**Renate Mackay – Life Before The War**

**Renate describes her family background. She talks about her mother’s premature death, her father’s arrest and the reason she was adopted by her mother’s sister and her husband. Her new ‘father’ was the eminent astronomer, Erwin Finlay Freundlich, and she soon found herself joining him and her aunt, first in Turkey and then Prague.**

**INT:** Today is the 20th of February 2014 and we’re here to interview Renate Mackay. Hello, Renate.

**RM:** Hello.

**INT:** Could we begin by asking where you were born?

**RM:** I was born in Cologne, or Köln am Rhein [in Germany]

**INT:** And when was that?

**RM:** 1931.

**INT:** And what was your name at birth?

**RM:** Renate Frederike Pütz.

**INT:** Could you tell us a little about your family?

**RM:** My mother, Elly Hirschberg, was the eldest of six [children].

**INT:** She had an unusual profession, didn’t she?

**RM:** Yes.She was born in 1886 *Before* the First World War  she had been a receptionist at a photographer’s and in fact she had established herself as a photographer in her own little studio, in Berlin.

**INT:** Which would be, I would have thought, very unusual for a lady to have a profession.

**RM:**It was, in ’13.

**INT:** And she was married to a non-Jewish person, did you tell me?

**RM:** Yes. Do you want this little story or not?

**INT:** Yes, please.

**RM:** I don’t know how she came to be in Cologne.; One night some of her,developing, apparatus wasn’t working so she knocked on another door where there was still a light on.

A gentleman came to repair it and, perhaps I shouldn’t be telling you this, but, as a thank you, she invited him for dinner. And I’m afraid my brother, my older brother, four years older brother, was a result of this. Right, in 1927 …she wanted, she wanted to have this child.  From another family relative, I was told she had established herself with a career, because in Cologne anybody who wanted to be photographed, a member of council or whatever, came to Elly Hirschberg. And so…she wanted to keep this child but Matthew Pütz was nice…actually he was a lot younger than her – but he said it was too much of a stigma for a child to be a bastard, so he insisted… they got married three days before my brother was born.

**INT:** I see.

**RM:** And, am I allowed to go a bit backwards and forwards?

**INT:** Yeah.

**INT:** A little.

**RM:** Yes, I would just like to say my adoptive father said, later, “You’re just like your mother – you can keep neither time nor money!”

**INT:** So tell us a bit about what happened…

**RM:** Because she wasn’t very good with her finances, my father took the keys away from her [the housekeeping keys. She went off to Berlin, with my big brother and he [her husband, Matthew Pütz] came after her, brought her back and, as I say, I’m the result of that.

**INT:** And then what happened to your mother?

**RM:** Oh, well in… 1933 there was to be a big march in Cologne.

It was just after Hitler came to power and she decided to take me out to the country until all this was over and on the way back to the station, it started to rain. She took off her jacket to keep me dry; she developed a cold and took to her bed and died of pneumonia.

**INT:** Oh dear.

**RM:** In 1933.

**INT:** And your father was left with, now, two young children.

**RM:** Yes, and unfortunately, I’m sorry, it’s really more important to point out that when she died her younger sister, who had been married in 1913, and had no children, came literally post haste to fetch my brother, whom she’d frequently borrowed, but left me behind.

Years later I asked why did you leave me? She said because her husband, who was Erwin Freundlich, quite well known astronomer….associated with Einstein. Anyway, he needed peace and quiet and children make noise. Just that.

**INT:** So you were left with your father.

**RM:** I was left with my father and his unmarried sister and his parents. And then after some time, after my mother died, my father went into his local pub. He was greeted with the words, I hate to say this, but he was greeted with the words, “You’ll be glad to be rid of your Jewish whore.”

And so he, I’m afraid, punched this person in a pub, which wasn’t a good idea so my father went to prison. Time passed. His sister, who was pushing me in a pram round the local park, started objecting because people were asking *her* if I was *her*bastard.

