

# Australians at War Film Archive

## Adele Manchoulas - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/1024>

### Tape 1

- 00:31 **Adele firstly, thank you for talking to us. On behalf of the Archive it's a pleasure to meet you and thank you on behalf of everyone's who's involved.**
- You're welcome.
- 01:00 **Perhaps we could start with a summary of your life and perhaps where you were born and when?**
- Bathurst, 1924. 3rd March. What do you want to know?
- Where did you spend most of your young life?**
- Until I was 13 mostly Bathurst and then Sydney to continue with my ballet.
- Brothers and sisters?**
- One brother.
- 01:30 **What did your dad do?**
- He dealt in real estate.
- And where did you go to school?**
- How many schools?
- Run us through the places.**
- I started off with little Mrs. Walker's School in Bathurst and then I went to Marsden College and then when I came to Sydney I went to a small French school in Edgecliffe called Chamble.
- 02:00 It not longer exists and then I went overseas.
- Where did you start your ballet training?**
- In Sydney.
- Whereabouts?**
- A studio up near the railway. My first teacher was Russian, Arnold Spearka. He was a ballet dancer and magnificent skater.
- 02:30 He was not a great teacher, I have to say in retrospect. I didn't last long with Arnold Spearka and I found Leon Kellaway. Leon Kellaway taught and taught very well. A very good grounding. So the great teachers in Europe subsequently told me
- How many years were you training in Sydney?**
- Sydney? Not quite two
- 03:00 I think, yes. Then the ballet came in early 1937 and my teacher Leon Kellaway for me and I think two other pupils of his to be given private lessons with the Met (UNCLEAR) Ballet, Leon Voicakovski to see whether it was worth continuing.
- 03:30 My mother said to him well she's been learning for 18 months or 2 years, go to Paris tomorrow. And go to Olga Preobrazhenskaya, and tomorrow we did.
- When was that?**
- 1937.

**How did you travel to Paris?**

By ship, an Italian ship, the Lloyd Triestina.

04:00 **And did your mum go with you?**

Oh yes, I was very little. I was too young to travel on my own. And brother...the three of us went.

**And so you arrived in Paris, what happened briefly then?**

Well, the moment we arrived in Paris, we set about finding an apartment. And as Mother said, "We are here to work, so we live in a working quarter.

04:30 Close to the studios if possible." She found where the studios of Olga Preobrazhenskaya were, so we found an apartment and we settled in there. That's another story. I started lessons very quickly. The moment I started she said, "Who taught you? He taught you very well."

**How long did you stay in Paris for?**

05:00 Two years, '37, '39 and everyone was told to leave Paris that wasn't French or essential to the city of Paris really...we were told to get out.

**Where did you go to?**

We went to Italy. Why did we go to Italy? Italy was neutral, then. Mother had hoped that possibly

05:30 I might be able to get into the Corps de ballet at La Scala having won prestigious awards and gold medals, she thought, "Well maybe she can." So we did and I was accepted.

**How long were you with them before Italy was swept into the war?**

Right. I would have joined them

06:00 at the end of 1939 or the beginning of 1940. Italy came into the war in June 1940. A month or six weeks before Italy actually joined the war there was the most frightful sudden ...sudden propaganda.

06:30 Previous to that it had been calm and peaceful, and we were English...so ok, you're English. And then sudden this fascist stream of propaganda spread. It was absolutely horrendous. And from one day to the next I was actually shunned by even the young girls at La Scala, and in particular the teacher. She was very fascist. So I came home every day in tears and Mother said, "We can't stay, that's no good." My

07:00 mother had tried to leave but they wouldn't issue us with the exit permits, so we went down south where my mother thought possibly they'll forget about us. We were hidden in a small village.

**Where was that small village?**

Eboli. An important place, a very good book was written about it: Christ Stopped at Eboli, and they made the film.

07:30 That's where we first went. We were there for a year. We were interned shortly after we arrived anyway. So we were a known number.

**What was your number do you recall?**

No. When I say we were a known number, I guess they have been following our tracks. So they interned us.

08:00 But there was a little cottage that we could live in. Albeit very little and run down but it was a little cottage out of the village. Dirty, filthy, no bathroom of course. But there was another convenience of sorts. And we could just cook on charcoal. We were there for a year.

**Were you with other internees?**

No we were not.

08:30 We were called (ITALIAN) free internees. So that means you go and sign an Act of Presence every day... it was quite a long walk up to the village I might add, rain, hail, shine. Of course they confiscated passports. No more mail and things like that. At the end of the year the government...no the local

09:00 fascists decided that a platoon of soldiers were sent. They called us up and said, "You might influence somehow bad propaganda." Or something like that...you might influence the soldiers, so we're going to move you. So they moved us to one place and for the first time my mother created

09:30 merry hell. She said, "In fact I will not stay here, what with the fleas and the bugs and the dirt and everything." I mean I can go into detail about everything but now's not the moment.

**We'll spend a lot of time on these stories. But if you could take us through it.**

Yes. Mother went to the local police station there and she said, "I'm going. I'm taking my suitcase and I'm walking down the mountain side,

10:00 you can shoot me. I don't care. But I am not staying here." My mother was rarely bellicose but she was on that occasion. And so they said, "Alright senora." And so they moved us then to another little village called, Oliveto Citra, quite different. We arrived there in the bus and Mother got out in the little square and she said, "Oh well, the war will be over and we won't

10:30 even know it." There was no where for us to go at all. Absolutely nowhere. So the local policeman was called and he said, "There is one room where the gendarme comes around once a fortnight to check on who's been killed, who's been charged with this and that, who's been in trouble with the law." So there was one

11:00 room with one single bed and one wash basin and a toilet. So there we were put and Mother had the bed and we had the floor...for about a week. And then the locals who didn't know us at all of course came around to talk to us, as we spoke Italian. And they said

11:30 we can't have that, and they themselves went to the local mayor and said he must find other accommodation. The said all three can't stay in one room with two on the floor.

**Who were you with at the time?**

My mother and my brother. So anyway, he was amenable. He sequestered really a little...I can't really call it

12:00 a house or an apartment...lodgings. Put it that way, lodgings, which belonged to...as did quite a lot of the little houses...it was up in the mountains, in this village. They belonged to people who had properties down around the mountain side. They had houses consequently down around the mountain side and they would come into the village on the Friday evening and

12:30 then on Saturday morning they would go to the market and church and then they'd go back.

**What was the name of that village?**

Oliveto Citra, and a lot of olives there were. So this was found and this little place....you went up some very narrow rickety stairs and half way up the stairs was a wooden door

13:00 and that's where you sat when you needed the lavatory with the door open. Then you went up another half a dozen stairs and there was a small room and another room. So that's where we were. No running water. There was one bed...well I can go into all this detail later on.

**If we could. What**

13:30 **year was this?**

1941. Yes '41.

**And after you were there where did you go?**

We were notified in May 1943...but there are so many other episodes, you just can't believe. We were notified in May 1943

14:00 via ...via mail. We really only had during the whole time we were interned, half a dozen Red Cross messages from Australia. This was OK and notified by the Swiss Government that we could go to liberty,

14:30 be put on a special train...I'd love to know more about this myself...put on a special train to return to England, but not my brother. My brother was of military age, so he would have to stay. My mother went through turmoil of indecisions about whether to leave him. But he was by then 20 and he said,

15:00 "You must go because the Allies are landing and the moment they do the Germans will come down, swish, and they will either put you in a camp or you will be killed or you will...God knows. So you must go." And so we decided to go. And so we went on the bus to Salerno to the beachhead. From Salerno

15:30 a train came all the way from Sicily and right up to the north of Italy to Bologna across France, Spain, Portugal. We spent six weeks in Portugal waiting for a flight across to England. The V1's [flying bombs] and the V2's [flying rockets].

**When did you arrive in England?**

July

16:00 '43. June or July '43. Yes. And the flight was just after the one where Leslie Howard [British actor] was shot down from Portugal. We still had problems in England. We had no money and the Bank of Australasia which was my mother's bank in Threadneedle Street had been

16:30 bombed and there was nothing there. They had lost her signature so we really had a problem. But there were two people in England who saved our lives. One was Bishop Crotty from Bathurst who was a very

close family friend, and Mother rang him...she went first of all to the church where he was living.

17:00 And the church was razed to the ground but she saw an elderly lady and she said, "Do you know Bishop Crotty?" "Oh yes, he's gone to Hove." She knew that an elderly lady in the area was bound to know, so it was Bishop Crotty who loaned us a hundred pounds. With that she cabled to a cousin, Lady Abenger in Scotland. Then we found accommodation

17:30 beside St Pancras Station, and we were there in total in England for just on two years, and then we came out on the ship with the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. Why we did and how we did is another thing I'd like to know. In fact my husband Felix is always saying, "I wonder why you were allowed to come back then?" The war was still on. We spent the Christmas of '44

18:00 '45 on board ship coming out and we went right up into the North Sea because the ship was obviously targeted by the Germans, and I know during the middle of the night we let off some depth charges which made the most frightful noise and terrified everybody. The Duchess of Gloucester spoke to everybody

18:30 in the morning. She said, "Now I think we're safe everybody. If you were wondering what the noise was, that was that." So a fairly uneventful trip. We had a concert on board and I danced for royalty. Funny. Then we came home.

**Was the war over by the time you...**

Came home, no.

**Where were you when the war...**

19:00 **ended...VE Day?**

VE [Victory in Europe] Day happened within a few days of our arrival. You're asking me difficult things as to the months and things, but I'm not quite sure. But it's easy to trace that exactly. But I'm pretty sure that it was really in a very short space of time. And not so long after there was the war in the Pacific.

19:30 **What happened next on your...**

Right. We went up to the property...outside Bathurst. It was an old National Trust property and it had been rented during our absence and we had left

20:00 Perpetual Trustees...less said the better. The last person to rent it was wanted by the police when we arrived. He had knocked down one of the nicest big rooms which was the old dining room because he wanted to sell all the cedar panelling

20:30 around the room. Tragic you know. And my mother was of course terribly upset, but we set about trying to put things in order. She said, "You'll only fritter away your life up here. We'd better find a flat in Sydney and see if you can get back to dancing." So we did just that. We found a flat in Elizabeth Bay

21:00 a small flat and found someone to share it with me who became quite a name, and I went back to lessons with Leon Kellerway.

**Who was the person you...**

Started with?

**No, in the flat?**

Her name was Mary Rose, but

21:30 she went on to much bigger and better things. That's another story. So I started ballet again and I didn't have any more Spanish lessons because I didn't find anybody here...Spanish dance lessons...because I didn't find anybody here who knew as much as I did. The

22:00 classical and the (UNCLEAR) work was still good. The ballet, I could not really achieve...A it had been too long and B, when I was in England...when we first arrived in England...I have to go back to this. I didn't want to go into too much detail. When I went back to England, everybody between the age of

22:30 16 and 60 had to be actively employed towards the war effort. You were at school or you were doing something towards the war effort. I could have joined the Land Army but that would have been a shame to leave Mother alone, and I thought well I might be good enough to join Sadler's Wells Ballet Company. So I went to Sadler's Wells and they gave me an audition

23:00 and they said yes. They said they knew I hadn't done anything for three and a half years and that I was stiff and...but that's fine. I showed them all my qualifications on paper. The then teacher, Russian by the name of Said-gaff [perhaps Nicholas or Konstantin Sergeyev?]. I was having classes with him. Very little English and very little French. So I said, 'Please, slowly, I'm stiff.'

23:30 ...so what did he do? He tore a tendon in the groin and I collapsed in pain, went home, called the doctor

and he said, "I'm very sorry. That will take you quite a long time to get over that. There's nothing to do except rest." He said, "Peacetime you'd sue them, now you can't."

24:00 Then I got a job with the British Foreign Office.

**How long were you with the Foreign Office?**

Oh a good 18 months I guess. Nearly 2 years.

**This was the British Foreign Office, not the Australian Government?**

Yes the British Foreign Office.

**Back in Australia, after you got your flat in Elizabeth Bay...**

Yes I went back and then I decided I could do some Spanish dancing. I could

24:30 perhaps perform at a concert or something like that. But really classical as such was a thing of the past and it was that that I really loved. That's life. And so then, really nothing much...

25:00 very sort of nothing much after that. In other words, I gave Spanish dancing lessons, and I had a bit of fun too because I had missed three and a half years of growing up at a time when you're carefree and nothing matters. And so I went out a lot and had some fun, and then

25:30 an acquaintance from New Caledonia came to stay with me and celebrated her 21st birthday and so I had a party and invited a French wool buyer. And at the last minute one of the number rang up to say... a German as a matter of fact, he couldn't come, he was going to Canberra. I said, "Oh dear. I need a boy." So rang the French wool buyer and he said, "Don't you worry.

26:00 I know just the man." And he brought along my husband who told me that he had been told two months beforehand, "There's going to be a great party, I'll see to it that you're invited." So there you are.

**And what became of your brother?**

Right. He settled in Bathurst. He always wanted to become a sculptor

26:30 or an artist, but he thought he could do architecture as well. And having been left behind in Italy...once the Allies were there, first of all he went to work for the Allied Commission and then he was able to go to the university to study architecture because he couldn't leave. In the beginning the only communication we had from him

27:00 was from the American forces. An American padre kept on sending us messages. My brother came out in 1947 and it was not until then that he was able to leave. All of our problems really...a lot of the problems actually stemmed from the fact that my brother was actually born in Italy

27:30 because my mother had married my father in Italy. Bob was born there. So that meant to the Italians that he was an Italian. So they wouldn't let him go out of the country. All the more reason once he was of military age.

**And your father?**

Well my father...my parents were divorced when I was about three

28:00 I suppose. Thereby's another interesting story because when they came out to Australia, before I was born because I was born in Bathurst, they decided to have a cheese factory in the area where my father came from which was Eboli. Close by there they have buffalos

28:30 and they make the mozzarella cheese. It's far better made with buffalo milk than cow's milk believe me. So they decided that that's what they would do. Unfortunately my father didn't speak any English. I think if they had stayed in Italy maybe the marriage would have worked. But out in Australia with my father with no knowledge of English...they bought a property up on the

29:00 Nepean, somewhere near Camden I think. Somewhere there. They set about...they bought out with them two Italian workers who made cheese. And they made the very first mozzarella, (ITALIAN) and those cheeses in Sydney. But nobody had ever heard of them and they couldn't sell them.

29:30 So it foundered and little by little the marriage foundered too. My father couldn't support us and ...

**And you went on to have a family in Sydney?**

Actually my mother then...what happened, my uncle, one of my uncles died. He had several properties and he had his own plane to fly from

30:00 one to the other. And the year I think was 1927. His plane crashed, there were two of them in the plane. It was over Grenfell and he was killed and so my mother then inherited the property, Blackdown. I remember it, little and all as I was, when I first arrived

30:30 there because it was a pretty rundown house and everything.

**We'll come back and talk about that. We'll just wrap up the summary.**

Yes of course.

**Did you have children?**

Did I have children? After I married Felix? Yes. A daughter and a son. The son's in London and my daughter's here and I have

31:00 three grandchildren.

**That's wonderful.**

The eldest grand daughter is 25.

