**Ingrid Wuga – Life Before The War**

INT: This is an interview with Mrs. Ingrid Wuga on Sunday the 29th of August 2010. So can you tell us when and where you were born?

IW: I was born in Dortmund, Westphalia. The date of my birth is the 24th of June 1924

INT: And what was your name at birth?

IW: Ingrid Wolff

INT: Ingrid Wolff

IW: W-O-L-F-F

INT: Can I just ask you, just very briefly, as a child growing up… you gave us a little sort of bit of background but what was it like? What, you know, what was it like where you lived?

IW: In Dortmund?

INT: Yes

IW: I had friends yes. I went to a Jewish school so I had no problem at all and in Dortmund some of my friends (who I’ve lost contact with, I have no idea where they are) from school, they were sent to high school / secondary school and it was very bad. They had to sit in the last row on their own and they all came back to the Jewish school which was an ordinary school, not a high school. But our headmaster was a very, I would think, very clever or looked into the future and he could see that emigration was imminent and he said ‘I know you would like to learn many other languages. You can have French lessons in the afternoon privately but I want to teach you English’

And we had English at school every day. He said ‘It’s more important because wherever (if you emigrate) wherever you go English will be a useful language. Whereas French not necessarily’

INT: Right so he was quite insightful then?

IW: Yes I think he was

INT: He realized what was ahead

INT2: And that was your secondary school?

IW: No that was an ordinary school; the Jewish school in Dortmund

INT2: So how…when did you start learning English?

IW: In that school

INT2:.How old were you?

IW: Eleven or twelve

INT2: Right

IW: And then we went to Hamburg. Eventually we lived in Hamburg where I also had English lessons at the school (also a Jewish school). You just… could hardly afford to go to a non-Jewish school.

INT: Have you, have you gone back?

IW: I’ve been back to the town where my parents originated, a little town, and I had no problem at all. I’ve been to Dortmund and I couldn’t get out quickly enough. I have no happy memories there because there was nobody to speak to; nobody that I knew at the time was there.

INT: They’d all gone

IW: And I didn’t want to… I said I wanted to go back to just see where I’d lived, where I’d grown up and I was very unhappy there. I went to Friedrichstadt in Schleswig-Holstein and I had happy memories of being with my grandparents (with my parents obviously) and I had no problem at all. And funnily enough Friedrichstadt was started by a Duke Fredrick who…There were people in Holland who were persecuted because of their religion and Duke Fredrick said ‘I’ve got a piece of land that needs draining and I know Dutch people are good at draining land. You can have that bit of land’

And these Dutch people went to Friedrichstadt and started the town; all the immigrants from Holland. So it’s… Friedrichstadt is built very much like a Dutch town with very gabled roofs and I have lots of happy memories there.

INT: It sounds very picturesque

IW: It is a very picturesque little town

**Ingrid Wuga – Life During The War**

INT: Ok. So I spoke to you just before we turned the tape on and I was going to say when did you first come to Scotland? But you told me that you came to England first

IW: That’s right

INT: So how old were you when you came over?

IW: I was exactly, I had just turned fifteen

INT: And why did you go to England?

IW: To England? Because a family by the name of Dixon; Mr. and Mrs. Dixon guaranteed for me and they lived in Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The Dixons were Christadelphians and there was quite a group of Christadelphians in Ashby-de-la-Zouch and they took in children younger than me and they were very good.

INT: Your family knew this family?

IW: No we didn’t

INT: So how did you have contact with them?

IW: It was all through Kinder Transport. It was arranged. We eventually, although I grew up in Dortmund, eventually my parents thought it would be easier to find immigration in Hamburg where we had a lot of family. My parents came originally from Schleswig-Holstein – very near the Danish border.

INT: Ok, so this was arranged through the Kindertransport?

IW: It was all arranged through Kindertransport which happened to be very active in Hamburg.

INT: And you were just, how old? Just under fifteen?

IW: Just fifteen. I had just turned fifteen

INT: Just turned fifteen. Who, who were in your family unit then? Who did you live with before you came over? When you were at home?

IW: My parents, I just lived with my parents in Hamburg

INT: Just you on your own?

IW: Yes I am an only child

INT: Ah right Ok

IW: I have no brothers or sisters

INT: Ok so they found out through the Kindertransport

IW: That’s right

INT: And you could come to England

IW: That’s right

INT: How did you get over then? How did you travel?