And the grandparents couldn’t cope. My aunt and uncle, the Freundlichs, had already taken shelter in Turkey, in 1933. So in 1935, he asked them, would they take me as well and as my uncle was unable to go back into Germany; through the good offices of yet another sister who was in social work, she [Renate’s aunt] hired a nanny, who brought me from Cologne to Turkey in 1935.

**INT:** So you would have been very young.

**RM:** I was four.

**INT:** Which is very young.

**RM:** I remember only part of that journey in that there was a derailment suddenly. I mean I was asleep. It was in the night and I sort of fell out of the bunk and everything stopped. Much later, they must have got another train [engine] because we then moved on and the engine was lying there in the embankment. Anyway we made our way to…I have to look things up on the map.

**INT:** Yes.

**RM:** And I think it must have been Constanta on the Black Sea and got on to a boat, which we were also on overnight, and arrived in Turkey and I do remember my uncle and my brother were at the quayside. However, one of the reasons why my grandparents couldn’t cope with me was that I was a mewling, puking babe – so I was told. Anyway, OK, I arrived in the morning, came into the house where my aunt and uncle lived, and my brother, and I sat at the Kindertisch [little table]. And what did they put in front of me? A bowl of soup… and apparently I was a Suppen-Kaspar.

**INT:** What does that mean?

**RM:** Well there’s that book, ‘Der Struwwelpeter’[Der Struwwelpeter (1845) (or *Shockheaded Peter*) is a German children’s book by Heinrich Hoffmann]. You know, there was Ein Suppen-Kaspar in that. And I’m afraid I was…perhaps it was the sea voyage; perhaps it was the accident during the night…I was sick in the soup.

**INT:** Oh dear.

**RM:** For which (and I have never forgiven them, never forgiven my aunt) I was spanked.

**INT:** Oh that’s so unfair.

**RM:** And put to bed. Years after I asked, why? – because the grandparents complained that I was a Suppen-Kaspar.

**INT:** And that means what? What does Suppen-Kaspar mean?

**RM:** Somebody who wouldn’t eat his soup.

**INT:** I see.

**RM:** I have ‘Der Struwwelpeter’ both in English and in German. I’ll show you the story.

**INT:** That is terrible.particularly, you know You were such a little girl and a terribly long journey. It’s very sad.

**RM:** Well I became devoted to the nanny. and they, My aunt only used me as a photographic model. She had shared a studio with my birth mother in 1913.

My Aunt K [Käte] had graduated from an art school doing batik and book binding and she moved in with my mother.  My aunt decided as she could see her sister earning a living, she [also]could. You’ve seen Penguin books? Well the Germany version of that is Tauchnitz.  And people might buy a Penguin edition but wanted it bound, right? So because…well there was this large ‘Mishpocha’…

**INT:** Large family.

**RM:** Yes a large family and strangely enough my aunt and uncle discovered they are related to two Caspary sisters.

So my uncle was one of seven and my aunt was one of six so there was a…

**INT:** Large family.

**RM:** Right where were we?

**INT:** You were telling…

**RM:** Oh, yes.

**INT:** What had your aunt to do with the German version of Penguin?

**RM:** Oh yes, when they lived together, my two mothers, obviously K learned quite a lot from Elly; In Turkey she had an Armenian maid who cooked and did the housework.

**INT:** Tell us some more about the books then please, Renate?

**RM:** Oh that – my…my aunt felt she could earn her living by binding these Tauchnitz editions and people could choose obviously leather and tooling and also the end papers. I still have one, very amusing, which she made for my uncle before they were married, and as my uncle was very, very tall,the inscription [dedication]was just “ Meinem Kleinem”.

**INT:** For my little one. .

**INT:** Was your uncle Jewish? Is that why they left ?

**RM:** Yes, yes.

**INT:** He was Jewish as well?

**RM:** Yes.

**RM:** Although, his father had married out. He married a Scottish lady from Gloucester…yes.

**INT:**Was he practising as a Jewish person?

**RM:** No.

**INT:** No?

**RM:** No, no.

**INT:** But he still had to leave Nazi Germany?

**RM:** Yes. I’m…I know…I’m sorry, jumping backwards and forwards…it’s just… important to think. Can we go back to just arriving in Turkey?