**That's a great summary. It's a fantastic story. I can't wait to cover the details of it right now. If you want to take a breath.**

I usually have my wireless in the car, very bad reception, but I usually have it on the Italian station

31:30 to keep the language going in my head. And not so long ago...well he's the usual Italian announcer, said something that I think is very profound. (ITALIAN)...Do you understand it? "He who speaks

32:00 another language is another person." And you are. When you are fluent in other languages it's a whole new facet to you.

**When you were growing up what was your mother language?**

English.

**But what other languages did you speak in the house?**

English. I was so little when my parents separated and divorced.

32:30 I was only into 'bar bar bar bar'.

**Where was your mother from?**

Bathurst. And my grandmother.

**How did she come to meet your father?**

Well she was very artistic. My mother loved music with a passion. She had a beautiful voice and she had lots and lots of records. She always wanted to sing.

33:00 She wanted to go on the stage and be a singer. The First World War occurred so that was off and she rode her pony. She got up at four thirty every morning and rode all the way over to St Vincent's Hospital to nurse, and when the war was over she said to her mother, "Now, my sister and I (she was a couple of years younger) want to go to Milan and we both want to study singing." My grandmother said, 'Well you deserve it. We'll go to Milan

33:30 and I'll find a nice pensione [hotel] for you, put you there and..." so they did all that and no sooner were they installed in the pensione than in walked my father in uniform, very dashing and a clap of thunder.

**I'd like to talk about that but...your grandparents**

34:00 **on your mother's side, how did that artistic musical influence...**

I really don't know. My grandfather was a real country gentleman. He loved horses. Horses were really a passion and in fact he bred Arab horses and sold them as polo ponies to the Indians.

34:30 There's another story. My grandmother used to entertain them in the big home. They had plenty of servants in those days as one did have. She had a big house to run and so on. The time came for them I guess to downsize, as we're thinking of doing. So they left the property

35:00 eventually to their eldest son and they moved into Bathurst, and then this son was killed and then my mother inherited it. But definitely my grandmother was born in a place called Rockley which is a little one horse town in the area near Bathurst and my grandfather

35:30 was born in Bathurst.

**What was the name of the property?**

Blackdown.

**What sort of property was it?**

Just about everything. There was cattle, sheep, crops and I believe when it was first granted...it was a grant of land to an English naval

- 36:00 officer, Captain Hawkins. Two thousand acres and his wife wrote quite a well named book about her journey across the Blue Mountains to Bathurst. Anyway where were we? Yes the property. My grandfather bought the property in
- 36:30 1880 something.
- Did your grandfather come out from England at that time or was he...**
- My grandfather was born in Australia. They were both born in Australia. Certainly there was no artistic bent on his side as far as I know. Grandmother probably but I wasn't aware of it. But I can say that I'm only aware of it
- 37:00 in things that I have inherited. Things such as that...
- It's beautiful but unfortunately we can't see it on the camera.**
- But it is beautiful. That, see the little angel. Well it's part of a heavenly choir of angels around a mirror.
- 37:30 **We have to be a little bit aware that we can't see these things on camera.**
- Ok. But that's how now in retrospect that I realise she must have been artistic.
- And what did your mother tell you of that period before the First World War?**
- Oh...
- 38:00 she told me that growing up in Bathurst on a property was fun. She and her brother used to go hunting rabbits and they strung them up between two ponies on wooden poles like this and then they would sell them. They also...what did one do in life in the country then?
- 38:30 It was self made entertainment and carefree. Very carefree, wonderful. A lovely life. Totally carefree I think.

## Tape 2

- 00:37 **Adele can you tell us a bit about what Bathurst was like in your girlhood?**
- Nice, quite country town. Clean, pretty, cold in the winter, hot in the summer. I had always, from the time I was two years old,
- 01:00 a pony and that as a little child was my great passion. I really wanted to be able to ride on top of the pony, standing on top of the pony and dance like a circus performer. I didn't ever do that but I rode...I think I rode well. I entered the show several times. I had a rug of ribbons.
- 01:30 **What was the community like in Bathurst. What community events did you have?**
- Community events? My main community event was the Bathurst Show. Other than that...
- Can you tell us a bit about the Bathurst show?**
- 02:00 To me of course, I was interested in the horse events, not in the vegetables and the fruit and the side shows,
- 02:12 there were, of course, a variety of side shows. Come and see Bathurst by night, then lifted up the curtain, nighttime, you could see all the Bathurst lights. But yes, the
- 02:30 Bathurst Show, for me, was horses.
- What events were you entered in, in the Bathurst Show?**
- Oh, I think, best child rider, best pony, equipment, something like that.
- What was your pony's name?**
- Tony. Second one
- 03:00 was Bruce, little Welsh pit ... I think they called them Welsh pit ponies, yes.
- Tony the pony.**
- Yes, Tony the pony.
- Bruce. Very practical names for your ponies.**
- I rode to school, eventually, on Tony the Pony.

**What evidence was there of the Depression in Bathurst, when you were growing up?**

Oh, yes,

03:30 my .... my mother's bank ... the Bank of Australasia ... shut. For how long, I don't know, I was too young to really take all that in. But ... so, without money, a lot of the people bartered. And ... who had eggs, swapped for so-and so. And my mother made cakes,

04:00 and bartered other foods, for quite a while. That I remember, making cakes with my mother until all hours at night. You mix that while I do this...

**What would she exchange those cakes for?**

I don't know for sure, probably, it might be meat? Yes,

04:30 possibly, lamb chops, something like that, yes.

**How did the workings of the farm change, through the Depression?**

We had ..... I can only remember two men. Sorry about the thing. But we

05:00 definitely had a very good, dear old gardener, Kelly. I think, when I was little, that the land was probably still managed by my grandfather, because my mother had really no experience, not really. And in any case, I wasn't interested in that, so ..... I don't, you know, remember really

05:30 those things.

**What were you interested in, apart from ponies, you mentioned, in those early days?**

Right, I was interested in music. My mother had this wonderful old gramophone, and I used to hear operatic arias, which I grew to love. And ... reading. Imagination, I had lots of that. At school, in ...

06:00 during school breaks, I would go off with a group of friends, and I would tell them stories, which were entirely ... imaginary. Yes. So, ponies, music, and then my mother said, one day, I came back from school, and I said "Look at this", and there I was, walking

06:30 on, very bad, the way I was doing it, but I was walking on tiptoe. And she said ... in any case, she said, "I think, that you're beginning to get bandy-legged, because you're riding so much. We should have you taught, perhaps, some dancing." And so I started, in a very small way, in Bathurst. Nothing to do with ballet. But

07:00 I guess it was just a taste, just enough.

**How old were you when you went to your first ballet class?**

I would have been ... ten or eleven, in Sydney.

**Before that, you mentioned that you read, and you listened to music. Were there any books, or pieces of music, that particularly inspired you as a child?**

Yes.

07:30 Music. Well, they inspired me because they inspired my mother. So I guess she would put them on ... she would play them often. Tosca. It still is. Books. Yes. The Magic Pudding. And I still think, and I agree with Peter Carey, brilliant.

08:00 The Magic Pudding, the Wizard of Oz, and then because of illustrations, I had the most beautiful book of the myths of Greece and Rome. I loved those. And Bishop Crotty asked me one day, he said "What do you think when you think of Heaven?". This was when I was an adult. Well, I said,

08:30 "I like to think of the illustrations in the book of the myths of Greece and Rome, with the pink clouds and the ....." . There you are.

**Can you describe the scene in your house when your mother would listen to Tosca?**

Yes. Yes. The gramophone actually was in the dining room, and there was a couch, not too dissimilar to that, but more comfortable

09:00 actually. And ... we would, we would sit and listen to some, but some of the time she would get up and walk around, and sing, too. She had ... when I was going to Marsden, there was a music teacher, and she was a lover of opera, too. And they became

09:30 friends, and she used to come over sometimes, in the evening, and they would sing together, and on occasions they would give operatic skits for friends. Very funny, I believe.

**What kind of a mother, was your mother, for you?**

The best.



- 10:00 I think. May not have always been wise, but a wonderful mother. I think, I really do think, that most artists, any kind, pianists, violinists, dancers, singers, whatever, need somebody to push them ... because
- 10:30 their way, the art ... and she acted really as a manager, and she did push me. So if I felt, I'm not doing well, and despairing, and that ... she, yes, she was strong willed. But my mother was psychic, in a very uncanny
- 11:00 way. Very psychic.

**Can you explain how her psychic ...**

No, I can only tell you the first instance. Before I was even thought of, when she was a young girl and she was at boarding school, and my grandmother was entertaining some Indians who'd come out to buy a polo pony. And towards the end of the

- 11:30 visit, one of these Indians went to my grandmother, and said, "Mrs. Gilmore, I hope you don't mind asking your servants if, when they're cleaning the house, looking for a large red stone which was in my turban". And he said, "It is ... more than anything, it is valuable, but it is of sentimental value, it belonged to my mother." Gosh, my grandmother. "Of course,
- 12:00 straight away." But he said, "Don't you worry, we'll leave, and if you find it, this is where I'll be", and, well, of course, they scoured the whole house from top to bottom. Nothing. And my grandmother wrote to Mother who was away at boarding school, in Sydney. And Mother had this dream. She wrote back and she said, "Go down to the cornfield in front of the house, and on the tenth row,
- 12:30 you will find." And sure enough, it was. And because of that, she became, I think, a trifle interested, and somebody gave her subsequently a book on palmistry, so she could look at your hand and tell you various things. But, she would look at a person without touching them or seeing their hand, and she would say, "You had influenza, very bad influenza, which
- 13:00 affected your lungs when you were so-and so". And some of the most amazing stories that she has told and foreseen.

**Do you ... was she a liberated woman for her time?**

Yes.

**In what ways?**

Well, I don't know whether you'd call this liberated, but she certainly took off for Europe with two

- 13:30 young children to foster their careers, from a country town, to Paris. Because she had a good education, she spoke some French, but, you know, little bit ... So she was, above all, courageous, I think.
- 14:00 Really, I can only say, nothing ever daunted my mother. When she was over 60, one of the wells on the property dried up, and none of the workmen who were there at the time wanted to go down. She said "I'll go". And she did. But ... liberated? Yes, I think so, yes.

**How much as a girl did you recognise this courage in your mother?**

Oh, I think when we were interned. ....

- 15:00 Yes, the hardships, the separation of the family... terrible thing to be separated from your loved ones, yes.

**Did her psychic inclinations make themselves known during that time, as well?**

- 15:30 Yes.

**Are there incidences of that that you can recall?**

Yes. A young man came, he was a cousin of people who lived across the square in Oliveto Citra. Although we were not supposed to go out at night, after we'd been there for a while, we would sneak across the little square, and go and sit round the fire with the local chemist and his family,

- 16:00 who were wonderfully kind, to us. And this night, we went over, and there was this young man, mid-twenties, I guess. And the moment he was introduced, my mother said to him "What are you doing here? You should be on your ship." So, then the lady of the house, who knew that Mother did and
- 16:30 could often tell people's fortunes, if you like, wrong word, said, "Go on, talk more to him, tell him." And Mother said, "Well, I see you on a ship which is doing short trips from Italy." And she said "You're going to be torpedoed. But don't worry, you'll be right. Your
- 17:00 life will be saved. You'll have to jump overboard, you'll lose your boots, and you'll save another man's life. But," she said, "you'll be safe, don't worry." Much laughter and, you know ... Well, two months went by, and he came back, specially. He said, "Signora, I

17:30 have to tell you: As you told it." Yeah.

**How incredible.**

Yeah.

**We'll just go back, we'll go back and go through your childhood a bit before we get up to that point, and talk about it a bit more. What other memories do you have of Bathurst, before you went to Sydney?**

18:00 My grandparent's home in town, which was a lovely home, and my first little school, probably. It was not preschool, I don't know that they had such a thing as preschool in those days. But before Marsden, I went definitely to a day school in

18:30 town, and ... I don't know how many children there were, let's say, in each class .. this was in a private home, as I remember. In each class, I suppose there were about 15 to 20. When I was serving years later at the Boomerang Club in London, I ran into somebody from Mrs. Walker's ...

19:00 school. So, what stands out, on my mind, is my first ride. I know I was two years old, and I know my grandfather put me on the pony, and he led me, down the street, and back again. And when we came back to the house, I said to my grandmother

19:30 "Everybody was looking at me." It was a lovely home, and it now is National Trust, Miss Traill's Cottage in Bathurst. So, all pleasant memories, I don't have any unhappy memories about Bathurst, they were all

20:00 happy, peaceful, yes.

**You mentioned Bishop Crotty.**

Yes.

**How big an influence was the Church, in your growing up?**

Oh, yes, quite. I mean, I went to a Church of England school, Marsden College. And Bishop Crotty and his wife and family were close friends. Every Christmas, Mother had a party,

20:30 outdoors, under the ... we had quite a large pond, and a huge hawthorn tree, and she'd put chinese lanterns hanging all round, underneath the hawthorn tree. And we had ... my mother was a very good cook. I guess, much

21:00 more than an ordinary country cook ... I think it didn't matter with them ... because she'd travelled quite a bit. So we had meals, and Bishop Crotty and his family would join us. So that I don't forget it ... not long after we were moved to Oliveto Citra, and we were not

21:30 supposed to have a wireless with us, but we snuck it in by ... because we had friends then. And we used to listen to the British Broadcasting, there was a special program to Italy, a Colonel Stephens. I think from memory it was 11 or 12 o'clock at night. And obviously, we'd been listening to this, and I had just left it on that station,

22:00 but turned off the wireless. Went to bed, and ... no this wasn't in Oliveto Citra, this was in Eboli ... and I got up, the following day was my birthday, and I got up early, went upstairs, turned on the wireless, and I've always had a good ear for voices. And I said, I can't believe it, and I shouted to Mother, I said "You can't believe it,

22:30 it's not true, but that's Bishop Crotty talking." So it was, I don't know, 9 o'clock, perhaps half past 9 in the morning, perhaps 10 o'clock. Although I thought it was earlier. And it was Bishop Crotty, and he was at St. Pancras Church in London, and he was giving the sermon. And that, yes, it was very moving for me, so...

23:00 **Like a beacon of hope...**

Yes. Yes. Yes. But you asked, were they influential? Well, yes. I was too young to be confirmed, when they went, and when I left Bathurst. But when we came to England, and he, because of the church being bombed, he went

23:30 down to Hove, he had a living at Hove. And I was confirmed there, all those years later.

**Your brother was a few years older than you, is that right? Two years older?**

Two years older.

**What sort of relationship did you have with him, as a child?**

Oh, good. But we were poles apart. I was there, and he was in there. I've always been really ...

24:00 though shy, you wouldn't believe it, would you now? But I was terribly shy. But nevertheless, once I

started, I guess I was outgoing. He was quiet. He was very ill as a little boy, at one stage. And, he became ... yes, very, very quiet. He was studious,

24:30 but he was a very good artist. That little one of the tree there, can you see it? The one of the tree in the middle?

**Oh yeah.**

You can't see it properly?

**Yeah, I can't see it very well.**

That's one of his.

**We must take a photo of that later. His name was Bob, right?**

Yes, Robert. Romano. Yes.

**Did he retain any Italian features, or influences?**

Oh yes. When we

25:00 finally arrived back in Sydney, to celebrate, we decided to go to Romano ... there was a big ... Romano's Restaurant, dancing restaurant. So he rang Romano's to book a table. And they said "What's your name?". And he said "Romano". "Oh, yes, sir." Yes.