IW: By train to the coast in Holland and then by boat over to Harwich and then to London where not the Dixons but somebody else from the organization, the Christadelphians, a Mr. Overton found me in Liverpool Street Station where we all arrived.

INT: When you were travelling did you know any of the others?

IW: I didn’t know anybody and it was very hard. I’m sure I’m not the only one who says that. To say goodbye to your parents at the station in Hamburg… I will never, never forget waving goodbye to my parents when I was on the train and they were on the platform running along.

INT: What year was this then?

IW: That was 1939

INT: So it was 1939 then

IW: Yes it was the 4th of July 1939

INT: Ok so just a couple of months before the war broke out

IW: That’s right

**Ingrid Wuga – Immigration**

INT: So when you arrived in England

IW: In Liverpool

INT: In Liverpool. You were met

IW: By a Mr. Overton who was also from the group of Christadelphians who had arranged to bring people/children over; boys and girls. And there were quite a few in Ashby-de-la-Zouch but I only met one couple because I, I was asked by the Dixons ‘What would you like to do?’ and I said ‘Could I go back to school?’

‘Oh no, no you are over fourteen; girls over fourteen don’t need to go to school anymore’

But I was asked ‘Would I like to earn some pocket money?’ And of course when you are a guest in somebody’s house you say yes thank you. And I would have loved to gone into, I’ve always been interested in medicine and I would have loved to go into nursing but Mrs. Dixon put me off very quickly ‘No, no, no – you need to wash walls and you don’t want to do that.’

I have a feeling she was afraid I might have to go and live with them and she was alright but Mr. Dixon was much kinder and…

INT: How long did you spend there then? How long did you stay?

IW: Not very long. It was a matter of a few weeks and they found me a job as a children’s nurse in, in a huge house where we eventually came… there was Patrick who was eighteen months old and I became charged with looking after Patrick.

INT2: So you were a nanny?

IW: I beg your pardon?

INT2: You were a nanny?

IW: I was a nanny. Well, so called nanny

INT2: Yeah

IW: The young couple who had Patrick, because war was imminent, moved in with the in-laws who lived in a huge house in Snarestone. When I say a huge house… In those days to have a swimming pool in your garden…

INT: Wow

IW: It was not exactly a little house of poor people. And there were other staff. The Lesley’s were very kind to me and treated me very well.

INT2: Were they Christadelphians?

IW: No they were not Christadelphians but they were very kind. But there was other staff (because it was such a huge house; other staff) and I think they felt why, as far as they were concerned, (Jewish didn’t come into it – I don’t think they had ever met any Jewish people) – but as far as they were concerned I was ‘German’ and that did not stand me in good stead. So they felt probably – why does a stupid German girl have a job looking after a little boy when one of their friends probably could have had the job?

INT: How did you learn English then?

IW: I had a little English at school and it helped me. That was another thing that was held against me – how can I look after a little boy who is learning to speak the language and my English was not perfect?

INT: Right

IW: Obviously not

INT: So a lot of people around were feeling resentful?

IW: Very resentful. But the Lesley’s were fine. The Lesley’s were very kind and because I looked after Patrick I had breakfast with the family (and that was held against me) and afternoon tea. Again I looked after Patrick with afternoon tea with the family. But my other job was obviously to wash Patrick’s nappies. In those days we did not have throwaway nappies; we had nappies that had to be washed and I did that.

INT: So I sense at that time then you were quite happy and content in one area of

IW: Yes

INT: Your working life there

IW: Yes quite happy there

INT: But you were aware that there were people around you that were a bit resentful about you having that position?

IW: Yes, yes but I had a job, I was quite happy there and Mr. Dixon would pick me up on my half day and take me back. I was in the Dixon’s house on my half day and Mrs. Dixon would take me out shopping, if I wanted anything.

INT: So you were treated fairly?

IW: Yes I was treated very fairly.

INT: Alright. So then what happened from there?

IW: From there…

INT: You were in England

IW: Yes

INT: You were working for this family

IW: Family

INT: And things were going along. The war was on.

IW: Yes

INT: Did you have any other contact at that time with any of the other Jewish refugees?

IW: No, none at all, I didn’t have any contact at all. My half day was spent with the Dixons and at night I was taken back again to my workplace and I did hear a week before war broke out that my parents managed to get to this country and they were brave enough to come as domestics.