**INT:** It’s fine; it’s no problem.

**RM:** I was devoted to my nanny.

**INT:** Right.

**RM:** And my aunt basically ignored me. My brother went to a school, it’s funny – it was an American school just up the hill, and my aunt only used me as a photographic model. She had learned the skills from her sister. In the observatory that my father had established in Turkey; she could develop things there. And forgive me if I go on, but from her travels with my uncle, they had been to Java and Sumatra on eclipse expeditions, so she was very interested in everything in Turkey.

She wore a cloak and she had a reflex camera, which she sort of hid inside the cloak and I’m afraid she took photographs in one of the mosques in Istanbul. [Renate explained that as her aunt’s camera was a reflex camera her aunt could take a photograph without making it obvious what she was doing.]

As she also was very clever in handicrafts, she developed this photograph and then put it onto graph paper and made…she stitched them. [embroidery]

**RM:** I have two items of her work. Actually my daughter embroidered one of them and there was a cushion in my uncle and aunt’s house, which had, which was from a tile and because this cushion was always in that house…when I got married…I now have a cushion with that particular tile.

**INT:** So all taken from the tile which she had photographed in the mosque?

**INT :**Tell us a little about your uncle, if you could please?

**RM:** My uncle was Erwin Finlay Freundlich; the Finlay comes from his Scottish mother, from Cheltenham.

**INT:** I gather he was a very eminent scientist?

**RM:** He…yes he become associated with Einstein. Einstein says that Erwin Freundlich was the first person to offer to make experiments of eclipses to help to prove his theory. I mean he was the first person who volunteered In Germany, he became the Director of the Einstein Tower in Potsdam, which is now a world heritage site. And strangely enough, I happened one day to be in the Glasgow School of Art where there was a Mendelsohn, Erich Mendelsohn, exhibition.

**INT:** The architect?

**RM:** The architect, yes. [Mendelsohn designed the Einstein Tower]

And going along the walls there was sort of what you call explanatory panels and I looked at one and I thought, that’s funny, that looks like Erwin’s writing, and it was. It was my father…I’m sorry – Erwin, my uncle, [who] later became my adoptive father.

**INT:** Yes.

**RM:** Who had met Erich Mendelsohn through Erich Mendelsohn’s wife, Luise Maas, who was a cellist and my uncle was learning to play the cello. That’s the connection between Erwin and Erich Mendelsohn. Luise Mendelsohn and Kate Freundlich were invited fifty years after the building of the Einstein Tower for the…whatever the celebrations, but both ladies decided they were in their eighties and didn’t want to go.

I’m sorry to digress but in 19…93, I happened to be in Berlin and, the Wall having come down, decided I wanted to go to Potsdam and arrived at the gate of this scientific park.

And at the gate I mentioned that my father had worked there and so the gate man gave me first of all a leaflet and told me which way to go, so I went…I think he rang up and so the director met me and I was totally gob smacked when I entered, because on one wall there was a wood cut by another famous German…now I have to think hard…I’ll come back to what his name was…[Max Pechstein] It was a woodcut, just of the head of Erwin on that wall, and on the other wall was an enormous photograph of Erwin sitting on the packing cases of his instruments waiting to go, getting ready to go, on one of these eclipse expeditions to the Far East, Java and Sumatra. But that was ’93 and he’d left Germany in ’33.

**INT:** My goodness. You must have been proud.

**RM:** Gob smacked.

Not only though…the director said there are all kinds of footpaths and one of these footpaths was called the, ‘Freundlich Weg’[Way].

**INT:** Amazing.

**RM:** Some years later my son, with his wife and two gorgeous daughters, went also to visit it and so my daughter-in-law gave me this photograph of them standing underneath Freundlich Weg and she said she captioned this photograph, ‘In the Family Way’.

**INT:** That’s great.

**RM:** I’m sorry I digress.

**INT:** No, that’s fascinating. Let’s go back to Turkey in 1937, I think you said that that’s when you had to leave, is that right?