**Your first big point of**

25:30 **change in your life, perhaps, is when you moved to Sydney.**

Yes.

**Can you tell us a bit about that move, and the situation surrounding it?**

Yes. Well, yes, it was. It was difficult for Mother to try and ... she couldn't send me to boarding school, because there's not enough time for the ballet. So she found this little French school, called Chamblee. It was in Edgecliff Road, and

26:00 the moment she interviewed the headmistress, and so on, she realised how nice she was, and she saw the pupils, and ... She said to the headmistress "This is my problem. My daughter wants to do ballet, I really live in Bathurst, and can't leave it permanently. Do you know anybody, any of the families here who might take take

26:30 my daughter in, at least for a while?" And so, a family was found, wonderful family, with a French name actually, Du Boise. And there were three daughters, they lived in Hunter's Hill, in a nice little house, beside a

27:00 magnificent house, which was owned by the girls' uncle, Ferdinand Du Boise. And it looked, for all the world, like you imagined Tara from Gone with the Wind. That was it. He was wealthy. Of course. It was overlooking the water, with beautiful green

27:30 grass front, and he had footmen, white gloves at table, and on Saturday's, we'd go ... on Sunday mornings, two of the girls would be asked ... and I was included in the family ... to go and have breakfast with him. And that was four star, at least, breakfast. So that was an important, very important, that family. And the mother,

28:00 their mother, was very nice. And the father, Arthur Du Boise, he died, very young. So, I stayed really with them until not very long before we left for Europe.

**How long did it take you to settle down in Sydney, in this new environment?**

No. Not long. No.

28:30 No. I don't remember any inconveniences or anything like that, no. I remember it being an awfully long way to get to school, because from Hunter's Hill, we waked up the Hunter's Hill, we caught a bus, then we caught a ferry, and then we caught a tram. It seemed to take forever to get there. But, it was a lovely part of Hunter's Hill.

29:00 Lovely, yes.

**How different was Hunter's Hill in those days?**

I don't think that it's changed tremendously, except that this beautiful homestead of Arthur Du Boise's, to make way for the expressway - the bridge and the expressway. That, to me, was a tragedy, really a tragedy. Yes.

**What was the language of that house?**

29:30 English, yes.

### **And Chamblee?**

At Chamblee, we had lessons in French, and lessons in English. It was an allround education, yes. So, I had a smattering of French before I arrived in France. I have a good ear, I guess, for languages. Going over on the ship, which was an Italian ship,

30:00 I picked up quite a bit of Italian. But subsequently, when I went to dance at La Scala, I was not conversant, really, and I had to start ... because there they have the school, as well as the ballet school ... I had to start classes. I was 15, and I went to classes with seven and eight year old girls.

30:30 **As you started to learn French at that school, did you start to notice another personality come out in you then, as you mentioned before?**

There was not enough, no. I know I enjoyed it, but not enough, no.

### **Can you tell us about you first ballet classes with Arnold Spearka?**

Arnold Spearka? Really,

31:00 nothing. Its a ... it's a ... it's a cloud. It was totally unimportant, he was not a good ballet teacher. I don't like to speak ill of the dead, which I'm sure he must be. But it was not interesting, nothing. The moment I started .... I was only there a matter of a few months. The moment I started with Leon Kellaway, he enthused

31:30 me, as I'm sure he did every ... Did you know, have you ever heard of his name? Leon Kellaway? He became, before he died, he was ballet master of the Australian Ballet. And he was the brother of the Hollywood actor Cecil Kellaway. He had come out with Anna Pavlova, and settled out in Australia. He was a funny man.

32:00 But wonderful teacher ... love of ballet. And good.

### **Can you describe those classes? They are very interesting from a historical point of view now. What happened in Leon Kellaway's classes?**

Well, they weren't ... I only had lessons with one or two ... one was one of the girls that went to Chamblee,

32:30 whom I still see. And another, I don't know whatever became of her, I can't remember her name. He had ... he had, fortunately, a small mirror, which is absolutely essential in studying ballet. Absolutely essential. Arnold Spearka did not. You must be able to see what you're doing.

33:00 I remember it was up near the railway ... little studio there. It must have been difficult for him, finding somebody to play the piano. It must have cost him quite a bit, because it was a bit of a

33:30 dumpity-dah, dumpity dah, dumpity-dah. And then do it again ... dumpity dah, dumpity-dah. This sort of piano, it could be very boring, until you get more advanced, until you become more advanced, yes.

### **What sort of a personality was he?**

He was English ...

34:00 he was a nice, artistic, gentleman. Gentle, as I say. I didn't know him privately, at all. I admired him, and when I heard that ...

34:30 from the teacher ... the world's best, I'm sure, at the time, Olga Preobrazhenskaya, that I'd been well-taught, I was so happy that I wrote and told him. And I know he was really chuffed to hear that.

### **What was it about his classes that inspired you?**

I don't think there is a word for. If you've got it here, then you can put it there.

35:00 What could I say? OK, so he had style. You could put your arm that way, just like that. Or you could put it like that. I think Spearka was just like that, as he might have been on ice, I suppose, because he was a very good skater. But, yes, he was artistic. I think

35:30 I could see through his eyes what eventually I could do. Remember, I was only a child. And when I came back, well, I'd done it.

### **How quickly did your ballet come on, in Sydney?**

Obviously very quickly. Because when the ballet company

36:00 came out in 1937, he suggested that I should have an audition ... a private lesson really, with the maitre de ballet, and my friend also, to have an opinion of really whether we should go overseas, because there was nothing

36:30 much here, then, here. And so, he arranged it, and first of all we went to two classes, which meant that

we were right at the very back of all the dancers on the stage, just following them. And then, we had, together, she and I, a private lesson. And, at the end of that, my mother, I remember she presented him with

37:00 a very nice T-shirt, which David Jones had put out, specially for the occasion, with the Russian eagle, or something, on it. And she said, "Right. What do you think?" And he said "How long? How many years has she been learning? Three? Four?" My mother said, "No, not quite a year." "Tomorrow, you leave Paris. And you go Olga Preobrazhenskaya." And so, we did it.

37:30 **How did that make you feel, at the time?**

Very happy, yes. Great sense of adventure. Wonderful.

**What were your ambitions, forming?**

Just to dance ... be on stage and dance. If you are a performer, on stage, of any kind,

38:00 the feedback from the public is euphoric, that's all I can tell you, from the beginning.

**How much of that euphoric experience of performance had you had before you went to Paris?**

Oh, very little. He gave ... Kellaway gave a concert,

38:30 with his best students, and I performed in some sort of gavotte. Somewhere or other I've got a photograph of it.

**How much contact did you have with your mother at this time?**

Oh, lots.

**What was she...**

Up and down and up and down and up and down. I believe that she was the first driver in Bathurst.

**She drove from Bathurst to Sydney on a regular basis?**

Oh,

39:00 yes, yes.

**And how much was that her decision? And how much did she talk to you about it when this occasion happened?**

I think it was all her decision, really. You don't decide much at thirteen.

**It's an incredible decision to make, as I think you've already said. We'll stop the tape there, we'll talk a bit about the trip...**

39:32 **End of Tape**

## Tape 3

00:31 **What you were telling me about your mother at the time you went to Paris?**

She formed a friendship with another lady. She was older than Mother and she came from Queensland. She was born in New Zealand but she came over to Queensland as a young woman. May Raymond, and she was a widow and

01:00 she had enough means to travel on her own, and when Mother told her what she was going to do, they decided to go together. She didn't speak any French at all but she was a pillar of support. So all the time in Paris she was with us.

**Can you tell us about the trip over on this Italian ship?**

Yes. It was my first flirt.

01:30 Well you know Italian men. So I remember distinctly my brother coming...this is not for publication really, I don't know. My brother

02:00 found that the doctor was behaving in an immoral fashion so he was put off the boat in Adelaide. They must have found another one quickly. I can remember the first time

02:30 seeing...we sat sometimes at the captain's table, and I can remember the captain dunking...brioche and going slurp slurp slurp, and Mother whispering to me, 'Don't worry you'll get used to that.' I had never seen that.

- 03:00 But he was a very nice man, Commandante Pierone. I can even remember his name. Look at that. We saw him subsequently years later, yes. What else do I remember? Where we called in, the ports were of great interest of course.
- 03:30 **Was this your first experience on a ship?**
- Oh yes. Wonderful.
- How did you like the experience of being at sea?**
- I loved it. I think I was probably one of the only ones not seasick crossing the Great Australian Bight. And I did practise ballet on deck every morning. Yes.
- 04:00 I loved the Italian food. What else was there.
- You say it was your first flirt. Who was on board the ship?**
- Officers of course. When I say it was a flirt, it was virtually an eye. An eye flirtation. I was too young. He was older. But he was just nice and
- 04:30 was trying to teach me some Italian. A nice young man that's all.
- Had you started to be interested in the attention of men at this stage?**
- Oh yes.
- I'm sure practicing ballet on deck would have caught the eye of a passing sailor?**
- I suppose yes. We even had a swimming pool in those days on board ship.
- 05:00 **What was the accommodation like on this particular ship?**
- Quite good. Nothing spectacular but quite good. Infinitely better than what we had coming back in 1943, 44.
- 05:30 **The world had changed a great deal in the intervening period. What ports did you call at, Melbourne, Fremantle, Adelaide?**
- Yes, Perth I think. Surely Perth. Colombo.
- What was your first experience of a foreign land in Colombo?**
- I can remember writing letters to my grandmother and saying that the taxi driver had very dirty feet. They were just black or dark brown.
- 06:00 **Was that a stop over of some days or what was the situation in Colombo?**
- No. A day. I'm pretty sure. Yes I think we just had time to go up to Kandy and back in the day, that's all.
- 06:30 **How old was your brother at this stage?**
- He was 15, yes.
- Was it difficult there travelling as a party of mainly women?**
- No, not that I was aware of. But those are things...
- 07:00 it would have been very noticeable one way or the other. It didn't make any impression on me of being difficult. I do know subsequently that my brother wrote quite long notes. He was much more observant than I.
- 07:30 So we arrived in...actually we arrived...first of all we called in at Naples where we were met by members of the family whom my mother hadn't seen for many years. Then we went up to Genoa
- 08:00 and went up by train to Paris. It's funny the way things happen. When we arrived in Paris Mother had found a little hotel near as I said, the studios. A small hotel (FRENCH) as they're called. And the first night
- 08:30 we went out for dinner. I think she ordered mussels without realising what they were. She was having a little bit of trouble managing and a woman sitting at a table on her own, fairly close, a Madame Strauss, she said, 'Can I help you?' in very good English.
- 09:00 'Yes please.' And she did. She was instrumental in helping us find the apartment; to introducing us to a chemist and his two children and his wife who was mentally ill and in a hospital. So we became friends with the chemist
- 09:30 and she also introduced us to another gentleman and his daughter, Monsieur Deharzay, and they altogether helped us a lot. Mother made friends very easily I have to say. She would talk to anyone and

if she didn't speak the language she still made herself known. So

10:00 after not very long in the...I also have my mother's diary from the day that we arrived in Paris and went to the studios, until Italy came into the war. She wrote this diary and she stopped for fear of reprisals. It's a little bit unfortunate.

10:30 I would have more details about Italy than what I have. But it's very helpful. For instance, Serena [Archive researcher] asked me how on earth did I have a love of ballet. Was there someone in your family who was a dancer or a singer? And I said, no not really, but

11:00 when we subsequently went down to stay with a family in Italy, after we had been in Paris for a while. My mother discovered a book dated 17 something. I've got it all written down in her diary about early court dancers and the techniques and

11:30 choreography, belonging to the Count of Telunetti, my Italian grandmother was a Telunetti. So whether by any chance anyone there was ...I don't know. So we arrived in Paris, we had help from these friends.

**What were your first impressions of Paris?**

Wonderful, absolutely wonderful.

12:00 And it almost gets better because it's cleaner today.

**What was it like back then?**

Well it was duller, greyer because they hadn't cleaned up all the monuments. Once they started cleaning all those beautiful old buildings and monuments, it made such a difference.

12:30 Yes I thought Paris was just magnificent, and the only city I thought subsequently to compare to it was Budapest.

**How did you find your reception from the French population that you met in those early days?**

Well I never had any problems, but my mother in her diary thought

13:00 that the French were inclined to be rude; too many dogs littering the pavement; hard business people... which I guess they are.

13:30 I would say within two or three weeks of arriving in Paris I was in the bus on my own and an elderly English lady got into the bus, handed the bus conductor her fare and said, 'Rue de

14:00 Roma silvu play.' And I in my little corner shrank. And I thought I am not going to talk like that. And somebody said, 'Use a mirror. Get your tongue in the right place. And you will soon be saying it correctly. So it helped...

14:30 once I found I could pass, my French was comprehensible and eventually nobody took any notice and just thought I was a little French girl.

**Was there a moment when you had an epiphany in terms of speaking French? How did that progress?**

No...so, the chemist found

15:00 an art teacher for my brother and they would go to the Louvre and he found in turn, someone to teach us both French every day. She was very, very nice. Very helpful.

**Can you describe the apartment that you found?**

We had two. The first one was quite big. There was enough room for me to dance. There was a room this size and

16:00 then there were...it must have been 3 bedrooms, maybe 4 bedrooms. An antiquated sort of kitchen. Very antiquated bathroom with groaning pipes and that sort of business. I do remember that the heating wasn't working

16:30 properly and it was very cold. And I also remember the problem my mother had getting some furniture because there was nothing, and I tell you, absolutely nothing. So she and the friend...we called her Aunt May. She was not but dear old Aunt May, and the two of them went off to buy brooms, dusters

17:00 buckets and all the things to clean, and having brought everything they found there was a general strike and they would not be delivered. So they had to walk because they couldn't carry all these things on the bus. And I think there were a few expletives in the diary about that. Anyway that

17:30 apartment was quite alright. But probably for what ever reason Mother decided to move to another one and we did.

**What neighbourhood was the apartment you ended up in?**

(FRENCH)...not far from Montmartre. Definitely a

- 18:00 working-class suburb. There were good markets once a week at least. Not an attractive part of Paris, but as Mother said, 'We're here to work and that's all that matters.'

**I know you're still quite a young woman,**

- 18:30 **for someone moving in artistic circles in Paris in the late '30s, was there a kind of bohemian atmosphere or was there an artistic...**

Oh yes. Yes. Most of all a strong influence of Russians, white Russians. My teacher was Russian. I started learning Russian from a Russian engineer who was working on the Maginot Line [French defensive construction intended to protect against German aggression]. Very poor.

- 19:00 He had little paper cuffs because he probably had a short sleeve shirt and he had paper cuffs. A nice fellow, but yes I found the Russians fascinating. Absolutely fascinating. One we met through the studios had a

- 19:30 brother...no, had a sister...yes the Russians were fantastic. When my grandmother subsequently came over, they thought that because she wore a hat, I think,

- 20:00 that she might have some money and be quite wealthy. So the studio sent around Prince Felix Yusupov. Prince Yusupov was the one responsible for the murder of Rasputin, and Prince Yusupov was living in Paris with his Morganatic wife and needing money because she needed an operation. He came

- 20:30 selling furs. The most beautiful sable furs, and emeralds. My grandmother had her hands full of these beautiful Russian emeralds. And I can remember she said to Mother, 'What am I going to do with those. In Bathurst I can wear a fur, but I can't really do anything with all these beautiful emeralds.' She

- 21:00 probably could have had them for a song you know. So she ended up buying a most beautiful full length...well full length down to there Royal Russian sable. And it was only years later that it was cut into three. One for Mother, one for my aunt, one for me. It needed...mine which was a stole virtually

- 21:30 a cape, needed to be relined and I took it into a furrier whose son went to school with mine, Bill Biber. He was a well known furrier then. You can't find any furriers in town now. He took one look at that and he said, 'Do you realise what you've got here?' And I said, 'Yes, it's a sable.' He said, 'No, it's a Royal Russian Sable.' I said, 'How do you tell the difference?'

