of friends, Jewish friends obviously in the Music Society, the Literature Society.

And Ingrid was a dressmaker in these days and got to know other people and eventually we, when Pollokshields Synagogue dissolved I went back to Queens Park and when Queens Park Synagogue dissolved I finally went to the Reform Synagogue which I feel very happy with. I could never have done that while I was a kosher caterer, you can imagine there were pressures, you know, there were certain, obviously there were pressures. But that I feel quite at home there, but I felt quite at home in Queens Park.

INT: Why did you decide to move to the Reform synagogue?

H.W: Because…why did I decide to move to the Reform? My background, my German-Jewish background is much more liberal; not as orthodox as the general community was here. Yes. So that really was not, was not a step away; this, this would eventually happen. I could not do that while I worked, the Beth Din wouldn’t have given me a license as a kosher caterer because I didn’t… I don’t want to go into the religious problems but there are lots of (as you can imagine) we had lots of problems with the Beth Din.

When I, first of all, when I applied for a licence. You know, I started catering, I started kosher catering no problem then all of a sudden people

‘But we have a Bar Mitzvah, if, we would like you to do the Bat Mitzvah but if you do the Bar Mitzvah the Rabbi won’t come’

Why? Well…this is how it was. That’s how it is. So I say to myself I better get a kosher licence otherwise I’ll not go anywhere. Rabbi Gottlieb. I don’t know if you remember Rabbi Gottlieb?

INT: Yes

H.W: Remember Rabbi Gottlieb?

INT: Yes, very strict

H.W: Well very strict but, well he was very strict but nevertheless he had a… he said to me, he said, well, ‘You want to apply for a licence?’ He said

‘I’m not sure. We have a, should you really do that? We have enough kosher caterers here’

I said ‘But I would like to apply for a licence’

‘Well…’

I said ‘Look, I’m not asking you for business advice I’m asking you I would like a licence’

And eventually he gave it. He said to me ‘Well we don’t expect you to lie flat on the ground on Tisha B’Av in the Synagogue but you have to, you have to conform to certain things’

So I got a licence and then Rabbi Gottlieb passed away then different kinds of Beth Din, then there were always problems, there were always problems with the Beth Din and some people extremely strict. For example, to give you an idea, obviously dishes meat, milk we know about that. Then we had a supervisor Reverend Balanow who became an extremely good friend of mine, I miss him very much he was a very nice man but he was very strict.

INT: He married Claire and myself

H.W: Did he? He was very strict, he was bound to be. He is a supervisor, he’s got to…

But he had, he had a little sense of humour and a little outgoing. So when things happened he would, he would put them right. On the other hand you get new dishes all of a sudden some frummer from the Kollel ‘New dishes? New dishes have to go to the mikveh. Have your dishes ever been to the mikveh’

I said ‘No they haven’t’

‘You better take your dishes to the mikveh’

I mean, we’re taking about thousands of pieces, so you know what I did?

I said ‘here are the keys, you can come to my house and take them’

I never heard anymore. But you had to, but I alright… I can understand it but they get carried away, they get absolutely carried away

INT: Absolutely

H.W: So but we established a good relationship, yes, and may I say, you remember Rabbi Rosen?

INT: Yes

H.W: Right

INT: I do, yes, a very friendly man

H.W: Now I met him the other day. I met him two years ago; we were going up north and where do I meet him – in Glenfinnan

I said ‘What are you doing here?’

He was here to examine the salmon, you know for… Pesach

He said to me when I left, when I left catering, he said to me ‘You’re going out with a good name’ which was a very nice thing to say, yes?

INT: Yes

H.W: That I appreciated, yes that I appreciated. We had, look we had things, we had… with certain debts somebody wouldn’t pay his bill, a very big bill so you can, what can you do? You eventually have to take them to court. Nothing happened. Nothing happened, he wouldn’t, he was fined but it didn’t matter.

Two years later the same man phones me up he said ‘I’ve got another daughter getting married – would you do it?’