INT: Ok so they made it out then and they got over here.

IW: They got out yes, at least they got to this country

INT: Ok

IW: And eventually they found a job in West Kilbride which is not far from Glasgow and when they were settled there (that was about ten months later) – ‘I would like to be near you, can you get me a job near you?’ And that’s how I got to Scotland.

INT: I see, ok. So you were sort of the best part of nearly a year then down in England?

IW: Yes, yes

INT: And then your parents, they came over and they came to West Kilbride

IW: That’s right

INT: And then you came up here to join them.

IW: That’s right

INT: Alright. So this would have been what roundabout…19…41?

IW: ’41.

**Ingrid Wuga – Settling In**

INT: Alright.

IW: ’41 yes

INT: So you came to West Kilbride

IW: West Kilbride

INT: And you all lived there?

IW: Yes well my parents had a job in one house and I was in another house and I was very kindly treated by a Mrs. Wright in a small place, not West Kilbride but Portencross. But unfortunately because of the war and being of German origin, we had to leave.

A policeman came to the door and said ‘You can’t stay here anymore – you’ve got to get out. You’re not allowed to live near the sea or near any protected place/protected area’

So we said ‘Well, where do we go?’

And through a certain circle… My father wanted to say Kaddish. We heard that his mother had died in Germany (a natural death) and my father said ‘Is there a synagogue near here?’

‘Oh, no. but there’s a Jewish man just down the road. Go to him he’ll be able to advise you’

And that Jewish man was very kind and offered us his house when we had to leave West Kilbride. And that was in Glasgow and that’s how we got to Glasgow.

INT: Do you remember his name?

IW: Mr. Samuel.

INT: He let you move into his house?

IW: Yes he…That was in the West End. We lived there for a little while. My father was interned then (most people were interned. Men, also some woman) and we found a job, my mother found a job, so did I as a children’s nurse again, my mother became a housekeeper in Cuthbertsons in Pollokshields and…

INT2: What training did you have to be a children’s nurse?

IW: None at all. I just liked children. I just was very fond of children.

INT: And your mother?

IW: My mother?

INT2: To become a housekeeper?

IW: Well she was always a good cook

INT2: Right

IW: And she just said instead of having somebody work for you- you do it yourself

INT: What were your impressions of Scotland at the beginning when you first came?

IW: People were very friendly and very helpful and while we lived in… What’s it called? Victoria Crescent Road in the West End. We lived in Victoria Crescent Road in this house (huge house) and we said to, what was the man’s name? It’s gone out of my head just now. He was related to the Samuels who are quite well known in Glasgow. ‘It’s very kind of you to offer us your house but we cannot pay you any rent’

And he said. Mr. Cohen I think was the name, yes ‘When I come to Glasgow you will cook me a meal and that will be fine’

He was very, very kind. Very kind indeed. They were not exactly short of tuppence but they had a house in, as I say, in Glasgow and a beautiful holiday home in West Kilbride on the Portencross Road.

INT: So…

IW: And they invited us. It was Pesach and they invited us for Seder night which was wonderful

INT: So were you aware that there was a Refugee Centre?

IW: No. We were… we met somebody in Victoria Crescent Road who said ‘There is a Refugee Centre and they meet in West George Street’ It was in West George Street at the time then they moved that flat. We met on the Saturday and that flat then was given up and they found somewhere in Pitt Street and eventually the house on the hill on Sauchiehall Street.

INT: So you went. You went there and met people there?

IW: I went there. I met people there.

INT: Did you meet friends through that?

IW: I met friends. In fact I met Henry who, we married eventually.

INT: So this is where you first met your husband?

INT: Ok so you met him at this

IW: At the Refugee Centre

INT: At the Refugee Centre

IW: Yes

INT: Ok

IW: And I met

INT: And how old were you then by that time?

IW: Sixteen/seventeen

INT: So you were very young

IW: Fairly young and two girls I’m still friendly with I met there. One went to America eventually and one girl went to London but we’re still very, very good friends.

INT2: What activities did they have?

IW: Ursula, I think she worked in an office and Eve definitely. Eve, her name was Elfie.

INT2: Uh huh and what did you do at the club?