- 22:00 He said, 'The tip of each hair is just off white. If you wear that to the opera house, 2 or 3 people in the audience will know what you have, but nobody else will, but they will.' The Russians I found fascinating.

**Who were some of the figures who became influential or**

- 22:30 **you looked up to when you arrived in Paris?**

I definitely looked up to my teacher. She was a Princess actually, and two of the big names...ballet teachers in Paris at the time were both...three of them: Preobrazhenskaya, Lyubov Egorova and (UNCLEAR)

- 23:00 were all noble ladies. She spoke; I don't know how many languages. People would come to her classes from all over the world and she seemed to have a smattering of every one. She was little and rather bird like. She was in her...

- 23:30 I would say early 70s, but she could prance around like magic. And the reason I think that I won the gold medal and the award that I did was because she composed something so beautiful for me that it won it. Who else was influential in Paris?

- 24:00 Oh a famous French actor, Louis Soubet. I started going to some of his classes at his theatre. He had his own theatre but

- 24:30 he was acting at the Comedie Francaise. And he was fascinating. He gave me a real love of theatre, acting which subsequently I did a little bit with Peter Finch [Australian actor]. Who else? The influences?

**Can you describe Louis Soubet?**

- 25:00 Well, not handsome but he had very large green eyes and he was performing in a play at the time called Doctor Knock [?] I think. And rather cleverly they had put a light with a round

- 25:30 lamp shade...not a light but what do you call it, not the bulb but the covering to the bulb which was round and it was green too, and he would put his elbow like that, and in very meaningful words....I didn't know him personally really.

- 26:00 But he was a very good actor. He acted in many films. He had a great reputation.



**You mentioned one of the Russians who was an engineer working on the Maginot Line, what did you have to do with him?**

He taught me Russian. I don't remember what I...what I learned I don't really remember today except (RUSSIAN).

26:30 And a few little simple phrases...he was just...he didn't speak French very well. Nothing much, he was just a teacher of Russian.

**Was there much talk of the Maginot Line at the time?**

Yes.

**And what was the attitude towards it?**

27:00 It was going to save France. They weren't expecting all the airborne threat to come over. Oh yes that was going to save France.

**What did you hear in the news of the Germany and of tensions building up in Paris?**

Yes, plenty I guess.

27:30 But a lot of it went over the head of a 13 year old. Plenty that was in my mother's diary didn't really affect me. It didn't really affect me. What's this war? You know, a 13 year old. But for me it was dancing, dancing, dancing. That was it.

28:00 First of all classes and then private lessons twice a week. It was everything my dancing.

**What other schooling did you have in Paris?**

Only the private lessons.

**In French, in Russian?**

Well Russian was just to learn Russian.

28:30 We had the usual school curriculum really. But it was a bit skimmed. Between what I had here and what I had in France and what I had at La Scala, I learned that every country wins the war. Not the one that necessarily did. Their politics

29:00 were quite different.

**That's another good example of how points of view are very important. How was your mother getting on after you settled and she....?**

I think she enjoyed it. I'm sure she enjoyed it. She enjoyed the success...once I started learning...the Spanish dance lessons, I progressed

29:30 very quickly with those and it wasn't long before I was actually able to perform in public. And because that was such a success the first dance that I was given was a peasant style dance called,

30:00 a jota. It is andante music and you come running on stage...with the castanets and so on. It was such an attractive melody and such an attractive dance that I don't think I ever performed it where I wasn't asked for an encore.

30:30 It was just such a great number and the first time that I performed it, after the performance I was taking my makeup off, a woman came backstage with her daughter and spoke to me in Spanish asking me how long since I had left Spain. Boy was I flattered.

31:00 **Who taught you Spanish dancing?**

Actually she was Russian. Dolores Morano, and she was some character. She would have been a beautiful young woman. She was middle aged and she was outstanding looking: tall, imposing, jet black hair done in the Spanish way

31:30 with a bun here. She sometimes even in everyday life wore the little comb at the back. And flamboyant, that's the word. Absolutely flamboyant. But Spanish dancing is flamboyant. Gosh, yes. Very outspoken.

32:00 But she had learned from the famous Spanish dancer, Argentina. So she had learned from the best and one thing she said to me that I have never forgotten. She said, "You see lots of Spanish dancing in your life, in various countries, but you'll see very little that is really classy.

32:30 You'll see a lot of ...this sort of thing. Rather ordinary Spanish style." And she said that for what it is that's OK. But when you see a really well taught classical Spanish dancer who holds herself beautifully, the head, the back, the shoulders.

33:00 She said it was noble. And it is. And the arm movements. It is noble but she said you won't see it often. And I guess twice I did see it, and it's fantastic.

**Much later in your life? Where were these occasions?**

First time was on our honeymoon in the south of France. There was a

33:30 small dance company and they were famous at the time. Rosaria and Antonio, and they were both, husband and wife, brilliant, excellent. Then years later we went to Spain on a holiday and in Barcelona, there. Just by chance really.

34:00 This dancer had come back from a tour of Russia and she was just magnificent. So a big difference between...because Gypsies can have class or be just ordinary.

**What about the ballet side of things? You won a gold medal. Can you tell us about that?**

Oh yes with pleasure.

34:30 I was informed by both teachers, my Spanish dance teacher and Olga, my ballet teacher that this competition that was held every year was coming up and I should enter for it. So I did. I can remember my Spanish dancer saying,

35:00 'You remember, if you enter for this, you are no longer amateur, you are a professional.' I said, 'That's fine by me.' So Olga composed this beautiful dance, La chase l'allouette which is the Chase of the Swallow.

35:30 It's a piece from a Russian opera I believe, Millions of Harlequins. A funny name. But the music was beautiful. And she just choreographed it beautifully. The swallow comes on...flying...

36:00 hopefully on to the stage and feels hit as if a stone or something had hit it and she's wounded. And she drops to the ground and then she realises that she's not. She lifts her head and feels she's alive.

36:30 And she feels her arms...through the whole body she's alive. And she gets up and she starts to dance for joy. It was a lovely...and then I did also a dance composed by my Spanish dance teacher. That was not a peasant dance. That was

37:00 what do you call it? I guess Classical Spanish with the (UNCLEAR) and the castanets. They were both on the same evening as I remember, and I won the gold medal.

**How was the competition set up and what was the structure?**

37:30 At the Colosseum in Paris. Actually it was not easy. It's much easier to perform on a proper stage where you have the audience in front. Here they were all round. The centre which is known as a piste was where we performed, so the audience was all around and there was an orchestra

38:00 and we just came through. I think each one was announced on the microphone of the loud speaker. Each one was announced. So I can't remember in all honesty, how many we were. Not a great number.

38:30 But...I certainly did not expect to win. It was international. I mean there were students from various countries. The next year I would have had...if there had been no war, I would have gone to Brussels

39:00 for the competition which is awarded...used to be awarded by the Queen of Belgium, which is just one higher up. But that gold medal was a great open sesame for where ever else I wanted to dance.

**And then the war came?**

Then the war came.

## **Tape 4**

00:31 **The world changed quite drastically for you around the time of the start of the war, can you tell us about that period when you were at the school in Paris?**

Yes it did. When I first started dancing at La Scala...

**Perhaps before we get to La Scala, in Paris?**

Oh Paris. Everything was going beautifully.

01:00 I had nothing but what I thought was stardom ahead of me, until suddenly war was declared. We were actually in England, in Cambridge the day that war was declared. We had gone there for a few days holiday. We were in church. It was a Sunday.

01:30 So we raced back to Paris and then I guess it must have come over the air, people who were not essential, or foreign people were asked to leave. Well we could have gone to England. Mother

- 02:00 thought, well that's going to be bombed, Germany might even take England, perish the thought but... and Italy was neutral. So with that in mind...see she wasn't psychic there. She thought well, we'll go down to Milan and see if you can dance at La Scala.
- 02:30 Italy could have remained neutral. It was touch and go at one stage, really truly. But it was hectic getting away from Paris. We left an apartment fully furnished,
- 03:00 to a Russian princess, Madam Tududov, and we just took our clothes and departed. Caught a plane. Italy really was peaceful. We didn't notice any signs of preparations for war. Nobody was anti the English. Oh no...that was my feeling and Mother obviously
- 03:30 felt the same. It wasn't until literally a few weeks before Italy actually joined the war with Germany...it was like a tide of propaganda. It was suddenly like a tap was turned on. The newspapers...
- 04:00 **Did you ever discuss with your mother that decision, and what did she tell you of that moment and the decision she made to go to Italy instead of England?**
- Yes I think I did. And I think she said that she felt that Britain was not going to be safe.
- 04:30 She had actually...there were thoughts of getting a boat to Australia from Marseille. She actually found that there was a Japanese ship that was bound for Australia, which incidentally was sunk. So perhaps it was just as well we didn't get on that.
- How much was there the thought that perhaps you could continue your career?**
- Both. She thought if Italy's neutral, both her children could continue their careers. The little old lady who was with us, May Raymond, she decided to go to England and catch the first boat that she could out to Australia.
- 05:30 And she did. Well we could have and in retrospect we should have. My life would have been quite different. There's no doubt about it. But what would I have missed? I would have missed a career in ballet, a better education in some ways,
- 06:00 but not in all ways. An appreciation of another race I suppose, of a totally different way of living, of existing.
- How much was Australia seen as a cultural backwater?**
- Australia? Australia? Umm...The Chief of Police
- 06:30 in Rome when Mother went to try and get my brother's passport, a visa to leave the country...Australia? Australia? It's attached to America isn't it? So Mother said, 'Actually it's rather a little bit detached.' Hoping that that might help.
- 07:00 The girls at La Scala had never heard of Australia. So it was really a totally unknown quantity.
- What about in Paris?**
- No, they were more with it, yes. But then I was not with
- 07:30 ...I was not with school children although the young ones in the ballet classes...yes, most of them would have been going to school somewhere. We didn't discuss Australia. I guess I was Anglo-Saxon, it was another country. That sort of business...overseas. I had just come from overseas.
- 08:00 And as for the small Italian towns...(ITALIAN) which is a foreigner. I remember it so well this Italian saying to me, 'Someone who comes from 5 kilometres away is a (ITALIAN). So you're no different.'
- 08:30 **Can you tell us about the journey, what you packed and how that journey proceeded across Europe?**
- Well we packed everything into our trunks that we had, all our clothes, and I think it was a perfectly straightforward, slow trip down to Milan.
- Do you recall what station you left from in Paris?**
- No. No idea. Felix could tell you probably.
- 09:00 I would probably have been the same then, but I've never been someone who was interested in what stations we take off from.
- I was interested in the wartime platforms and the state of flux with the population.**
- No.
- Was there a sense of evacuating Paris?**
- It didn't really faze me.

09:30 Prior to our departure then, six months beforehand there was an alert. There definitely was an alert and my Spanish dance teacher, the dramatist, said, 'We must leave Paris. We must go out of Paris. They're going to bomb Paris.'

10:00 She put the wind up Mother and we did leave Paris. We went 100s of kilometres away or something like that and stayed in some village and then of course nothing happened, so we just came back again.

**Do you recall the premier ballet scene in Paris at the time? The major dances and were things going as normal?**

10:30 Yes, I would say things were pretty normal. Yes. There were recitals. In fact one evening that I appeared was in aid of Vaslav Nijinsky [dancer 1890-1950], you've heard of...the one who went...and he

11:00 was in a hospital for the insane in Switzerland and they thought he was cured and he was coming out. And so there was a soiree organised to provide funds for him once he was out and about. And so this soiree

11:30 was organised by a dancer, Serge Lifar [dancer, 1905-86] who was one of the leading dancers at the Paris Opera at the time. So, let's say there were half a dozen or a few more of the main dancers in France at the time, plus

12:00 a couple of top pupils of the leading schools and Olga was the leading school and then you had Olga Preobrazhenskaya and Lyubov Egorova, and I was one of the star pupils I was invited to perform. Unfortunately ....I've got the sheet

12:30 of the evening, but my name's not on it because I'm just one of the school of that. But it was nevertheless...it was actually at the Musee des Artes (UNCLEAR) which is part of the Louvre Museum. It's to believe when I say I've danced at the Louvre. But in fact they erected a stage and I did. Serge Lifar

13:00 himself came backstage afterwards and held me by the hand and said, 'Tres bien': Well done. So I was very pleased with that. Was that the last time I danced? I don't think so. In fact I made a film for television.

13:30 Fleeting, but I never saw it. Don't know anything about it. And the film that I made for television here which was for Lux, I never saw it either.

**In Paris you made a film?**

Yes.

**Do you recall what it was called?**

No, absolutely not. I think it was just Le Dance or something like that. It was several students

14:00 from...nothing special. It may not have eventuated into anything. I don't know. I just remember thinking, television? I didn't really know what television was. It must have been the very early days of television.

**What became of those people after you left? Do you know what happened to them after the war?**

Do you mean the ballet stars or the...

**The ballet stars and also**

14:30 **Preobrazhenskaya?**

Right. There was a big article in the Herald [newspaper] 25, 30 years ago about how she had died aged in her late 90s in Paris penniless because her manager,

15:00 he was Polish, Lahofski [perhaps Leonid Lavrovsky, 1906-67], and he cleaned her out completely.

**Did you meet him?**

Oh I dealt with him all the time. Had to.

**What was he like?**

Just a business man. A snake in the grass. He's dead now. A snake in the grass.

15:30 **An extraordinary period of time.**

The other two, Preobrazhenskaya and Lyubov Egorova, I think they just died eventually of old age. But to think that this Preobrazhenskaya went on teaching virtually to the end.

**Throughout the war do you know what happened in Paris**

16:00 **to the Ballet?**

No I don't. We really had no news practically from anyone, except when we were first interned in Eboli, the authorities said, "OK, you have to come and sign an Act of Presence everyday. You could stay here for the moment in this little person's shack. You can't have a wireless."

16:30 But we had a nice little wireless. But my mother said, "Do you think, if I give the wireless to the family next door, that after the war they might give it back to me?" "Oh yes, you can do that. Just don't have a wireless." So she said to them because by this time we were on very good terms with the peasants next door and she explained the situation. He

17:00 said, "Signora, I'll bring it back under cover of darkness." And he crept back with this wireless and my brother made a special timber box to house the wood for the fire and cooking, and the wireless was underneath that. Several times the fascist authorities came down and sat on the box with the wireless underneath.

17:30 But we only put it on very low and mainly late at night so we could listen to this Colonel Stevens from England to get any news. Naturally the news we had in the Italian papers was propaganda plus.

**Just back to your journey out of France, can you tell us about that train journey and crossing the frontier for instance?**

Yes.

18:00 I do know it was extremely slow. I could tell you much more about the one when we were escaping to England. But this...well, it was fairly uneventful.