I said ‘I will do it if you pay beforehand’

Apparently the man was a gambler. When he had it he was a big boy when he lost he went, he didn’t communicate you know, this is human nature. This is human nature and another man, I mean really I had hardly any debts, another man (he also had business troubles), he went away – he owed me a few hundred pounds. Not a big deal. Two years later he comes to a function here, he says ‘Henry I owe you something, puts out an envelope. You know, these are tales, it’s quite funny

INT: I won’t ask for names

H.W: No, no I won’t give you names. This is, this is, I mean this is, such is life

**Henry Wuga – Reflection On Life**

Henry tells of his love for skiing and his commitment to helping disabled people learn to ski. He feels completely at home in Glasgow and is very satisfied with his life there.

INT: Yeah, such is life. Henry can I ask you about something you haven’t mentioned but I know is the love of your life – your skiing?

H.W: Yes, well, I have, let me put it that way. I have skied since the age of eleven or twelve and then of course I came here and then war broke out and things were difficult but I’ve always skied.

Funnily enough, I will show you something in a minute. Because you mentioned skiing I’ll show you afterwards. So I’ve always skied. I want to show you a picture, it must be 1949 – there, I was married ’44, ’49, ’47, even during the war. There’s snow, it was snowing so I said ‘Ingrid we need to go skiing’

You know what, I had nothing. We went to a shop, we hired skis, we hired, gear we had, we hired skis. We skied in Linn Park and people looked at us, you know.

‘Can we take a photo?’- wait until you see the photographs, they’re funny. So we’ve always skied, this is, I mean winter to me is important.

INT: You and Ingrid?

H.W: Yes, oh yes and eventually I, in Aviemore, (we used to go to Aviemore to Grantown on Spey in New Year time with the children) and eventually I saw a ski bike or a skibob in a shop and I said ‘what’s this?’ and I tried it out on the [snowy] golf course and I liked it and I used it extensively here and then I went abroad with this ski bike. I didn’t know abroad there were other people and then I didn’t know there was British Skibob Association, which I’d joined

INT: A skibob is that?

H.W: A Skibob Association yes and eventually I (about twenty five/thirty years ago) I then got in touch with… through skiing, you know, you get to know people.

I’ve skied with the blind, I’ve skied with this and I got to know, British Limbless Ex-Serviceman Association and I’ve been with [them], I’m associate with them for thirty years now. I became their chief instructor

INT: Of skiing?

H.W: And we had these amputees and we go every year, we still go. We’re going next year

INT: Where to?

H.W: We have a place. We go to the Öetztal in Austria with a group of amputees every winter this is my life.

I mean this is, and then not only that, all my family ski. All the grandchildren ski, all the children ski, well, I’ve only two daughters and two sons-in-law and four grandsons and we’ve been going skiing for over thirty years as a family every winter. Alright, somebody, now and again somebody drops out because of exams but we go, late, between England and Scotland to get university and school dates together is very difficult for eleven people. But we have gone as a family for [over 35 years]

INT: Where do you go to?

H.W: Where do we go now? [For] the past 18 years we’ve gone to Verbier in Switzerland

INT: Yes

H.W: Every year, this is absolutely

INT: Am I right, have you been awarded the MBE was it, for your service

H.W: Yes, I’ve been awarded the MBE for, for sport for disabled people

INT: Yes

H.W: So that, that gives me greatest pleasure

INT: Yes

H.W: To be, to get an MBE for something you, you have done yourself.

Not, there’s also such a thing as the OBE you know but what people say ‘it’s a higher grade’ but it’s, it’s very rude to say that. The MBE is my own business and OBE is other people’s bloody business! You get kicked upstairs.

No, I’m very, I’m very proud of that because that’s something, you know, you’ve done yourself and I appreciate it

INT: So the question here is, if you look back now on your time in Scotland what are the highs that stand out for you?

H.W: Well the high is to establish yourself here and have a family and be together with a family and I had a good career here, certainly the Jewish community helped.