IW: At the club we just had meetings, in fact, very interesting meetings. There were older people in this club who were students and some were already doctors. People from Czechoslovakia and Austria and Germany and we had very interesting lectures on a Saturday night and on a Sunday we would go rambling into the country and that was quite carefree. It was the main thing to meet.

INT: How many people were there approximately?

IW: Oh, a lot. Henry might remember better but maybe altogether seventy people – quite a lot of people. And there was, eventually in this house on Sauchiehall Street there was a café and you could have a meal that was affordable. It didn’t, they didn’t make any profit; it was just enough to pay the women who were working in the kitchen. It was very good that you could eat there.

INT: So

IW: But we didn’t eat out a lot

INT: So during the war years then you were between the age of about fifteen and twenty-one – yes?

IW: Yes

INT: And you were working as a nanny/child minder?

IW: Eventually, no, eventually then I got out of that. The club, the Refugee Club gave me the courage to get out of that kind of work. It was very boring sitting with a family at night and looking after a little boy. It was, I mean I wasn’t ill treated

INT: No but a bit isolated?

IW: But washing nappies – it very boring and as I said the Refugee Club gave me the courage to go out and…I was always quite good with the needles/sewing and I got myself a job in a very nice dress shop and I learned to do alterations and at night I went to a school (evening classes) to learn how to cut out so that I was able to make garments.

INT: To do the patterns?

IW: Yes.

INT: Where was this shop that you worked in? Was it far from where you lived?

IW: No it was within walking distance. I was able to live in the youth, then, the girls’ hostel which was in Renfrew Street and the shop was just down the road at Charing Cross.

INT: And your parents?

IW: My, well my father was interned and my mother got a job in, again as a housekeeper, in Cuthbertsons, the music shop.

INT: So she wasn’t far from you then?

IW: Oh yes, that was quite a bit away. I could only see her maybe once a week or so

INT: Once a week. Ok. So you were, you know, you were making a life for yourself then?

IW: Oh yes, yes

INT: And then you’d already met Henry?

IW: Well that was later

INT: A bit later

IW: Not right, not right away

INT: Not right away

IW: No, no

INT: Just sort of during those years?

IW: He was also interned. He was interned. In fact he had quite a difficult time because during the war his mother was still in Germany and he wrote to his mother via Belgium and France, where he had uncles, and these letters were intercepted and he was called a spy. So he was taken. He wasn’t, he was far too young to be interned but he was interned and eventually sent to the Isle of Man.

**Ingrid Wuga – Integration**

INT: So you were working during the war?

IW: I was

INT: You were more than a seamstress really; you were cutting patterns

IW: Yes

INT: You were learning to

IW: No that was, that was for myself. No I was only a seamstress in the shop learning to do alterations to make things smaller if people needed.

INT: Were you quite happy doing that then? Did you enjoy it?

IW: Yes, well you…

INT2: How did you get that job?

IW: I went, I literally went into the shop and said ‘I’m looking for a job. Do you need any help?’ and she said ‘I can only pay you twelve and six’ I remember that so well and she said ‘You know when I was young I had to pay to be employed in a shop like this’

So I said ‘Well I’m sorry I can’t pay’ And I lived in the girls hostel in Renfrew Street.

INT: So you feel that the Jewish Refugee club, the people there helped give you the confidence?

IW: It did give me confidence which I had lost quite a bit. I felt very… at sea.

INT: Yeah. So when the war finished, when the war was over you were about twenty-one?

IW: No, well yeah I must have been about twenty-one yes. And by that time I was married, yes.

INT: So did you get married just before the war finished?

IW: Just before yes, yes 1944

INT: Ok and then what happened then? What did you do thereafter? Did you work?

IW: I just, I got out of the shop. Well I did some more work where I was called up ‘What would I like to do?’

INT: Was this in order to help you to become naturalized or was this?

IW: No, no. Just because it was war work.

INT: Just because it was war work.

IW: You could either go into a munitions factory but since I was able to sew they said ‘You can sew in a factory where they make uniforms or parachutes, so I said ‘Well I think uniforms might be better’ and I worked in a factory, Moore Taggart in Albion Street where they made uniforms. But where I worked, they made policemen uniforms. A very boring job but it was a job and you just get on with it.

INT2: How were the girls?

IW: Alright

INT2: With you?

IW: Yes, yes they were not too bad

INT2: And could you understand them?