**RM:** No we didn’t have to leave; no, no, no.

He was experiencing difficulties and anyway the German speaking university in Prague, the Charles University, was looking for an astronomer, who could establish yet another observatory and department of astronomy. And strangely enough the man who was in charge of interviewing or finding these people was somebody called Wenzel Pollak who was also associated with Einstein. Anyway, he wrote to a whole lot of people, some Nobel Prize winners, and there were three people short-listed for this post in Prague and they all came down in favour of Erwin Finlay Freundlich. So he was offered the job. However, we then had German citizenship – he couldn’t go back so close to Germany without some guarantee of protection. We became Czech citizens before we even set foot in Czechoslovakia and to digress even further…

All during the war my father…there was now a Czech government in exile – and my father had to go down there [to London] every two years to get a fresh stamp on his passport and in this course of time he met the young Masaryk and also Beneš who became, for a short time, became the President of Prague [President of the Czech Government in exile]… And Beneš would come and visit the observatory in St. Andrews. [Renate corrected this last point and said Beneš came only once to St Andrews]

**INT:** We’ve jumped a wee bit.

**RM:** Yes.

**INT:** Let’s go back then.

**RM:** All I was trying to say was that, if I may, my aunt only used me as a photographic model, when there was film left in the camera, and there’s one very cute photograph where I have been woken from my rest and I’m sort of standing there dreamy eyed.

Just so she could finish the reel and go off and develop it.

**INT:** So tell us about Prague then, did you actually go to Prague then?

**RM:** Yes, in ’37.

**INT:** Right and how long were you there?

**RM:** I became six, which is the, the normal school entry age ‘sur le continent’,what Jimmy Young would say). And so I went to school and what did I get? First of all I got measles.

**INT:** Measles was quite dangerous actually.

**RM:** Well it started slowly and my father, being at the university, of course, asked various other medical professors to come and look and somebody found the Koplik spots inside my mouth, which were the first identification.

So I was barely finished with the measles when I developed whooping cough and then I whooped and I whooped until…my mother got me up because there were no more blankets for my bed. So…

**INT:** Eventually did you get to school?

**RM:** Yes, yes.

**INT:** And by that time could you speak a little Czech?

**RM:** No, no. I only have one sheet of my school report, which was just sort of the signing off because we were leaving to go to Scotland.

**INT:** So how long did you attend school for?

**RM:** About a year, but most of it having measles and whooping cough

**Renate Mackay – Immigration**

**Renate explains that her father was in St Andrews in Scotland being interviewed for a job on the day the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia. Renate then talks about Lawrie Wardale, the man she calls her “Scarlet Pimpernel,” who brought her and her family to safety in St Andrews in Scotland.**

**INT:** So, eventually you had to leave, of course, Czechoslovakia as well?

**RM:** Yes, well with the annexation of the Sudetenland.

**INT:** So they went into the Sudetenland in October ’38?

**RM:** I’ve no idea of, you know, of the date. But then the students rioted, sorry, at the Prague University, the Charles University, and my father was advised not to come and lecture in German. So he was without work, but his association with Einstein…he started writing to various people that he knew, and one of them was Sir Arthur Eddington. Both my father/uncle’s expeditions were clouded over, but Eddington was the first one to get a result, so they were in correspondence. In fact after the First World War when Eddington came to Germany to meet Einstein, my uncle/adoptive father was there as a ‘Dolmetscher’, you know, a translator.

So he wrote to various people he knew, Eddington amongst them, and Eddington said, strangely, there was a vacancy in St Andrews in Scotland and my father, my uncle… father/uncle, what do you want me to call him?

**INT:** I think call him your father; it’s easier.

**RM:** Call him my father, right. He said he was on a lecture tour in Holland so he could easily come over to be interviewed. So he was interviewed with, incidentally also the help of the Astronomer Royal, and that’s another story. He was interviewed by the Principal of St Andrews University on, literally, the day the Nazis rolled into Prague.