The catering was successful and not only that, it’s, I’m fairly happy here; it’s a nice place to be. I find I’ve, Glasgow’s a good place to be. You are near mountains and the sea and people are kind and people say to you ‘When you retire where you going to move to? To Spain? Or to Malta?’

I said ‘No’ I said ‘I’m sorry, I live here, I belong here, my family’s here. I go to these places certainly but I belong here and I’m perfectly happy here’ No desire to go anywhere else

INT: Are there any lows?

H.W: Yes, well there are bound to be, yes. Obviously

INT: Work, family, community?

H.W: Oh, aye. Well not so many family lows, no. But one just shows you what can happen to you. When I was in the Beresford Hotel we got a huge consignment of salami in or something and nobody wanted it and everybody was given one, well take one home, yes.

Nevertheless, I took one, whatever. But ‘You stole something’, yes. I got the sack.

Yeah, well, fine. Well, I wouldn’t, there was no charge or anything like that but you, you were sacked immediately so that, you have to be careful; these things can happen

INT: Yes

H.W: Yes

INT: Although they’d invited you to take; had others taken it?

H.W: Yes, others had taken it

INT: And they weren’t sacked?

H.W: Yes, so yes we were all sacked

INT: Oh I see

H.W: Yes, oh yes. Yes that was, that taught me – be careful, yes

INT: Yes

H.W: Be very careful what you, what you do. You can easily, you can easily fall into problems. But there weren’t, I can’t say, there weren’t many lows

INT: Thank you very much Henry that was excellent

H.W: Pleasure

INT: Thank you very much

H.W: Thank you

**Henry Wuga – June 1940 The Fun And Normal Life Come To An Abrupt End**

The refugee committee informed me that I need to go to the high court in Edinburgh. A lawyer from the committee accompanied me to the high court but he was not allowed into the hearing. At the High court in Edinburgh I was convicted of “Corresponding with the Enemy” a very serious offence during wartime. My letters to my parents were sent to my uncle Salo Würzburger in Brussels which in 1940 was a neutral country. Uncle Salo then forwarded the letters on to Germany. The answer came back by the same route and the letters were intercepted by the censor.

The Judge, Sir John Strachan made me **A Dangerous Enemy Alien Category A.** I was arrested, I was just 16y (a juvenile). I was shocked but not frightened.

Two Detectives escorted me to Waverly Station, put me in a locked compartment on the Glasgow train, all alone. Collected at Queen’s Street Glasgow by 2 policemen and taken home to Hurwichs. Allowed 1 phone call and packed the minimum of clothing in a holdall.  Next stop Police Headquarters. The Sargent said: “Cannie tak the Laddie. He’s under 17, not allowed in a cell”. A civilised country!  A stressful day but I was well treated by the policemen. They panicked, what to do with this Dangerous ‘Cat. A’ boy?

A Remand Home for Juvenile offenders, was the answer. Boys of 13/15y waiting to go to court the next day for stealing and other offences. I was greeted by these boys: “What did ye dae?” As I “didnae dae onythin” I lost their esteem. My cigarettes were deposited in the Governor’s office. He was kind and meant well, giving me permission to smoke in his office. I knew better. I would have been ridiculed. A most stressful day. Did I sleep well for the two nights I was there? I can’t remember!

I was transferred to Maryhill Barrack’s, a large military base in Glasgow now a prisoner of war camp. Rudolf Hess was held there after his “peace” flight.

Shared a Cement Air raid Shelter with 21 captured German Merchant Sailors. Here I was once again in a hostile environment. **Jewish, German and Category A**. There were anti-Semitic remarks, however some senior ranking officers protected me. A stressful time, as prisoners we were confined with nothing to relieve the feeling of imprisonment.

Two weeks later the journey continued by bus to Donaldson school in Edinburgh, a large former Deaf School at Corstorphine, now an internment camp. I was once again with the same German sailors, fortunately I did not have to share their dormitory.