IW: Yes just! Yes they were, well… you could talk to them but not a particularly intelligent conversation

INT: Did you, (I mean even then and now at any time) did you have any experiences of [anti-Semitism](https://gatheringthevoices.com/glossary/anti-semitism/)?

IW: No

INT: Personal?

IW: No I can’t say that. No, no. Maybe anti-German during the war but not really badly. When they heard why I was here they became, people became very friendly.

INT: So you felt that Scotland was a good place to be?

IW: Yes definitely. Yes, yes I’m very happy in Scotland.

INT: So you were a seamstress?

IW: Yes

INT: Did you think about studying to do something else?

IW: I thought of further education but I just couldn’t afford it so I eventually gave it up. But in the Club, in the Refugee Club there were, as I said, people who were older and had studies. Some were more educated and we had very interesting meetings on a Saturday night where people would hold lectures about medicine (which I found always extremely interesting), history (yes quite interesting if you heard people talk about their own country) – but I found that I’ve always been extremely interested in medicine and anything that came up in a meeting like that I would be all ears.

INT: You said earlier on you would have liked to have trained to do nursing?

IW: Yes, yes

INT: If you’d had the opportunity

IW: But somehow it just didn’t work anymore because I don’t think I could have earned enough and it just didn’t work out anymore.

INT: So you were married after the war and you were

IW: No during the war – 1944

INT: Uh huh yes and when the war ended, after that, when you were married, did you start a family early on or were you working?

IW: No, no, we knew…

INT: No?

IW: We knew we would not start a family. In fact my parents finally got out of the housework and that was just before we got married and I said to Henry ‘My parents are going to rely on both of us or me alone to help pay for the flat’ – the rented flat, a furnished flat. ‘They can’t afford it on their own’

So I was going to move in with my parents and Henry agreed that when we got married we would live with my parents, share. We would have our own bedroom but shared the sitting room and the kitchen and there was no problem at all. My parents welcomed Henry very much, so much so that I used to say ‘Well I’m the step-child and Henry is the son’ because whatever was being decided -‘We’ll ask Henry’.

INT: So it worked out very well for you then?

IW: It worked out extremely well; Henry was accepted right away.

INT: So how long, how many years or how long did that situation last for?

IW: We lived in the furnished flat then my parents bought a flat upstairs and we lived there….but then….yes, eventually we had a little girl and we said, ‘We’d like a flat of our own’ and we bought a flat not very far away.

INT: Quite nearby

IW: Quite nearby because we got on extremely well with my parents

INT2: Did you speak German with them?

IW: Never

INT2: In the house?

IW: Never, never. The only time Henry and I spoke German in front of Hilary was when it was something we didn’t want her to understand / want her to know. I can’t remember what it was but she said one morning ‘I know what you’re saying in that funny language’ and there were no more secrets. We said ‘In that case we don’t want to speak German anymore’.

INT2: And what about with your parents?

IW: No. I spoke English. I had a thing – I didn’t want to speak German.

INT2: And at the Refugee Club?

IW: It was mostly English

INT2: So it was a decision?

IW: We all felt, we all felt that we’re in this country and we want to integrate as much as possible.

INT: With friendships – did you have mostly Jewish friends or half and half with non-Jewish or?

IW: We had some, through Henry’s work (Henry is a chef and he worked in hotels and restaurants) and one family who lived in (or live) in Falkirk became…the daughter was gaining experience in the hotel and she must have mentioned to her parents about us and we were invited to Falkirk to the family, the Morrison’s, and they were not Jewish and they were extremely kind. They could not have been more welcoming than they were.

INT: So did you maintain a friendship then?

IW: Yes we’re still friendly with the daughter who lives in Falkirk still.

**Ingrid Wuga – Reflection On Life**

INT: You mentioned that when you came over… when you left your home to come over at the beginning and you waved goodbye to your parents- Do you sort of reflect on that? How different things could have been had they not come over? Do you feel…

IW: Oh yes

INT: Very fortunate?

IW: I was very worried, I was very worried that my parents might not make it in time because my father was taken into custody again into…well, it was a concentration camp but it was only a police station where he was for a few, I think, over a week and he was accused of espionage. And he was freed and right away, they had permission by that time to come to Britain, to Coventry and they just got out one week before war broke out.

INT: So things worked out very well

IW: It was very, very worrying. Very worrying

INT: It was worrying and close, but at least they got here.