**INT:** Which was in March ’39?

**RM:** Yes, the 15th of March 1939. So my father said; “I’ll take your job if you can get my wife and children out”.

**INT:** He must have been very worried.

**RM:** He was, he was.

**INT:** So how did they manage that?

**RM:** Well, there was a lecturer in the Department of German, at St Andrews University, who happened, just happened to be in London doing his own research. So his wife sent a telegram. Sorry, I should mention this man, Lawrie Wardale, who I refer to as ‘My Scarlet Pimpernel’.

**INT:** Just like the Scarlet Pimpernel he managed to whisk you out of Prague, did he?

**RM:** Yes, well his wife sent him a telegram saying, “Can you fetch Family Freundlich, expenses paid?”. So my father went hot foot on the night train down to London armed with money and all sorts of addresses and things and there is a very amusing… well, may I digress again?

Through a strange set of circumstances – years and years later, I came across Wardale’s daughter who had been, believe it or not, interviewed by Margaret Drabble for a book that she was writing. I met Margaret Drabble and I was telling her this story, and she said, “Oh I interviewed Carol. She now lives in Cumbria”. And again, quite a few years elapsed, and I happened to open the book by Margaret Drabble and I looked at the back, the sort of…

**INT:** The appendix?

**RM:** Yes, so it just said’ Carol Dawbarn, Cumbria’. So I was, at that point; separated, footloose, fancy free, so I rang directory enquiries and said, “Can you give me a number for Dawbarn?” I said, “It’s all I have – Sedbergh or Cumbria”. And within seconds the man said, “Shall I put you through?” I said “No, no, no, just give me the number and I’ll do it”. So I rang Carol… “Renate”.

“Renate?” So she said she wasn’t well, but I was footloose and fancy free so she said, “Come and see me”. So I came within a couple of days, drove down, and I was hardly inside the door when she gave me a rather grubby manila file in which was the entire correspondence between her father and her mother back in St Andrews – the telegrams – and she said, although she now had grandchildren, this wasn’t her story. She gave it to me and it’s…

**INT:** That’s lovely.

**RM:** …absolutely amazing, what’s in that.

**INT:** Absolutely amazing. So, what did he do? How did he get you out? Did he take a plane to Prague then to rescue you?

**RM:** Well first of all, obviously, he had to go, I think, to the German Embassy and get permission to go because my father didn’t dare go in. And Lawrie said, while he was sitting waiting, he could see my father pacing up and down because… say it was an ordinary sort of office with half obscured windows, well half glazed, you know, and all he could see was my father’s hat walking backwards and forwards. And, oh he’d been given a letter dated, I think, the 18th of March.

**INT:** That’s right.

**RM:** By the Principal of the University [Sir James Colquhoun Irvine] 18th March, saying… may I? “This is to certify that Professor Dr. Erwin Finlay Freundlich, formerly of Prague, has been appointed to be Napier Lecturer in Astronomy and Director of the Astronomical Observatory. The appointment is approved by the Home Office, which has given permission to Professor Freundlich together with his wife and two children to reside in Great Britain.

Doctor Freundlich is already in this country and it is requested that every facility be given to his wife and family to proceed to St Andrews to join him.”

So armed with that letter… (It was very unfortunate that both Lawrie Wardale and his wife would just write… they wouldn’t put dates on their letters, just ‘Tuesday’ or ‘Friday’. And he wrote a great big long letter.)

It took him quite several days until he got to Prague. I know he flew from Croydon to… I’d have to look it all up and tell you.

**INT:** It was certainly a very dangerous journey I think, and very brave.

**RM:** I know.

**INT:** And of course there weren’t passenger flights in those days.

**RM:** Well there were passenger flights until the very last minute. Once Lawrie had…

**INT:** Arrived

**RM:** …got to us, right? We just missed the last plane [out].

**INT:** Oh dear

**RM:** Yes, to come back [refer again] to Turkey. Some of Erwin’s problems in Turkey were – he wanted to get some of his equipment for his observatory from Britain and the Turks didn’t want this. The Turks had been in with the Germans but Atatürk was clever enough to entice, you know, the Jewish people that wanted to emigrate to them. But, anyway, Erwin went to the British Consul in Turkey and met ever such a nice man, Mr Hough, who was also musical, and you won’t believe it, but Mr Hough went to Prague at the same time as the Freundlich family in 1937.