**How disappointed were you to be leaving Paris?**

Well, no I don't think so because I thought well if I'm going to be able to dance at La Scala

18:30 that will be alright. I speak Italian reasonably well...well I thought I did but of course it wasn't all that good. I had to go and study. But I don't think so. I think I'm fairly adaptable like my mother. I'll go most places. The one exception was the place in the mountains at Teggiano when she created merry hell.

19:00 I really can't tell you anything very interesting about the train trip down, no. I can remember being... Mother saying, 'What a relief. Everyone's very calm and ...' I don't know how she met...in fact I don't know how she met

19:30 this gentleman in Milan, Mr Rossi. Perhaps we found accommodation...yes we must have found accommodation and it was his apartment, and...I think this is it. It was his apartment and he said 'Look there are three of you,

20:00 why not have where I'm living? And I'll move into to where I'm letting because you really need something bigger.' Awfully nice but I think he was rather attracted to my mother. So we had a very nice apartment, in fact there was 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Gosh the apartments in Milan were lovely.

20:30 So for those few months we were there that was it, and he was a good friend. A good friend.

**How were you off for money doing this trip?**

We still obviously had money. The real crunch came the moment Italy joined the war and we went down to Eboli then everything was stopped.

21:00 But there again fate stepped in. We'd only been in Eboli...I don't know, 2 months and we were interned, and suddenly one day one of the peasants came calling on Mother and she said, "Senora, there's an Englishman there wanting to talk to you."

21:30 So Mother came out, and in fact it turned out that he was Dutch. A Mr Geharnne I think. And he was Saville Row.....he spoke perfect English. No accent at all.

22:00 And Mother said to him, "What are you doing in a hole like this?" And he said, "They have interned me. Why? Because I have oil wells." And he said, "I'm going to get even, I'm going to get even with them. But while I'm here I'm glad to know there's someone else I can talk to." He was very, very kind. He asked my brother

22:30 to do a sculpture of him in clay for which he paid him handsomely knowing full well that he could never take it away with him. He had had an extraordinary life. He had been interned in Russia at some stage. I can't remember all of his life story. But he was fascinating. He said, "I have friends in the

23:00 American Embassy, a Mr Perkins. I'll see to it that you get mail through. You may not be able to get money but you'll get mail." And he did. He kept his word. Mr Perkins came down to see us. And we managed to get some Red Cross messages through that way.

23:30 Oh yes. He was there for a couple of months at least I guess and buoyed us up considerably.

### **How long did you stay in Milan on your way down?**

Right. It must have been

- 24:00 June of 1940 that we left because the moment Italy declared war on England, we were persona non grata really and likely to be spat on and...oh yes. I tell you, it was an overwhelming horrid feeling, if you spoke English in front of them...just at that time. In a big city
- 24:30 there was such a fascist feeling, great fascist feeling in the air.

### **This was Rome or Milan?**

Milan. We were in Milan. My mother said it was a little bit like the fermentation caused by Il Duce [Benito Mussolini, Prime Minister of Italy] when he first came to power. She was in Italy then and she said the crowds that gathered

- 25:00 in the squares were enormous and everyone shouting, "Duce, Duce, Duce!" And in the railway stations you didn't know who was more important, Il Duce or...what's that famous Olive Oil....Duce, Olive Oil, Duce. So it was uncomfortable and that's why she thought, "Ok, don't stay in a big city."
- 25:30 My Mother I might say had been to see the American Consul, the British Consul, the French Consul, all to try and leave. She had even gone to the extent...we all had French identity cards and with a French identity card you went everywhere in France. And she thought, if we go down
- 26:00 to the border we could catch a little boat and row around and we would be on French soil. So we went down to...not San Remo, just beyond San Remo...what's the name? Remember my age!
- 26:30 Anyway I'll remember that. We booked into a little pensione and forthwith she went down to the beach and started...as Mother was want to do, to talk to some of the locals. I'm sure she must have said, "We'd like to get around to France" And someone said,
- 27:00 "I can get you around in one of these little dinghies. If you haven't got much luggage." He said, "You might have to wade through water a bit." And Mother said, "That's alright, so long as we're back in France." And she thought then we could catch a boat from Marseille or where ever. I don't know if it would have been any better. But the fact remains
- 27:30 that we did go down there, we did this and it was all organised. This fellow was a sailor and he said he would come to the hotel, the pensione at 7 o'clock Tuesday evening or what ever it was. "You be ready and I'll row you around." Well we waited 7 o'clock, 8 o'clock
- 28:00 and by the time it was dark he came knocking at the door and said, "I'm terribly sorry. Just really this morning, they've put in motor torpedo boats with machine guns and big search lights, so I'm not going to do it any more." So we went back to Milan and that's when we went south. It was a bit scary.

### **28:30 You still went on to La Scala though is that right?**

No, we had left La Scala.

### **So that was in Milan. I thought it was in Rome. My Italian...**

La Scala is the opera house in Italy and it's in Milan.

### **Can you tell us your first impressions of seeing La Scala?**

Yes, rather disappointed from the outside because

- 29:00 it's not like the Paris Opera House which is a beautiful structure to me. It's big and it's nice but you could pass it by and not realise it's the Opera House. But inside...oh it's magnificent. My last performance at La Scala was in the
- 29:30 corps de ballet and I've had a postcard where I'm on the post card and I've had it blown up so you can tell it's really me. It was the Sleeping Beauty, and my grandmother was still with us. She had come over briefly. She must have been a bit mad to have stayed so long too. So she came and she had been living in London coming over to Paris
- 30:00 so she had come down to Milan with us and she wanted to see performance, and it just so happened that she had to leave Milan and catch the boat, I believe she was catching the boat in Naples. She had to leave the night before the first performance of the Sleeping Beauty.
- 30:30 Which was a pity. So my mother wrote to the Principal...the Commenatori Mataloni, asking him, could they have permission to go to the dress rehearsal the night before. So he gave them tickets to the Royal Box. So the last time I saw my grand mother was then.
- 31:00 **What position did you...**

Just in the corps de ballet. I was too young to have any principal roles then. All the 14 and 15 year old girls were in the corps de ballet. Scattering petals down the steps and this sort of business.

31:30 But it was nice.

**That was your last performance?**

At La Scala yes. And it was the last time I saw my grandmother. She came home. A hazardous journey. We were very worried and it was a very quick trip.

32:00 I believe. I read that in Mother's memoirs. A quick trip back to Australia and then from then on she was tormented from lack of news. But when we first arrived in England in 1943,

32:30 I think it was May or June 1943, we were immediately contacted. I mean it was a train load and a plane load of slightly different people who had come from internment. But we were certainly called in by the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] and interviewed by Anne Matheson and my grandmother was in hospital

33:00 in Sydney about to undergo an operation for a gall bladder removal, at St Luke's Hospital in Sydney. She had the wireless beside the bed and she heard the broadcast and she knew we were safe, and she never came through. She died.

33:30 Yes, but still. She heard it. But it's amazing the way life turns out like that. You asked me earlier about the different person I might have

34:00 been an what lesson I had learned being interned etc, and I think one of the best things that I have learnt, at least it applied to me and I think the three of us...I just think it's one of the better things of life

34:30 that with time you do remember the better times and not the worst times. Yes. I know when I dwell on it, some of the horrors of 1940...was it 1941

35:00 or '42? When was Australia about to be attacked by the Japanese?

**Early '42.**

Early '42. Yes. And the Italian newspapers said, 'Australia surrounded by the Japanese.' That I guess

35:30 is the blackest moment in my life. There are tissues in the kitchen.

**Do you want to get one?**

They're just near the telephone. Australians will not give in. I remember her exact words: 'We will not give in.'

36:00 She said they would fight to the last man. They were my mother's words. She said "We probably won't have a country to come home to, nor a family to come back to." But then,

36:30 thank goodness for that little wireless, and we heard that Captain Stevens I'm sure it was. And this buoyed us up no end. Captain Stevens in one of his speeches, talks late at night, used the expression

37:00 'Catch as catch can.' The following morning...it was a Saturday, we went out and everybody was in the piazza. It was market day. Saturday was market day. And you could hear Italians everywhere saying, 'Catching a capore.' 'Catch as catch can' which was a dead giveaway.

37:30 They had been listening to the English wireless too. That buoyed us up no end.

**Where were you when you heard that news about Australia?**

Oliveto Citra. That's the second place where we were interned. I tell you, when we first put into these rooms

38:00 ...it was...you went into this small area where they had little charcoal burner things where you could grill things. But that was not for us because that belonged to the people who owned the apartment and who had

38:30 ...well it's not an apartment. It was a dwelling. That belonged to the people who had the house in the country and they were going to come in once a week. So we had upstairs and we went up the stairs beyond the door where you sat uncomfortable and it was open, where we had one room which was a little living room,

39:00 and then another room which was a bedroom. And all there was in there were...one bed which was a heavy iron stand shaped like this and four planks of wood about that far apart.

39:30 That was the bed and a mattress which had holes on both sides and you put your...it was stuffed with corn sheaves. You undid these little holes every morning and you went wish and then it came up to about that and then in the morning when you woke up it was down there.

## Tape 5

- 00:33 ...until more or less the last minute, I was every day at La Scala, and in the beginning everybody was happy and friendly, very friendly, great. The Italian teacher, the dance teacher, the girls. Even Beniamino Gigli [Italian opera singer] was singing there at the time and we used to call him Uncle Benumina. He used to come along and chuck us under the chin.
- 01:00 Have you ever heard of Beniamino Gigli? A famous Italian singer, famous. As famous as Enrico Caruso. You've heard of Caruso? So they were all friendly and then....like a tap, the propaganda and I read in the diary that I used to come home every night in tears because the dance teacher was really nasty.
- 01:30 And in fact, I not only danced in the Sleeping Beauty but I appeared in the crowd scenes and a couple of others, and photographers came along to take photographs and so my dance teacher would put me right at the back and
- 02:00 pass derogatory remarks. So at one stage I had had two dance teachers there. The first one...when I went there, when I started....I guess a ballet enthusiast would understand this, there is and there still is today, a Cecchetti method. Enrico Cecchetti [Italian dancer, teacher 1850-1928] was one of the
- 02:30 very first ballet dancers, teachers who devised a method of learning to dance ballet. And then subsequently there was the Ballets Russes, the Russian classical ballet. But the Cecchetti method remained and probably still is at the La Scala today slightly different. So I started in a lower class and was far more advanced than
- 03:00 the little girls I was dancing with, but there were some differences that I needed to get adjusted to. And she was a gentle woman and a very nice person. And she came on stage while the photographers were there and she saw what the nasty other teacher was trying to do. And she said, 'Don't worry.' And she tried to bring me forward
- 03:30 to be properly in the photograph. And then the other one, 'Get her out the back.'

### **Where did that compliance with the propaganda come from in the State Opera or the State Ballet?**

It was the State Ballet. The head man, Mataloni...I don't remember him being violently fascist.

- 04:00 But to keep your job you had to be outwardly if not inwardly fascist.

### **Why was the fascism directed against you as a foreigner?**

English. We were just about to be at war with England. Suddenly English... 'The English, they have five meals a day and we can barely afford two!' or something like that.

- 04:30 The propaganda, the newspapers were so full of what Mussolini was going to do and the Germans are doing well and the English...

### **What did you see of anti Semitic...?**

Nothing. Nothing. There's a most beautiful film though...

- 05:00 about the same time. I've taped it quite recently, called...with Isabella Rossolini, called The Sky Will Fall.

### **With this mounting pressure on you, what was going through your mind as far as continuing...**

- 05:30 I think I began to despair that we could stay, what could we do, and I guess Mother being the courageous woman that she always was would say, don't worry we'll get through this.
- 06:00 But I notice in her diary she does refer to it quite a bit. It's funny, my brother who was working drawing statues and the like in the Costello in Milan, a beautiful place. He had a certain amount to do. Well, he had his teacher and others I guess in this museum.
- 06:30 He didn't complain of any unpleasant fascism. But it was virtually everywhere, where ever you turned in the street almost.

### **Do you recall any friends you made at the time, Italian friends who you danced with in the ballet?**

- 07:00 Not by name.

### **Were there other foreigners who were dancing in the ballet with you?**

No.... I guess if it hadn't been for my gold medal.

- 07:30 Subsequently there have been I think but mainly for guest appearances. It's basically for Italians.



**What do you recall or can you recall about the moment you were told to leave and you could not go back after that last performance?**

- 08:00 I wasn't told to leave. I left. My mother said, "If you're so upset you can't go ahead like this." Because it was day after day of being so upset. She just said, "Don't go back any more." and I didn't. And we just planned to leave.
- 08:30 She said, "I think if we disappear, virtually into the countryside, we may be forgotten." But I guess they had already noted us. I'm sure that under the circumstances if we couldn't leave Italy
- 09:00 she did the best thing by going into the country, down the south. It's also possible that there was less anti- British feeling down south than there was up north. Yes, I'm sure. I mean people in the southern part of Italy and in the small towns particularly, they
- 09:30 were really not worried about politics. The only thing that worried them was having their husbands or fathers away fighting. As I said to you, if you're a stranger five kilometres away you're just as strange.
- 10:00 The second place, Oliveto Citra was more difficult from the point of view of living in the sense that we were high up. It snowed in the winter. Our shoes were wearing out fast and that's when my brother invented the soles
- 10:30 which he attached. He went to the local tip and he found some rope about that thick and he possibly borrowed a hammer and some tacks, and tacked that round and round and round the sole of the shoe. And then on the top of that he cut from tins, from the tin bits of tin also about this wide which he
- 11:00 put over the top of the rope. And so it would cling to the mountain side as we were walking and so the rope would last. So that was good. The heating, with snow on the ground in winter time...the cold, and our heating was a brazier.
- 11:30 Do you know what that is? Rather like...quite a nice looking copper plate about so big with little charcoals in it. So you virtually almost sit on it to get any warmth. And we noticed that most of the women because the place was mainly full of women and
- 12:00 old men had marks, sort of black and red marks up and down their legs from being close to these braziers. But then the place we went across to at night when we escaped they had decent fire places and that sort of business.

**We'll come to Oliveto Citra...back at Eboli. Can you tell us something about fleeing, and leaving Milan**

**12:30 and heading for Eboli?**

Yes. I can't remember much of the trip. Just that we knew we'd find some sort of accommodation at Eboli and in fact this was a little

- 13:00 peasant's cottage.

**What did you know of Eboli?**

Well quite a bit because we had been there before. That is, my father was born on property out of the town with the little cottage on it...actually the property belonged to my Italian

- 13:30 grandfather. But I think his understanding was that the cottage was leased to people who worked the land for him. Share farming or something like that.

**How were you received by your Italian family?**

Very warmly but they had to be very careful. Not to be...I mean we couldn't go...they had a huge house. They had

- 14:00 something like 36 rooms, but we couldn't live with them because that would have been aiding the enemy. Helping the enemy even though we were family.

**Had you been by this time registered as internees?**

No we were registered as internees within a matter of weeks of arriving there.

- 14:30 So yes I would say from memory, for the first two or three weeks we would have stayed in his house. It was and still is, I think today it's a big place. But even there, the bathroom...I don't know how many bedrooms there were, umpteen.
- 15:00 But the bathroom of which there was one had a pretty net, a lace net over the bath, and there was no shower. But Mother felt, I'm sure sensitive to his position and so she said we must move out so that...
- 15:30 So he said I'm sure that we could have the little cottage. I'll ask the people who are there if they've got somewhere else to go to. So we did...what's he going to do? That little cottage

16:00 was really...if we had been allowed to stay there instead of being shifted once the soldiers came down, life would have been much much better there. But there again there was no bathroom there. There was running water and a fireplace. It was quite a long walk to go up into the town to sign the Act of Presence.