IW: They got here

INT: At the right time

IW: Yes

INT: So

IW: So I feel I’m very, very lucky because many of the Kindertransport people never saw their parents again. So I feel very blessed.

INT: Yes. You’ve lived in Scotland all these years

IW: Yes

INT: So if you’re thinking back over the years that you’ve been here have you got some really strong good memories that you could share with us? And then some maybe not-so-good memories?

IW: We, when we did get married we, we went on…Even before we went youth hostelling, we walked from one youth hostel to another but I found it very difficult to carry a rucksack so then we were able to buy bicycles and we cycled from one youth hostel to another and had very nice holidays in youth hostels. Met quite a few interesting people…so life just evolved and eventually we started…

Yeah Henry went… I was pregnant with Hilary and Henry wanted to…

He had a cousin in Lyon and he always wanted to go to Lyon to work in the catering trade in Lyon because it’s well known for good cuisine. And we met Henry’s cousin in Paris one year and Henry said ‘Kurt you were always going to get me a job in Lyon?’

He said ‘Well come with me tomorrow’

I said ‘Just like that?!’

And Henry said ‘Given the chance I’ve got to go’

So he went to Lyon, got himself a job and – ‘You can start next week’

So he was there for six months in Lyon. He got a leave of absence from The Grand Hotel where he was chef, worked in Lyon for six months and…

INT: Did you go over while he was there?

IW: No I couldn’t. I had to do my dressmaking to earn some money to pay the rent/share the rent with my parents and he was back in time just for Hilary to be born. But I worked. I kept the things going here. We didn’t know whether he would earn any money in Lyon but he did earn a little. Not very much, but enough. He said that it was an experience that he would never like to have missed. It was really good, he worked in two…

INT: It was a good opportunity for him

IW: Yes and also in a patisserie. He said ‘You can learn lots of things’. He started at six o clock in the morning and he tells a story where he wanted to have a cup of coffee at six o clock in the morning to start work and he said ‘Not at all – you drink “Marc” (Cognac) at this time of the morning’

INT2: And did he think the skills that he got in Lyon, that he would be able to come back to Scotland and use them?

IW: Yes, yes. Some of it, some of it

INT2: Some of it.

IW: Well eventually we, eventually Henry wanted to earn some extra money and a friend of ours said ‘Why don’t you do the odd function?’

He said ‘function? What are you talking about?’

‘Well so-and-so wants a party’

I think it was New Year and Henry must have been quite good at it because somebody said ‘Who did your function?’

‘Oh that guy up the road’

‘Oh, can you do a function for me?’

‘Can you do a function for me?’

And eventually we got so busy that we started our own catering business. We catered in…By that time we had a flat of our own but

INT: And what was your involvement in the business?

IW: I did a lot of baking. I had my mother’s recipes and I did a lot of baking. Henry didn’t do the baking; that was my job.

INT: Oh right

IW: But he decorated the cakes.

INT: Ok, but you did the baking?

IW: I did the baking

INT: Ok so you would have been very busy with that?

IW: Very busy, yes, very busy.

INT: So have there been any lows? Anything?

IW: Any?

INT: Lows. Any bad times?

IW: No you just get on with it. If there was a low you … And our business was right away kosher. We said ‘No we don’t want anything…’

INT: You made that decision yourself?

IW: Yes we did

INT: Is this because of…?

IW: And we catered for non-Jewish functions

INT: Yes

IW: And we told them that we could not give them milk in their tea after a meat function and they said that’s alright. But nowadays you have vegetarian milk.

INT: Yeah

IW: That is permissible.

INT: You were telling me that when Henry set up, when you both set up the catering business, you wanted it to be kosher

IW: Yes

INT: Is this because of your links to Judaism?

IW: I would say

INT: What I’m trying to ask is how strong have your links been with Judaism? How important in your life has it been?

IW: Well when I came to this country, when I was in England first, people said ‘How did you manage your food?’ and I said ‘You eat what you’re given or you go hungry’

I didn’t need to eat pork or bacon but the meat was definitely not kosher. But you just get on with it.

INT: So prior to coming over then (when you lived back home, before you came over here) had you lived..?

IW: Not one hundred percent. My grandparents yes and I have very, very happy memories of spending holidays, summer holidays with my grandparents. They both lived in a small town in the north of Germany and I’m quite sure that was to the letter of the law.