So, we had met; we had been there for tea and, where does he live? But right opposite Prague Castle. Anyway, so he had said to my mother, “Give me your jewels; give me your money, I’ll send it out in the diplomatic bag” But in the end that didn’t happen. But he said,  “Right, while you [Renate’s aunt/mum] and Lawrie Wardale are busy trying to get the furniture packed…”

My father was going hairless; you know he just wanted…[to get them safely to Britain]

**RM:** But my mum, she packed a whole lift; all our furniture came. Anyway, Mr Hough said, “Send Nanny and the children to me.”

So we were… I thought it was the British Embassy but again in 1940, [Renate corrected the date – 1998] I was in Prague and went to, first of all to the Embassy, and they let me look out the window and I said, “No, no that’s not the place” and then, by sheer chance, I happened to find that he lived in literally a big tall building that was opposite the top end of the Hradchin [beside Hradcany Castle]and, this is something that horrifies my daughter – or rather, she keeps wanting me to tell this story.

We were having our elevenses, sitting sort of on the window looking over towards the castle, when a great big entourage came out and went down the side of the hill. Somebody was standing up and there was a flagpole beside the corner of this building and somebody was hoisting up a Czech flag, as this car with, I don’t know who it was, whether it was Hitler or Goering

**INT:** That was very provocative.

**RM:** Wasn’t it?

**INT:** To do that when the Nazis were there. Very brave.

**RM:** So anyway, somehow we got onto the train and Lawrie sent a marvellous telegram to his wife, which is here.

The first one is, “Can you go Prague and fetch Family Freundlich, expenses paid. Please wire.” This one is dated St Andrews, 27th March: “Endlich Prague” – Finally arrived in Prague – after several flights and train journeys and crossing borders. I even have his passport, Lawrie’s passport.

**INT:** So tell us, he got you on the train, the whole family and the nanny?

**RM:** And, wait a minute, yes another one dated… oh, this is strangely dated the 3rd of April.

**RM:** “Bringing flock back, Wednesday”

**INT:**Oh now, that’s a wonderful telegram.

**Renate Mackay – Settling In**

**Renate describes her experiences as a schoolgirl in St Andrews’s.**

**INT:**Now let’s just take you to St Andrews, Renate. They must have been very pleased to have your uncle because he’d come from such a prestigious position as Director of the Einstein Tower in Potsdam. Tell us about what happened when you got there.

**RM:** Well, thank goodness my father was fluent in English and my mother also.  OK please may I just say that when I went to school…

**INT:** In St Andrews?

**RM:** In St Andrews. It was the posh girls’ school, the prep school for St. Leonards. I was still feeling the effects of, you know, the whooping cough and… well, at playtime, when we went out into the playground…There was ‘tig’[a game where one or more players chases other players in an attempt to “tag” or touch them].

In the first place I didn’t know what ‘tig’ was, and I couldn’t run because I was coughing, so I ran to, there was a teacher [who was] sort of supervising – I was used to running to Nanny and so I was referred to as a ‘nasty Nazi’ [by the other children].

**INT:** Oh that’s terrible.

**RM:** I couldn’t explain to the children that we were running away from the nasty Nazis.

**INT:**That’s horrible. And eventually did you befriend them and did they later discover that you were running away?

**RM:** Well, not really, not really, although there was a rather funny little episode in the summer term. Well I arrived in April. In the summer term I’d joined the Brownies and because my accent wasn’t very good, they sat me on a toadstool – it was all pixies – on a toadstool playing a flute. [This happened at the end of term show]. I have a photograph to prove it.

Ah, however, this is very naughty, very naughty indeed. My first school report was: ‘Progress – Very Good, Conduct – Very Good’, that’s the end of the summer ’39. Come the long summer holiday and I had met another family, the family of the Professor of Greek who had also rescued a family, in fact had them living with them for a very short time. So, I met Kate, [who became] a lifelong friend, and by the end of December my school report said: “Progress – Very Good, Conduct – Good, but already a little too talkative”.