The war was going badly after the Dunkirk evacuation. Prime Minister Winston Churchill

Banged the Cabinet Table “**Collar the Lot**” was the phrase he used. The internment of enemy aliens, German and Italian, even the “friendly Continental Jewish refugees” began. Churchill was driven to that by the relentless virulent anti foreigner’s campaign by the tabloid press, The Mail, Express & Sun. “Expel the foreigners, lock them up etc.”

An unnecessary decision, we came here to flee from the Nazis and to help defeat them.

At Donaldson’s the commandant asked “Is there anyone here who can cook?”  I put my hand up, “yes, I can cook!”. My apprenticeship in Baden Baden in 1938 made me confident.

Thinking back, the temerity of youth made me volunteer. “Within 72 hours 170 internees will arrive, you need to prepare meals” The army provided the rations and I found myself

in charge of the kitchen with a staff of 12 German sailors in this large institutional kitchen,

and we cooked. One sailor called me “ein dreckiger Jude” a dirty Jew. Another knocked him out. British Corporal was assigned to keep things normal. We worked hard for 10 days.

General Internment had been ordered and amongst the arrivals of the men was my cousin Gustav Würzburger and my future father in law Ascher Wolff.

It is now July and while at Donaldson’s we fortunately missed being sent to Canada on the SS Arandora Star, which was tragically torpedoed off Ireland with the loss of hundreds of lives of Internees.

Time to move on again by train to York Racecourse. Corporal produced a list of rations for the train: Oatmeal potatoes, beans etc. I pointed out that we will not have any cooking facilities,

“We need bread and corned beef.” I was not afraid to speak up again, I spoke the truth.

We were quartered below the stands of the race course. Very basic cold and damp.  Now separated from the German sailors, just mostly German Jewish Refugees.  Only a few days there. I remember lectures on hygiene, no doubt they had concerns about homosexuality.  A boring time, constant roll calls to check the number of prisoners.

The minute you became familiar with the new camp and fellow internees, it was time to move on.

Now August and on to camp No 5. Warth Mills near Bury Lancashire, on old cotton mill. It turned out to be the most horrendous experience of all the camps.  2000 men crammed into the filthy oily floors of this disused mill. On arrival we were strip searched, I remember joining the long queue to be searched. I lost most of my personal belongings, fountain pen, pocket knife, wrist watch, never to be seen again. A fairly rough going over by the soldiers.

It was intimidating and frightening we were just the German Enemy!

Given a hessian sack to fill with straw. That was your bed, now find a place on the floor to sleep. Overcrowding sparked a tense situation that led to sickness. Injuries from falling overhead transmissions, a dangerous time. Basic toilet facilities consisted of 60 buckets in a yard and 18 water taps for 2000 men. At night crossing the yard the guards would       shout:

“Halt or I Shoot”. I recall one man so upset that he pulled open his shirt and said “SHOOT”

Someone described it as “Hell on Earth” You can imagine the in adequacy of the food.

The eating area was called Starvation Hall. There were many Doctors amongst the Internees, they were afraid of an epidemic occurring in these dangerous conditions.

On a lighter note, unbelievably the only item that was plentiful was Carnation Milk in tins for your porridge, so sweet and sickly, that I have not touched it since.

**It was a very hard 2 weeks at Warth Mills, tense and dangerous, Soldiers with guns and bayonets.  The officers and men were eventually court martialled for the unnecessarily brutal treatment of the Internees. It is a sad reflection on the Government’s panicky handling of the Internment of Aliens. They knew who we were and why we sought asylum in the UK. to escape the Nazi persecution of Jews.**

Time to move again to Hyton Liverpool on our way to the Isle of Man. How do you create a camp quickly? Hyton was an unfinished housing scheme, simply enclose with barbed wire  and hey Presto you have a camp. We only stayed 2 days.  At Liverpool we embarked for the IoM where many camps were ready. Simply whole sections of Hotels and Boarding houses surrounded by barbed wire, in Douglas ,Ramsay, Peel and Port Erin (women).

A smooth 3hour crossing of the Irish Sea. Our destination was Peveril Camp Peel on the West Coast of the island.