INT: Right ok. But you still kept traditions, the traditions going?

IW: Traditions yes, traditions yes. But here, once I got here you just, as I say you eat what you’re given or you do without.

INT: And then later on after the war you were married and did you…I know you were talking about being part of the refugee club initially, but then throughout the years

IW: Sorry?

INT: The refugee club.

IW: Yes

INT: Initially you were there but later, in later years have you had an involvement in the Jewish community? Apart from obviously the catering business (you are well known in Glasgow for that).

IW: Yes, oh yes, eventually people… In fact when I went to the, or we went to the refugee club somebody said once ‘Oh you all keep yourselves very separate’ and I said ‘Look you must remember we are visitors in your town or country. I cannot come to your door and say may I come in. It’s for you to invite us’ and somehow we…if you think about it if you go to another town, unless you meet people you are a stranger and it can be very lonely. And I would of, we would have liked to mix with the Jewish community in Glasgow right away but it wasn’t that easy. They felt we wanted to keep ourselves separate but we didn’t. We wanted to be mixed.

INT: So it was kind of a, it’s a bit of a…it sounds like it is maybe a bit of a breakdown in communication in a way?

IW: It was. It was. When I did dressmaking with a friend one lady said ‘You know there is a Jewish Music Society here in Glasgow? And I hear you always play nice classical music on your radio’

She had something made by this friend and myself. And Henry and I joined this music society and that opened up the Glasgow Jewish community. We met other people and it was a very welcoming affair.

INT: So then you began to feel more part of the Glasgow community?

IW: Definitely, definitely. The music society started it; yes the Glasgow Jewish Music Society.

INT: So have you made long friendships then with people here? Jewish people here?

IW: Oh yes, yes, yes

INT: Apart from people that you met through the refugee club then?

IW: Yes, yes

INT: You sort of, so you became a part of the wider Jewish community?

IW: Well through catering

INT: Yes

IW: And then eventually…In any case, yes

INT2: What have you given… you’ve, I know you have given back to Scotland and the community (i.e. BLESMA – the skiing for handicapped soldiers)

IW: Oh yes

INT2: How did you get involved with that?

IW: Oh…I don’t remember but we’ve been going with… We must have met someone?

INT: So when did you start skiing?

IW: Henry started skiing, oh, many, many years ago in Aviemore. We might have met somebody there. Henry, I know Henry skied with blind people. You have to go by the clock – 1 o clock you turned a little to the right, 3 o clock you would turn completely to the right and so on; that’s how you ski with blind people.

I think that’s why/how we might have got involved with BLESMA which is British Limbless Ex Servicemen. It’s a big organization where soldiers or ex-soldiers have lost a limb and they need instructions. They… BLESMA gives them recuperative holidays I think once or twice (I’m not quite sure how often) and we’ve gone with them for many, many years to Austria where we skied. Henry instructed them or skied with them and I, I’m…Henry is an instructor I’m only a helper but I had quite a few soldiers who I helped to skibob down the hill.

INT: Fantastic

IW: And I got the name of ‘Aunty Ingrid’ there because I helped one guy who halfway/quarter way down the hill he said ‘I can’t go any further’ and I said ‘Come on! We’ve got to get down the hill’ I said ‘You have got a gammy leg and will find it difficult to climb back up the hill. I’m old and I would find it extremely difficult to climb up the hill. So let’s go down the hill’

‘No’ was the answer

So I said ‘Well, let’s go to the other side’

And eventually I got him down the hill and he said ‘That was wonderful! It was wonderful! Can I call you Auntie Ingrid?’

And I said ‘Yes’!

So ever since then BLESMA calls me ‘Auntie Ingrid’

INT: That’s lovely. Tell me, do you still bake?

IW: Yes. Not a lot but I do

INT: And what about your own family? Are they?

IW: Well we have two daughters

INT: Are they in Scotland or are have they moved away?

IW: No. One in Scotland, in Edinburgh. Jillian (the younger daughter), her husband and two sons live in Edinburgh and Hilary (who married Paul) lives in London and they have also two sons. So after two daughters we’ve got four grandsons.

INT: Very nice, lovely

IW: And very happy with our sons-in-law. We get on extremely well with them so there’s no problem.

INT: Very good. Well thank you very much. It’s been

IW: Alright?

INT: Very insightful and yes we’re very grateful. Thank you