16:30 And very quickly we made friends.

**What was the signing of Act of Presence procedure? How did that work?**

You went in and you waited until the mayor or whoever was in charge of the Town Hall that day was free and you just went and signed.

17:00 If he was nice you came straight in, if he was not he kept you waiting. I don't remember ever waiting in Eboli. But once we went to Oliveto Citra in the beginning, where the man was so horrid, there we were kept waiting. Yes, Eboli

17:30 it was delicate because of the position of my grandfather, otherwise we were fine. And funds were running very very low and nothing of course could come through any more, so this Dutch fellow said he would have a word with the American

18:00 Consul and then in turn get in touch with the Red Cross. The Italian Government then allowed a pittance. Just enough to have some pasta and spinach and whatever.

**What became of the Dutch fellow?**

I don't know. He moved in far loftier circles than we ever would.

18:30 But he was so furious. He was so furious with the fascist government. He said he had a sister-in-law who unfortunately is high up in Berlin and he said he was contacting her because the Germans will have those old oil wells, not the fascists.

19:00 Six of one and half a dozen of the other [similar options] I suppose.

**So you were getting a pretty rapid introduction to the politics of the world at that point. How were you finding following events? And how were you ...I mean it's a long time ago...**

I think in all honesty I was a bit scatterbrained. At that age life skips along merrily, merrily, merrily anyway. I

19:30 was learning for the first time to cook a bit, really literally for the first time. I was becoming a bit interested in the peasant way of life and peasant dishes and some of the hair raising stories the peasants would tell me. Yes actually they said

20:00 that some years beforehand the woman living in the cottage had been throwing the water from the kitchen out the window into the garden, on the strawberries or whatever. And she kept on having a recurring dream that there was a body underneath

20:30 and this body had a band round its head. And the body was saying, 'Don't throw any more water on my head, or some misfortune will occur to someone in the family.' Well of course it was just a dream and she didn't think much about it, but it kept on recurring. And then one of the family was killed in car accident and then the same dream occurred and then

21:00 they lost a couple of goats or sheep or something like that which was quite something to people on that scale of living. And at the funeral of the cousin who was killed in the car accident, she discussed with one of the relatives that she had been having these dreams. The relative said, 'But that's extraordinary, so have I. We really should do something about it.'

21:30 So they went to the mayor and the mayor went to the church and they organised it to be dug up and what did they find? There was a Saracen...they traced it back, it was a Saracen princess, and so then she was taken and put in the museum in Salerno. Funny things.

**How integrated into this peasant way of life did you become?**

Well I think quite well. Better in Oliveto Citra than Eboli. But we always stood out by our dress. We were never dressed like peasants. We had the clothes we had when we were first interned. Most peasants always wore a 'kerchief around their head. A scarf.

22:30 Which we didn't. And Mother, both in Eboli and Oliveto Citra wore as most Australian ladies did, particularly from the country, she wore a hat. And she was known in Oliveto Citra as La Senora Carcopelo...The Lady with the Hat. The Lady with the Hat.

23:00 We always looked different and it was the dress.

**How were you...or how much attention was paid to your schooling in other area other than the arts and ballet?**

Well in Paris I had the French teacher for general studies and French. In La Scala when I started they were general studies...

23:30 I mean I had done obviously some of it but there I was trying to do it in Italian. Half the time I could read very well but I had no idea what I was reading about. I could pronounce it all very well. Rex Harrison. It doesn't matter what you say so long as you pronounce it properly. That was me. I was pronouncing it properly but I didn't know what I was saying.

24:00 So yes, I've missed a lot of education.

**What about Eboli?**

No, we didn't have any chance really. I couldn't go to school there. No. Definitely not. I read when I could.

24:30 I read what I could, but I'm very ill educated.

**What books did you have access to and what were you reading do you recall?**

Mostly books lent to me. Books by Italian authors. You wouldn't

25:00 know them. A famous one of course by Gabriele d'Annunzio [Italian author, war hero, Fascist 1863-1939]. You probably ever haven't heard of that one...Gabriele d'Annunzio was the writer

25:30 who was supposed to have written the first pure Italian from the time when it went from what they called Italiano Vulgari, vulgar Italian which was mixed with Latin, to classical pure Italian. I have...after my father died

26:00 and my stepmother, bless her heart, a wonderful woman. My stepmother...they were married in very old age. My father was in his 80s and she was a childhood sweetheart. And she wrote to us and told us, so we went back. Felix was working anyway overseas. So

26:30 we went back there. And she said please go through all his things and take anything you want, and I found a book...yes you can call it a book or a notary from the town, the district with cases which a notary would

27:00 write about, from 1534 to 1570 something I believe, and that is written in Latin and vulgar Italian as they called it. It's a pretty unique piece. It's upstairs if you want to photograph that.

**Extraordinary.**

27:30 **What did you see of the growing...or the security arrangements or the military or the fascists at Eboli?**

Really, until the soldiers arrived, nothing. Really nothing.

28:00 No. Why...that famous author because he really was quite famous, Carlo Levi wrote the book, Christ Stopped at Eboli because from Eboli down Christ had forgotten. He still hadn't remembered by the time we had arrived.

**What did you know of the events of the war that Italy was involved in and how Italy was going in that war?**

28:30 Really not a great deal. We had as I told you the wireless that was giving us news from England.

**Was that in Eboli or was that in Oliveto Citra?**

Right through from Eboli through, we took it with us. I'm sure the

29:00 Italian newspapers fairly well informed us of what Italy was doing in the war.

**They suffered some major setbacks in West Africa at the time, what was reported in late '41?**

I thought that occurred later on when we were in Oliveto Citra. I think so.

29:30 But there again you must remember I was a pretty empty headed young girl who thought of ballet and music and...so we're down with the peasants? So we're down with the peasants. The only thing that worried me was that I couldn't dance. There was even not anywhere that I could have exercised. Once I accepted it, and

30:00 I accept things fairly easily. So once I accepted that we'd be there for a while, never dreaming that it would be three and a half years, I set about living the life we could with pleasure. Yes. Getting to know the peasants.

**Any particular friends or people you got to know in Eboli?**

30:30 Yes, one was the...he was the teacher of mathematics at Naples University and he used to come down

and speak Italian very nicely with us which helped us to learn. But he was a young man and I think it was not just the Italian

- 31:00 language ...in fact one night he paid us a visit and we were sitting around the fireplace, and there was a heavy bashing at the door. We jumped up, "Who's that?" and it was his father with a
- 31:30 huge stick in his hand. 'What are you doing here with these English people and young girls at 10 o'clock at night.' He was furious and he was a total peasant. His son had risen way above him, going to university and so on. But he was so embarrassed by his
- 32:00 father's performance. We were just absolutely gob smacked [astounded] I think is the word. To think that anybody would come...I mean we were innocently sitting around the fire chatting. So the father probably thought that the two of us were cuddling or whatever. So he still continued to come but not so often.
- 32:30 So that was unpleasant but we did have any other unpleasantness in Eboli probably because of my grandfather's family. He was Cavaliere Romano with a very respected name.

**What games did you play or sport?**

Well we did erect, just outside the kitchen a net and we found a rubber quoit to play

- 33:00 deck tennis or whatever they call it, that all. But we had plenty of exercise walking all the way up to the village every day. Plenty. The highlight of that was Mr Deharne first of all and then hearing Bishop Crotty. I do remember not
- 33:30 long after they had interned us, and one night, it must have been about nine, half past nine at night. It was fully dark and there were a series of little bangs, crack, bang, bang, crack, bang. We thought, goodness what's happening and we didn't dare go outside to investigate. And the following morning we found
- 34:00 burnt out little sort of cracker things over the ground. And we wondered if they were the police, perhaps to frighten us. I don't know. It was never actually fully discovered. But someone was walking around and cracking these...yeah.
- 34:30 There were at the front door glass panes and the bottom two had been kicked out at some time or other and just replaced by thick plastic. Anyway they were opaque, and when we first moved in it was not clean and a lot of work had to be done
- 35:00 there to get it clean. I remember Mother putting a pillowcase over her head and some old clothes and getting to work seriously as an Australian country woman would. And there was a knock at the door and it was the local priest. Mother opened the door and said, "What can I do for you?"
- 35:30 "Oh." he said, "You are newcomers. I've come to bless the house." And Mother said, "Yes you well may because there's a curse on every animal that crawls." There were fleas, and what are those things, lice, and just about everything. He took off his hat and turned around and went. He thought, "These infidels." you see.
- 36:00 She closed the door. Mother thought "Oh dear what have I done?" So she got down on her hands and knees and lifted the plastic to see if he had gone and she met his nose on the other side. He wanted to see what we were doing inside. Yes.
- 36:30 Nothing ever occurred any more. We were left in peace. But when we went to Oliveto Citra, Mother said to us, "Now it says in the Bible that you should go to the house of God to pray. I'll leave it up to you two.
- 37:00 This is a Catholic church and we are Anglican, for what little difference there is. Not very much." She said, "Shall we go to church on Sundays or shall we not?" And we said, "Yes I think we should." And so we did. Another note. Yes, it was a very wise decision. That also integrated us better with the locals.

## Tape 6

- 00:36 **When did...take us through the story of how you came to be moved from Eboli to Oliveto Citra?**

We were notified by...how we came to go to Eboli or Oliveto Citra?

**From Eboli?**

Yes, we were notified by the authorities that a platoon of soldiers had come down and were camped

- 01:00 on the outskirts of the town of Eboli and for fear that we may corrupt the soldiers we were going to be sent elsewhere. First of all they put us on a bus and sent us high up in the mountains to a place called Teggiano.

01:30 Amazingly there was what they called an inn. There were two rooms and food provided of sorts. But it was never used. It was filthy beyond description. The first night there we spent getting rid of

02:00 every crawling beastie. Everything was horrible about it I guess. But mostly the dirt. Dreadful. You can't imagine having bad food and little insects but by golly they sure provided it. So Mother just went to the local authorities there

02:30 and said, "I'll walk down the mountain. You can shoot me but I'm not staying here. And my children will follow." Well they ummed and erred [debated] a good deal but eventually they relented and said there was somewhere else they could send us. So a couple of days later they put us on the bus and after many hours travelling on a rickety old bus

03:00 going round and round the mountains we arrived at Oliveto Citra.

**Did at any time did you come into contact with other internees being moved about?**

Never.

**And when you say your mother offered to walk down the mountain be shot if it came to that, was there ever a threat of force applied to you by these people?**

Not there.

**How did they treat you at the times when they moved you around?**

03:30 The only really unpleasant force if you like to use the word was when we first arrived at Oliveto Citra.

**What happened?**

He was the power in the village.

04:00 I think he was the mayor and Fascist secretary all rolled into one. And he was pompous and very, very fascist and he thought, "Ah, two women. I can get them to work in the house free. No payment."

04:30 So once an abode had been found such as it was, and I must say that when we moved into the accommodation, and there was really no furniture, the end of the first day...let's say we moved in, in the morning, from having stayed in the one room which was the policeman's.

05:00 When we moved in, in the morning, by the end of that day, almost everybody in the village had provided us with something. Pillows, blankets, sheets, towels, a saucepan or two, a bucket. They got together and ...

05:30 but this mayor come fascist secretary, he said, "I want you to come to my place. Be there at 8 o'clock in the morning and you can clean and you can do the dishes. You can make the beds and you can also help my wife to make the pasta."

06:00 And Mother said to us, "We know we shouldn't be doing these but he's such a power here that if we refuse he may send word to Salerno and invent something that wasn't true, and we could be put in jail. Heaven knows what." So we

06:30 started, Mother and I. Bob was not required. We started doing all these things: cleaning the house and helping with the preparation of the food, but in the meantime we were talking to the other people all around the piazza and we told them the story.

07:00 They were furious and we found that he had a very bad name and they hated him. Apparently he was behaving abominably to all...see they were nearly all women. So it was not long, maybe 2 months, and one morning we heard a commotion outside and we saw a crowd of women converging on the piazza with pitchforks and brooms

07:30 and anything they could find and all going en masse to the little town hall where they picked up the ink pot, threw it at this man and said, "Get out! Via, Via!" So in fact

08:00 he was removed and someone else came in his place who was quite amenable to us. But that was rather unpleasant.

**It sounds very democratic though in a Fascist country at the time?**

Well I guess...the fact

08:30 that they were nearly all women whose husbands were away and we were just the icing on the cake if you like. The finishing touch and we're not going to put up with a so and so like that.

**It sounds like the town had a lot of sympathy for you?**

Yes they did.

**What contact did you have with the townsfolk?**

- 09:00 Excellent. Not long after, 2 or 3 months after there was a family, a husband and wife and two small boys. The husband had been the taxi driver for the whole village and of course the government had taken away his car. So he had nothing more to do.
- 09:30 And he came to see my mother and came to see us and he said, "If you are desperate for money, I will lend you some money. I have some put by. I know you're British and I can rely on the British, so I'm quite happy to lend you some money." Mother would not accept it but she surely appreciated it very much. One of
- 10:00 his sons had had polio and was quite disabled with it and Mother had been the nurse and read the story of Sister Elizabeth Kenny [Australian nurse 1886-1952, pioneered controversial polio treatments], I think she went to America. She said, "I think massage can help." And so a couple of times a week she went to their house
- 10:30 and spent quite a long time massaging this boy's limbs. When we went back after the war, he was walking unaided. Had a limp but was running a café, very successfully. And he said, "God bless you."

**What elements of Fascism**

**11:00 was there in that town?**

Only the authorities. One in particular. He happened to be related to the family we were very fond of and got on well with. He was so close to us. But he was definitely very fascist and very bellicose.

- 11:30 He was there one night when we were sitting around the fire with these friends and Mother said something rather derogatory about Mussolini. She wouldn't have dared say anything dreadful, but it couldn't have been too good. He rose up like a bull,

- 12:00 (ITALIAN) "I prohibit you from using Mussolini's name. Never say it again.!" He got really furious. And from then on he was quite unpleasant with us.

- 12:30 He said, "In fact don't you ever speak English again in front of us. Never. Only speak Italian." So Bob and I used to use pig Latin. (PIG LATIN) When we went back years later after the war he was so apologetic and he produced

- 13:00 two lovely souvenirs. One which I'll show you was a small Roman oil lamp and the other one is a chipped Etruscan vase. So he was very sorry and apologised. But he was unpleasant. Other than that some of the kids in the street sometimes...nothing much really.

**13:30 What would they do?**

Oh, one of them once threw pebbles. Mother turned around in Italian and told them off and that was that.

**The town was missing a lot of its young men. What was the atmosphere amongst the women like?**

Very good

- 14:00 really. Remember that a lot of them went out of the town to their farms around and then came in on the weekend. In the church men were on one side and women on the other. But we helped...a young man came knocking at the door one day and

- 14:30 he said, "My uncle is in charge of the electricity for the whole valley." There were mountains on either side. He said, "We're to help you if we can. We're sorry. If there's something you need." Mother said, "That's very kind. We'd like to meet him."