**INT:** So you were settling in? That’s a good sign. So you studied in St Andrews.

**RM:** Well I went to school in St Andrews.

**Renate Mackay – Integration**

**Renate talks about her career in nursing. She describes the coincidences that led to her meeting her first husband, Fred Goldschmidt.**

**INT:** And at the end of school you decided to become a nurse, am I right in saying?

**RM:** Yes, well, my older brother, who had gone to University at a time when a lot of the ex-soldiers were coming back, anyway, for some reason or other what he wanted to study was engineering and you didn’t do that in St Andrews, it was in Dundee. And he spent most of the time on the train playing cards and so on so he didn’t do very well and my father was bitterly disappointed.

I wanted to be a nurse but my father said, nurses didn’t have a good reputation, in a way and he said, “No, no, no if you are interested in medicine you must study to be a doctor,” and I was actually very lazy and hated exams and I knew… five years… I’d met enough medical students by this time. Anyway, one of my teachers, luckily, said to me, “If you want to be a nurse you have to go to the Florence Nightingale Training School in London” [at St Thomas’ Hospital].

And strangely enough the daughter of the minister of the town church, who was head girl at St Leonards, she went to St. Thomas’. So, anyway, my father wrote to the Matron of St. Thomas’ and signed himself Erwin Finlay Freundlich. The double barrel seemed to have worked and so I was invited to St Thomas; I was enrolled, and everybody said afterwards it was quite an honour to be accepted.

**INT:** And by that time did you feel yourself as having properly integrated into Britain or did you still feel…?

**RM:** Oh no I still felt very European.

**INT:** Did you?

**RM:** Yes.

**INT:** Did you find people were more willing to befriend you by this time? Local people?

**RM:** No, I think, sadly…my mother didn’t settle well and my father, I think, didn’t, although the University was good in many ways, to him.

When he became sixty-five he was in the middle of a research project which he wanted to finish so they allowed him to stay on until he was 70. but as he also had gone to Germany to see what relatives were left and found a brother and several nieces, and, with restitution, he decided to go back to Germany in 1958, much to Fred’s, to my husband’s, chagrin.

**INT:** Yes so you studied Nursing in St Thomas’?

**RM:** No. I didn’t.

**INT:** You didn’t?

**RM:** I was too young, unfortunately. The Matron accepted me but said – I think then I was sixteen and a half when I went for the interview – and she said, “No go to the Edinburgh School / College of Domestic Science where they have a pre-nursing course, which will get you through the first two exams” – the hygiene…anatomy, physiology, hygiene, dietetics.

But unfortunately the pre-nursing course first of all had a year of domestic science, where my father said all I learned was how to peel potatoes with mathematical precision. Or.. Did you know you should sweep a room from the window to the door? Oh and how to engage and dismiss a maid.

**INT:** Very useful.

**RM:** So we all, all of the ones that were on this [course], the pre-nursing ones, we all decided at the end of the first year we would just go and find ourselves another job and somebody in my class at school in St Andrews had gone to the City Fever Hospital. So she was a year ahead of me, so I just followed in her footsteps and did fever nursing.

**INT :**At Edinburgh City Hospital. And then how did you meet your husband?

**RM:** Ha! That’s another long story. Yes, all right, my father came from St Andrews to Glasgow as an external examiner and at the University had met a very nice man called Doctor Ornstein. I think, I can’t remember exactly what he was… I know he was in product engineering., but anyway, anyway.

One evening, the Goldschmidt family consisting of my [future] father-in-law, mother-in-law and sister-in-law, Liesl were on their way home from the factory they had established between Gallowgate and London Road just past Glasgow Cross. They were going home to Thornliebank and, however, they had borrowed a book… (The German Jews that came to Glasgow tended to congregate together, right?) And they sent Liesl upstairs to the Ornsteins to return the book and Liesl was an awfully long time coming back. So when she got back in the car she said the Ornsteins have the most fascinating visitor, so when my mother-in-law got home she phoned Mrs Ornstein and said, the next time you have this fascinating visitor please invite us as well.