Walked from the harbour to the railway station, a narrow gage small train took us to Peel, about 80 internees. Peveril Camp consisted of the last 8 hotels at the end of the promenade, overlooking PEEL BAY and Castle. This looked very promising,

Reasonable accommodation, double rooms. House No 6, 12 rooms on 3 storeys.

24 Internees age groups 25 to 60 plus. Mostly German Jewish refugees and some political German detainees. I was the only CHILD aged 16 detained by MI5 !!

Knowing we were here for the long term, you settled down and made friends. Food was reasonable, no shortages.

Business people, teachers’ doctors galore, University professors and also “ordinary” Jewish refugees, all missing their dear ones let in the UK. It did not take long to establish discussion groups, theatre and music debating groups. We all had time on our hands. Interrupted careers, no income, one letter a week, everybody had family torn apart.

For me it was a great learning experience like a look into adult life and a whole new education. No Newspapers allowed, we followed the course of the war by radio when permitted. The authorities began to understand we were not “Enemy Aliens” but a well educated

Refugees from the Nazis and are anxious to help the war effort towards victory. We organised the postal system, we hated the disruption of the constant ROLL Calls and found a better system which the camp commander accepted. We refused to go for walks or swimming accompanied by soldiers with guns and bayonets, they began to understand, we were not going to escape, Things settled down to mutual cooperation.

Professor Hans Gal, who had lived Edinburgh, published his daily diaries in German and English, from a camp in Douglas, a really special insight, worth reading.

To combat illness, we were divided into groups by our doctors, to test different foods or medicines. It WORKED.

Many men played Chess, but with their backs to the chess board, given 10 seconds to call out the next move. Quite a challenge !! Many musical instruments arrived from their homes in UK and Music and Theatre flourished . Cabarets, Shows also for the Officers. We were taken to Douglas to see the Charlie Chaplin Film : The Great Dictator, making fun of Hitler. Life went on. Several people were released for hardship or medical reasons. We all hoped to get home soon.

We were allowed a weekly letter. My letter was used to complain to the authorities. It was sent to the liberal Manchester Guardian and Eleanor Rathbone MP(known as MP for the refugees). We  argued that we should be released to help with the war effort and defeat the Nazis. This exposure got our comments mentioned at Prime Ministers Question Time.  In spite of being behind barbed wire it gave us a feeling of living in democratic country.

I was called to several Tribunals to be reassessed. Did I really correspond with the enemy?

I got a new roommate, a German officer a Metallurgist working at the British Aluminium Co.

in Fort William. He turned out to be an MI5 Agent. He spoke Perfect German and Oxford English. He gave lectures in metallurgy, to fool us of his identity.

He tried to get me drunk and searched for information, which I did not have or know.

An unpleasant episode. But his report must have convinced them that I was CLEAN.

Which eventually led to my release. In 2008 I received a document through Freedom of Information from MOD that they did think I was a spy.

Many more boring months went by. Met many interesting people and made good friends. A Yorkshire man who had no German connections wondered why he was interned. It turned out his grandfather was German and had never become British. Poor man found it difficult to take. However, he taught me about Tabaco. Gather certain leaves, cure them with Salpeter, put them in a sardine tin place under 1 leg of your bed and the pressure will make solid Tabaco. You learned a lot about making do.

I was transferred to Ramsay Camp for just 2 days to be released. The commandant told me: “I cannot keep you a day longer as you are under the age for internment” which was 18.

Such is the bureaucracy of wartime. The journey home was frightening. All ALONE after being in a friendly community for 10 long months. Had vouchers for Boat and Train, But which Boat? Where to find train to Glasgow in Liverpool station? Remember it is wartime, who do I ask?

A warm welcome from Mrs. Hurwich. I have come HOME.

What Now?  I found a job as apprentice Chef at the Corn Exchange restaurant.

Found the Refugee Club with lots of young people, “The House on the Hill in Sauchiehall Street “Where I met Ingrid. As they say “The Rest Is History”.