- 15:00 So the young man said, "It's quite a long walk but come down to the electricity station." And he was from Sardinia, very tall, very thin and very charming and very nice and he lived there with his sister. We became very good friends and after the war, Mother helped

- 15:30 his nephew, and that was his nephew, come out to Australia. She financed him and helped him get his first job and he's since then run restaurants etc. So...the friends we made.

**I want to go through quite a few of those things, but perhaps you can tell us where you ended up living...**

**16:00 I know you've described that in a part before, but perhaps you can describe that again for us?**

Firstly there we just had a one room which was the overnight stay for the policeman who would come around once a fortnight for all the crime and murder and whatever. As I said, that was a room with a washbasin and a toilet and one bed.

- 16:30 My brother and I slept on the floor in the beginning. Then the authorities realised that they had to provide something better than that. So obviously they persuaded these peasants who weren't using these quarters most of the time to allow us to have two rooms on top.
- 17:00 It left them the room below where the cooking should have gone on. So what we had in the two rooms above was a chimney. In front of the chimney was a hole that big. It would be about a foot high and about a foot wide. And you made your fire
- 17:30 in front of it because you couldn't get it inside. You made your fire in front of it and you had a tripod and a cauldron. So you went out to the village square with your bucket or your jug to collect the water
- 18:00 and you took it home and you put on there and you cooked your pasta or any form of grass that was edible. And we ate a lot of grass. Dandelions...not too bad. So that was the main cooking arrangement. In the same room there was actually a baker's oven, a big one but you would have needed
- 18:30 lots of timber to light it, and what could you bake in it. Well, when we had been there for nearly two years we were given...that was by the lady next door, some sugar and we sat and looked at that sugar for a few days because we hadn't seen any for ages.
- 19:00 And Mother said, "Suppose we take the donkey, we borrow a donkey from somewhere and we go up and get the timber and we light this oven and make a sponge cake?" How wonderful. So we borrowed a donkey and we went to get fuel. Also we had kept...every now and again we would be given an egg and so we
- 19:30 had kept 3 eggs, just enough to make this. And if you had seen our three eager faces with the flames going up and this sponge cake rising and rising and then collapsing down to that. They call it in Italian pane di Spagna
- 20:00 which is Spanish bread. This young man whose uncle was the electrical director down in the valley said, 'That's a disc of Spagna.' Well it taught us how to make do with very little. We had one very
- 20:30 cold, wet winter in 1942. We couldn't go out. We had no raincoats. We had no umbrellas and it made it very difficult to go working for the peasants to get food in return. We had cornmeal and water and you would cook that up and it made a gruel.

21:00 But even that with the weather turned mildew. But when you're hungry you eat anything.

**What was your staple diet and how did you come by those foods?**

Wholemeal pasta. I do not recommended. Wholemeal pasta. Occasionally

- 21:30 a piece of pork because most people in the village had a or several pigs. Perhaps two pigs. Every time they killed a pig they were supposed to give half to the government. So they endeavoured to do them in the night time and then the pigs would be
- 22:00 .....the pigs were being killed. So we were given...if it hadn't been for the kindness of those people we wouldn't have had nearly enough to eat. There was a small store but that had so little. These farmers were self supporting. Their meat consisted of pig, rabbits, goat
- 22:30 very good goat, chicken. This very kind woman next door, the doctor's wife, she would pass over the balcony on Sundays some chicken.

**What was in the other room?**

Well

- 23:00 there was a bedroom with this very hard bed and the next room with the baker's oven and the little hole in the wall. There was nothing in it when we moved in but my brother made the furniture. He would go to the local tip where there was quite a lot of bamboo.
- 23:30 Fairly substantial big bamboo and he cut that into pieces and he made chairs and tables and he even arranged a pulley system whereby we could...there was so little space. So he slept in this living area and we slept, Mother and I in the big
- 24:00 bed with the corn sheaves underneath, and all the washing and cooking arrangements were all in the same pot. And then sterilised by boiling the water.

**How did you wash? Can you take us through what you were able to keep yourselves clean?**

- 24:30 Yes, hot water which was boiled. Or cold water if we wanted. So there was this cauldron if we wanted hot water. Make the fire, or just cold water in a dish.

**Where did you draw your water from?**

In the village square.

**Can you describe the well in the village square?**

Like this, a pump. One of those pumps. Up and down

25:00 pump.

**Was that a focal point for the village?**

Yes.

**What happened at the well?**

Don't worry; quite a lot of people did have running water. We didn't. It was rather makeshift accommodation even for the peasants. They would have a proper little house on the outskirts. And we went there many, many times because they were awfully kind. They were very nice to us and we would plant potatoes and take

25:30 the corn off the cob. Whatever was going and they would have lunch and we would have lunch with them. One day he said to us...it was in the middle of summer because it was very hot. He said, "How about some giuncata?" I said, "Giuncata?" He said, "Yes I'll show you." They had their own milk from a goat.

26:00 So, he put the milk...while we were having the pasta, he put the milk in the sun and then when it was tepid he took a bunch of grapes and he squeezed the grapes into the milk and in a few minute you had junket.

**Very simple but surprisingly good.**

Yes.

**What other treats or special things were you able to get your hands on apart from this junket and the sugar?**

26:30 Well we made, with the help of the peasants, home made pasta, and some of them had white flour, some didn't. If it was white flour it was great and it was beautiful pasta. We made bottles and bottles and bottles of tomato sauce, and they used

27:00 mainly wine bottles or beer bottles with the little, you know that top with the rubber that you pull down. They would put them in a container and boil them. But they were beautiful tomatoes. Alas we don't seem to have the same tomatoes with the same flavour here. They grew their own basil so they had the flavour of that. Yes, biscotti...they

27:30 taught us the use of biscotti. In other words, who had a baker's oven would make their bread about every three weeks. So they would make enough to last them. If they ran out they had what they called the biscotti, which was there anyway, a loaf like the bread with indentation about an inch and a half wide, just slightly done with a knife.

28:00 And then left in the oven ...after all the bread was finished, it was left in the oven really overnight until they were quite hard. And then, when the bread was finished after two or three weeks, they would put this under running water and it became almost like fresh bread.

**Did you get any other insights into**

28:30 **peasant life that you had never seen before that surprised you?**

Oh yes. Funerals.

**What happened?**

The first one, this was in Eboli actually. We were down near the cemetery, and usually you would see the hearse with the horses come by and people...a

29:00 few had cars and the rest would come by foot. And one day just in the middle of the day, it was a white horse, or two white horses and a white carriage, beautifully done up. Flowers everywhere and it was coming careening down, galloping. And Mother stopped what she was doing out in the fields

29:30 and she turned to the peasant who was working nearby and she said, "Giovanni in our country the hearse goes slowly all the way to the cemetery." And Giovanni said, "So they do here Senora. This one must have died of something infectious."

30:00 The wailing. I've never come across anything like that. Around the corpse when you go to pay your respects, they have usually several women and they go on and on and on for hours. Extraordinary. Perhaps they don't

30:30 do it any more.

**How would the women dress for the mourning?**

Black skirt, black shirt, nearly always in black. But most of the peasants wore very little colour. Really.



Long full skirts, what you might have called a ballerina, peasant style anyway.

31:00 Wooden clogs known as zoccoli that they would stick their feet in and just a blouse tucked into the skirt so they went out this way and that way and a scarf around the head. There was not a woman in the place that ever wore trousers.

31:30 What was different?

**What about the men? What were the typical peasant clothes?**

No such thing as t-shirt. They weren't popular then I suppose. The t-shirt revolution hadn't really come about. Shirts. Just multi coloured shirts.

32:00 Checked shirts and things like that and just an old pair of trousers. Braces some of them and the same zoccoli, and some wore hats. Women never wore hats.

32:30 **In Oliveto Citra or indeed in Eboli, was there any noticeable gentry at all and who were they?**

Oh yes. In Oliveto Citra-chitra, the gentry were right beside us. The doctor's wife who was a ministering angel to us, she came from a very wealthy and well known family

33:00 in Naples. The Lauro family. There was a shipping line, the Flotta Lauro of that family. So she was gentry and she married a Ruffalo and he was related to the family that lived on the other side of the little square. That was no bigger than this room.

33:30 The chemist and his family, they were considered gentry. I think that was about it.

**You haven't told us about the chemist very much. Describe him?**

Right. The family Ruffalo.

34:00 Husband and wife and three sons and a daughter. The daughter and I became very good friends. I used to spend a long time in the pharmacy with her putting medication into onion skins because they were short of the capsules to put them into.

34:30 And we would talk about life in Australia versus life in Italy and boys and whatever young girls spoke about. One brother was a doctor and he was in the army. Another brother was in Naples and he was a lawyer.

35:00 And the third one I think was a solicitor. Yes they were all very kind and hospitable to us, and when we went back after the war...the first time I went back with my mother they weren't all there. But afterwards when I went back with Felix

35:30 I think the sort of bush telegraph had come through. But the moment I walked into the chemist shop, he was at the desk and looked up, 'Adele!' Yes. After all those years.

**How did these slightly better of people, the gentry, how did their lives differ from the peasants around?**

36:00 Considerably...really, because they didn't have to work in the fields. They had people working the fields for them, and they benefited because they received the food straight from them.

36:30 But the peasants respected them. They were nice people. On the whole it was extremely harmonious. We did notice quite a lot of people going around...young people, with infirmities,

37:00 Mother thought it was all the interbreeding and there was still quite a lot of tuberculosis then.

**Once you settled in these quarters that you described, what did a normal day hold for you?**

Right. If we didn't know in advance

37:30 but we usually knew, if we could go to this family or that family on the outskirts to help and in return to get some food. But the weather of course influenced our decision. During winter with snow on the ground we couldn't really do much. So

38:00 my brother, he was known as a painter, so they said to him...there was a small hospital. It was just out of the town, the village I beg your pardon. It was run by nuns and they said to my brother, "If you're a painter then you can paint the hospital." So Bob said, "Oh well, if they pay me for it why not?" So he got work with

38:30 a paint brush to paint the hospital. One of the nuns was very nice and befriended us particularly. And a sister of hers from Rome came to stay for a while. And she had spent considerable time in France and she spoke fluent French. In fact I think she had been married...

39:00 no she hadn't. She was too young but she married later on a Frenchman. But eventually she came out to

Australia and settled in Bathurst of all places.

## Tape 7

- 00:33 Some of the men in their youth had been to America, the idea being to make a fortune. Not many came back with a fortune but they came back and so they learned a few words of English and when we would meet this particular person who had been to America he would say (ITALIAN).
- 01:00 'Fachamo', that's 'Lets do, shake hands.' The odd English word would pop into the Italian language. What's to tell?
- 01:30 A funny incident? We must have been there for at least a year and Rosetto from the chemist shop said, "They've sent notice from Salerno (which was the closest big city) to say that people are coming round to give and demonstrate
- 02:00 a permanent wave if anybody is interested." And I think quite a few of the peasants had never heard of it and were probably interested to have a permanent wave. So Mother said, "That will be fun to watch." So the people duly arrived and the set themselves up in the one room of the little inn and
- 02:30 in those days, in the very, very early days and probably it was no longer existing here, but there the permanent waving system, you were attached to some sort of big hood with little corkscrew things that went up into this hood and once you were attached and all your hair was caught up in these corkscrew things, they switched on the electricity
- 03:00 for a few minutes and you were cooked. Anyway people were too frightened to come forward to have it done. Mother never being afraid of anything said, "I'll give it a go." And they said, "Alright if you want to be the first one we'll do it for you free." "Great." said Mother. So about 11 o'clock in the morning, she sits down in the chair and laboriously the hair is wound around these corkscrew things
- 03:30 so she's all up like this. Can't hardly move. And they turn on the electricity and it goes off. Now the electricity depended on these friends of ours all the way down in the valley where it took about three quarters of an hour to walk down and another three quarters of an hour to come back again.
- 04:00 Nobody seemed to have heard of the telephone. Perhaps they didn't have one. But Mother was sitting there for hours while someone went all the way down there and told them to switch it on again and all the way back again, and they switched it on and for a few minutes....and it worked reasonably well. But the whole of the village was outside all looking in at this.
- 04:30 It was the greatest peep show ever. And then because of what had happened no one was keen to have it because it might go off again and they'd had to sit there for all those hours. It was a bit of a fiasco. But to us it was very funny. Oh dear oh dear.
- 05:00 **What relationships did you form or did you form any romantic attachments to any boys in the town?**
- Yes a bit, a little bit flirty. Nothing much. The young man who came down from Naples,
- 05:30 and Mother said he should have been on a ship. In fact he was on a petrol ship going to and fro from North Africa. She had just seen it. And yes he kept on coming back frequently. He was attractive and we had a bit of fun. We danced, not in our place because you couldn't really dance.
- 06:00 But the place opposite. But nothing much. There was really no...it was mainly eye contact, wishful thinking.
- What about your brother?**
- Much the same. I don't think he was very...
- 06:30 No not much. Well if he did it was...
- The owners of the house you were staying, can you tell us about them?**
- Just a nice husband and wife, farmers, no children,
- 07:00 and he said to us one day when we were out making the tomato sauce, he said, "There's something I always wanted to know. Is the moon the same out in Australia as it is over here?" Simple good folk. I can build a story around them. There really isn't anything to say.
- 07:30 I'll tell you, when we had a meal with them we all ate out of the same dish which was something that was quite foreign to me and from which I really shrank in the beginning. It was a big dish, this size and everyone dug their fork in and set to work.

08:00 And after you had a few mouthfuls he would put his fork in and stir it all up again. Mother told me afterwards that she could see me shrinking. I wasn't brought up to eat like that, but so what. I was too young to appreciate that it was just their way and being kind.

**What can you recall about their attitudes to fascism?**

08:30 Absolutely...they said, "We don't care who's at the head of the government so long as we've got enough to eat. That's all that really interests us. If we can work the land and eat and get enough, that's all that really interests us."

**You said there were not many families around, what did you know of families that may have suffered losses or anything like that?**

09:00 No, we didn't. Not at that stage.

**At any stage?**

No, I mean...no come to think of it, we didn't know of any who suffered losses. We didn't. No.

09:30 I don't know how it happened that way, I don't know. We would have known, I'm sure...yes we would have known.

**What did you think your future was at that stage?**

10:00 It was so unforeseeable. As I mentioned, when the newspapers carried the headlines that Australia was surrounded by the Japanese, we thought that was the most terrible news that could ever, ever reach us. My Mother said, "The Australians will fight to the death and there will be

10:30 nothing left." And we had visions of not having any country, any home to come home to. It left us feeling really shocked, empty, awful. I think it's the only time that I as a young girl felt

11:00 that I would go off my rocker. I felt like tearing my hair out by the roots. If it hadn't been for the broadcast from the BBC at night, that saved us. Really. I do think a lot of them. A lot of

11:30 peasants weren't politically minded in any way, but they were certainly not fascists. The ones most likely were the schoolteachers. The schools...that was one good thing that Mussolini did. He set out...

12:00 He sent teachers and in this case they were all girls, young women to the remotest areas to teach and to teach with a fascist bent. But I admired them because they would walk so many kilometres every day to reach their little school and then all the way back again.

12:30 **What did you see of nationalist celebrations of any kind?**

No. There was nothing really much to celebrate.

**I was thinking more of the political nationalism of the school children or rallies or...**

No.