**RM:** Fred, would be four years older than me, also, was away studying already in Leicester. When he came out of college he was full of ideas but his mother wouldn’t sort of, you know, let him bring these into the factory so Fred, disillusioned, went off to Canada for a while, where he was going to start his own little business but then his father died so he came back. Right. Oh at Liesl’s wedding my parents met another German Jewish family called Pauson anddiscovered they also had paintings by Lyonel Feininger, a quite well known…[artist]

**INT:** So you met your husband and…

**RM:** No, no it was through the Pausons that I met Fred. right?

**INT:** Ah, right.

**RM:** I’ll try and be very, very quick, OK?

At the wedding they met the Pausons and they said, “Come and see our paintings”. So one of the days when I came home to St Andrews on nights off or something, the Pausons were just leaving, getting on the train.  (Oh my father was going to America to see another observatory, Mount Wilson, goodness knows what they had… yet a bigger telescope?) And so they said, “When your parents are away and you have nights off come and stay with us”. And that suited me very well because I had met another medical student. However, the long and short and tall was the first time I arrived Mrs Pauson said “You must go to bed because Fred Goldschmidt is coming to take you to the concert tonight and he’s just come back [from Canada). He’s living with his mum and he doesn’t know any nice Jewish girls”.

**INT:** Lovely and they…

**RM:** I said, “No, no, no I’m going out. I’m meeting Ian, the medical student, for tea” at theCa’ D’Oro. However, when Fred… Oh yes, apparently when Mrs Pauson phoned Fred, who was a dutiful son, he said, “All right I’ll take her to the concert on Saturday but I’m busy all day Sunday”. So anyway, when he came, actually I just fell for him straight away and at the concert we turned to each other and said exactly the same thing, and anyway, that was how I met Fred.

**INT:** That’s very nice

**Renate Mackay – Reflection On Life**

Renate talks about her love of Scottish scenery. She then tells the interviewers about her children and grandchildren.

**INT:** I know that your life took on many twists and turns after that but we have to come to a close and ask you a couple more questions. If you look back now on your time in Scotland what would you say were the high points of your life here?

**RM:** Funnily enough I became very friendly with a librarian, who was an awfully nice person, Eileen Ryan, who introduced me to youth hostelling and took me in 1947 to Skye. We cycled all the way to Skye, although part of it we cheated: we took the train from Fort William to Mallaig; we took the boat from Mallaig to Portree; and we took the post bus from Portree to Staffin and then we walked over the Quiraing over to Uig and back again and then cycled all the way back to Kyleakin and then took the boat. So I fell in love with Scottish scenery.

**INT:**Now, you certainly don’t sound German anymore, do you still feel Continental?

**RM:** I feel European, yes. In this present mode, I feel, I feel Scottish. I mean I tell everybody how wonderful Scotland is and tell them where to go and where to stay. Proud to be Scottish, proud to be British, but still since I’ve been drawn back into AJR…

**INT:** The Association of Jewish Refugees.

**RM:** I feel Continental.

**INT:** You’ve got a lovely son and daughter and you also have grandchildren as well, which I think is wonderful.

**RM:** Oh, yes, OK when I became pregnant (just like my mother!) Fred said to me, “If it’s a boy, what shall we call it?” I knew he was devoted to his father, who had died two years previously, I said… well his father was just Willy Goldschmidt.

I said “Willy of course, but he must be William on his birth certificate”. But when he went to Hutchie [Hutchesons’ Grammar School] the headmaster simply said, “What’s he called?” and I said “Well, Willy”. His headmaster said, “Well he’ll be Willy here as well”. Anyway Willy came first and then when my daughter was born. Of course I named her Elly after my mother, although she’s Eli-nor (E-L-I-N-O-R) but she’s Elly after my mother. And then so Elly has five children in Israel, four of which have been to the army and the youngest is just getting ready to go. And Willy also married out, to a nice lady who had had three children before…but anyway gave him two wonderful daughters.

**INT:** Which is lovely.

**RM:** Yes.

**INT:** Thank you so much. We have thoroughly enjoyed speaking to you.