13:00 **Singing the national anthem to the raising of the flag or anything like that?**

Yes, but it was a very low key really because it was so small. Really very small. The other thing that impressed me very much was before Christmas, two people

13:30 would come round with an instrument that was very like bagpipes. I'm not quite sure what bagpipes are made of, goat skin or something like that? Well this was goat skin with the pipes. They were called piffero and they were whoosh, whoosh, and these two people came round to play at every

14:00 household nine days before Christmas. And of course the main song that they sang was La Novina, the 9th day. And that was very nice, very special.

14:30 Then another personality in the village was Maria...she had another funny name. Maria...she had one eye the size of a big marble. It was a false eye from memory. It was extraordinary and really made her look terrible. She said she could cure all ills.

15:00 And we all had mad jaundice which really affects the liver very badly. We had jaundice. Bob had typhoid fever,

15:30 and malaria. We all had malaria, bad malaria. And the only thing they cured us with was goats' milk. So this woman, she was old. She really didn't look...Maria the Witch. She came round and she said to Bob,

16:00 "Cut off your toe nails and I will put them under the front door in the sand and in so many days you will be cured." Well we thought we had better do what we were told to do, but of course it didn't make any difference. He would have gotten over it anyway.

16:30 But she went around the village curing people that way, like a witch doctor. And people accepted her. But fortunately we had a proper doctor next door and he just said for things like malaria that they didn't

have all the correct drugs. But he said, "Rest and goat's milk and

17:00 eat very little and it will pass." And eventually we improved. The malaria came back to me in 1951 in the Bathurst Hospital. And I had it for quite a while and then I was given

17:30 the drugs Quinine. It's funny how it can lie dormant or a mosquito came down from up north. I don't know.

**It can last a long time. What about your birthday. Can you tell us of any birthday celebrations you had?**

I didn't have any birthday celebrations

18:00 but it was my birthday when we were in Eboli and I had left the wireless on from the night before. Just on the station but not switched on and when I got up in the morning, I think I told you, I switched it on to the same station and I shouted at the top of my lungs, "Mother you won't believe it, that's Bishop Crotty." And it was from St Pancras Church London.

18:30 That was just about the best birthday present I could have received.

**Do you remember what he said?**

No I must confess, I don't really remember what he said. No I don't. I was just so excited. I just couldn't take it in. Thinking of where I was and where he was and it was coming over the air.

19:00 I was used to hearing war messages. I'm sure, knowing Bishop Crotty it was to give hope to everybody. He had an excellent manner and a beautiful speaking voice. He was just the right clergyman to give a good sermon. Excellent.

19:30 Very tall, very imposing man with a beautiful voice.

**Can you tell us of listening to the radio in Oliveto Citra?**

Yes, well we listened to it in both places. But Oliveto Citra, since we knew that people had been around at night time, we had to be very quiet.

20:00 We almost the three of us had our ears on the wireless and we had to be very careful to put it away and cover it up with all the logs of wood on top, and hide it in the box that was made by Bob and then covered by a nice pretty cushion that Mother made which the fascists would come and sit on and look around and see that everything was in order.

20:30 No wireless to be seen. It was okay. I know that when I arrived in London, I made inquiries at the Foreign Office as to who the Colonel Williams was. Nobody knew. He spoke excellent Italian and he certainly gave us hope. That sigatcha kipor sigatcha kipor,

21:00 catch as catch can. Well then we discovered everybody whispering to one another in the piazza the following morning. That was such a giveaway. How many had been listening to the wireless from England. It was forbidden of course. Absolutely strictly forbidden. Yes.

21:30 We spent a lot of time doing stupid things like trying to make something tasty out of very little. The brazier which we used to heat ourselves, you could very slowly cook food on, so we had to get very fine charcoal

22:00 We had such a craving for sweet food. So what did Mother come up with? She said, "We will make our own sultanias." In our bedroom we strung up rows of string across the top of the bed to which we hung grapes.

22:30 And as the heat came, the hot nights and the hot days, gradually they shrivelled and when they were near the end of shrivelling we put them into the baker's oven for a few minutes and they were quite good. But hornet...

23:00 no, bees would come in and prick the grapes and the syrup would fall down onto our faces. But we made a sort of sultana.

**What about the passing of the seasons and the weather in Oliveto Citra?**

Passing of the seasons and the weather?

23:30 Being a very old building I'm thankful to say it was reasonably cool. We didn't suffer greatly from the heat. We were up high and we had a breeze, so from that point of view, but we suffered a lot from the cold. That we did.

24:00 Chillblains and so on. I made...we were given by a peasant who had shorn a couple of sheep and very kindly he gave us the wool, natural, just like that. The Senora Ruffalo, the doctor's

24:30 wife said, "Just wash it lightly, not much and put a tiny bit of...disinfectant into the water

- 25:00 and a little bit of..." we made our own soap by the way, so we had home made soap. Then she said, "Then you dry it and I'll find someone who can lend you a spinning wheel." All of which we did and so we spun and I knitted myself
- 25:30 a cardigan and I wore that until it was really falling apart. I mean I brought it back to Australia. It would have been too small for me eventually. But boy it was warm. It was wonderful.
- How were you off for clothes?**
- Not very well. Not very well. Hence the making of that.
- 26:00 I don't think anybody lent us any clothes. I think we just held out. The shoes, Bob fixed those with his clever arrangement. And of course being an age of...
- 26:30 fashion conscious young girl, we had, Mother and I a few pairs of silk stockings. In those days nylon was not yet around. We had a few pairs of silk stockings. So if we wanted to look our best we would put on the silk stockings and when they went into ladders...
- 27:00 I had long red hair, and I mended the stockings with my red hair. Needs must the devil...as they say.
- What were the occasions that you had to dress up for?**
- If somebody in the village had a birthday and they wanted us to come and have lunch with them or whatever it was. It wasn't much.
- 27:30 It was just a little bit better than everyday.
- Did you ever have dances and music and celebrations like that?**
- At Oliveto Citra, no. In the chemist's house I danced once or twice with this young sailor.
- 28:00 But we had our gramophone and the gramophone travelled with me everywhere and I brought it back home and not long ago I got rid of it. In Eboli we did dance. The young man who taught us mathematics. He was a keen dancer and a friend of his, and we would some times dance.
- 28:30 There was somewhere to dance. I mean we could but in Oliveto Citra you couldn't.
- What music did you have with you?**
- Well actually they brought some. They would bring down the odd record. If we didn't have something suitable they would bring the odd record with them. There is a tune which I guess every southern Italian would know.
- 29:00 A lot of the families played...had someone in the family who played the harmonica, and you would hear frequently, just so frequently this particular song...La campanola bella...
- Can you sing it for us?**
- Yes, sort of...
- Take a glass of water.**
- Yes it's not a bad idea.
- 29:30 Song sung in Italian
- 30:00 I'm sure that every southern Italian...you've probably even heard that. It's up at the local markets, probably where you went today. There was an Italian the other day trying to sell his strawberries and he said try one. I said, "They're not like in Italy." He said, "Oh no senora, not like in Italy." And he said, "Oh to be in Italy now."
- 30:30 And he said, "I'm going shortly. I'm going to buy another harmonica. I haven't had one for a long time. They're too expensive here but I'll find one down the south of Italy." I said, "I bet you'll be playing (ITALIAN SINGING) and he said, "Yes I will." There was a version also of the song Lili Marlene in Italian which was funny.
- 31:00 And it was all back to front. But it was a good tune.
- Can you give us a version of that?**
- No I can't. I'd have to look it up because I couldn't remember that one. No, I can't remember all the words. That's asking a bit much.
- 31:30 But the campanola bella is a lovely melody and I really fancied it so I guess I've remembered some of the words. Actually I sang...when I started at La Scala they told me that every young girl was tested for her voice as well as her dancing ability. Would I care to give them a demonstration?

- 32:00 And I had a moment of hesitation. I daren't sing an English song. This is really not the moment. I didn't know any Italian songs. I hadn't had time to learn any Italian songs. What can I sing? (FRENCH SINGING)
- 32:30 You must have heard that song. And I was so nervous when I got to the last two lines of the first verse, they are...(FRENCH) ...open your door for the love of God.
- 33:00 And I just couldn't think of it so I just (FRENCH) and it rhymed and it was open the door my good old man. Oh well, nobody noticed. They weren't fluent in French. So in those days I had quite a good voice and I was told that if I wanted to become a singer I could study singing.
- 33:30 **How interested in your life back in Australia were the towns folk in Oliveto Citra?**
- No, not very. It was too remote. To absolutely remote. Even at La Scala where they were city people and much better educated, more advanced. Australia? Australia?
- 34:00 One of them said, "Are you sure you're pronouncing it correctly? Isn't it Austria?"
- Was there any occasions when you had to sing Waltzing Matilda to anyone while you were overseas?**
- No. But I was very glad when I arrived in London. Every time I went out with an air force boy and we walked into a nightclub, the music stopped and they played Waltzing Matilda. Every time. Infallibly, it was just gorgeous.
- 34:30 **What about...you met the delegation from the Red Cross in Oliveto Citra. Can you tell us about that?**
- Yes. They asked us thousands of questions. They were most impressed with Bob's furniture. They said he was most ingenious. He demonstrated how he pulled it up on a pulley.
- 35:00 **What's that?**
- The bamboo furniture. And we showed him the soles he had put on our shoes. They were interested in that. They said, they hadn't come across anybody else who had fended for themselves as well. Yes.
- 35:30 I'm sure, look I've never delved into this but I would be interested. I'm sure one of them was Count Burnidot and Count Burnidot was of the Royal Family in Denmark, or was it Holland. Denmark. And oddly
- 36:00 enough, if you know your history...the Burnidot family came from Pau where Felix's family come from which is the south of France, and at the time of Napoleon Bonaparte, Burnidot was something in the army. Let's say a captain in the army or something like that.
- 36:30 Napoleon was so grateful for the fine work that this Burnidot had done, he gave him the title. I shouldn't say any more because my history is abysmal. So I'm sure it was a Count Burnidot, and the other one I thought was Dag Hammarskjold [United Nations Secretary-General, 1953-61]. Now I might have that incorrect, but I thought so.
- 37:00 And in Eboli it was Mr Perkins from...I'm not sure if he was the American Ambassador but I doubt it. He was just sent from the embassy to help us and to arrange for us to get messages through. He was a very nice man. Golly...there have been so many
- 37:30 kind people on the whole. Very little that were really bad. The terrible tedium. The tedium and the day to day existence for fear we wouldn't have
- 38:00 enough to eat and that we'd become ill or that our country would be swallowed up by the Japanese. The more hair raising moments came for us really once we left. That was a bit worrying to say the least.
- 38:30 The trip up and across.

## Tape 8

- 00:35 **The question again. What language do you think in, especially remembering these times of the past?**
- If I am on my own and as far as I can think deeply, I'm fairly sure I think in English. But if it's short conversational sentences and things like that, of which you actually think just before you say them, I think in the language.
- 01:00 There are sayings in each language which are so perfect for the occasion and not in any other language except that one...

**Just on that, if something like that comes up in the interview, just feel free to say it in whatever language it's in because we might not understand it straight away but someone**

01:30 **watching the archive later on might really appreciate it because it really does bring you back to the immediacy of the situation. I think it's great. I'll see if I can understand it because it will test my French and Italian. What things during your time as an internee did you fear?**

The

02:00 loss of our country and our family. Lack of food. We started smoking to curb the appetite which indeed it does.

02:30 **We were talking about what things you feared during your time there.**

Well we didn't fear bombs. We didn't fear...very little. We weren't supposed to go out at night and on a few occasions we did and...one night

03:00 we did. We went down to the taxi driver's home and coming back it started to rain and we were creeping along very carefully and standing in the little square, and in front of where we were living was the fascist secretary and his offsider. He was standing there, just standing. They didn't seem to notice

03:30 the light rain falling, and talking politics or whatever. And we had to wait and wait and wait. Mother whispered, "I'm afraid they're going to be there all night and we have to sink down into the mud." It kept on raining and they were there for a long time. It must have been most important what they were talking about,

04:00 or else they were drunk. No, I can't say I was even afraid even then. We were afraid of the man who wanted us to become his prisoners, yes, that. Nothing else. We were not afraid.

04:30 It was more a sense of hopelessness. Will it ever end. Will we ever be home again? It must have been far worse for my mother, far, far worse.

05:00 And then when the time came that we were offered the opportunity to leave, to be put on this special train and to have to leave my brother behind...

**Before we come to that moment, how was it for your brother?**

05:30 A very difficult question to answer because he was a very private person and he didn't really convey his feelings much at all. He created...he did quite a lot of painting and drawings,

06:00 apart from painting the hospital. And he made the furniture.

**He made furniture?**

Yes and he worked as we did with us, in the fields. Sometimes

06:30 you can know a person all your life and never know them. Even though he's your own flesh and blood. So he was a very private person, not like either my mother or my father. Quite different.

**What was you mother's relationship with him?**

Good.

**How did it differ from the close friendship you seemed to have?**

07:00 Well we always had conversation going and they didn't. But he seemed to know and understand. He rarely, rarely ever swore or said anything

07:30 ...he was very quiet. Once only can I remember, when we were interned that he let out some big swear words. He had put our table up to the ceiling, strung up with the cords and on the table was a type of meat safe that he had made. There again of bamboo

08:00 What he had for the sides was some sort of netting which there again he had found at the tip. And he heard something go smash in the night. So he got up and there was this large rat...oh yes there were rats,

08:30 which had jumped up on this safe. We won't call it a meat safe because there was no meat. He had jumped up onto the safe, and Bob leapt up and grabbed...I would never have done that, but grabbed the rat by the tail and was left with the tail in his hand and the rat got away. That's the only time I can really remember

09:00 Bob letting out a few swear words. He was very mild mannered, gentle.

**How did you deal with the frustration and hopelessness of the situation?**

Oh I put some of it into words, walking, talking to my

- 09:30 mother. And sometimes to friends there. They could understand sometimes. To Rosetta the chemist's daughter. They understood.
- 10:00 It didn't take us long to form friendships and find that since they were sympathetic to our cause, we could talk about anything. They knew from the word go that we loved Italy and all things Italian, barring fascism. As Mother called it, 'grabism'.
- 10:30 **Can you explain that?**
- He wanted to take Albania and he wanted to conquer North Africa ...'grabism'.
- How did you feel having spent quite a few years in Europe, obviously you loved Europe as you say. So how did you feel about Australia?**
- 11:00 There or when I came back?
- There at the time?**
- It was still my home. Very much my home. The land and my homestead where I grew up. It was that part of my life which was separate at the time, but which I loved because I grew up there.
- 11:30 It was home.
- You mentioned about being quite concerned about the safety of your loved ones in Australia, can you tell us a bit more about how you got that news and...**
- Headlines in the papers: 'Australia (ITALIAN)' 'Australia surrounded by the Japanese'.
- 12:00 We of course had been listening to and reading the newspapers so we knew they had bombed Darwin. But to us it was the beginning and then we thought my God, that's the end of Australia. That was the worst moment ever.
- 12:30 **Apart from news through the Italian and Fascist influenced sources, what other news were you getting?**
- Only through the BBC, that's all. Only through the BBC, through this Colonel Stevens mainly.
- What did the Red Cross messages tell you?**
- 13:00 Hoping all well. We're well here. Glad to have received message dated such and such. Keep well. Keep faith.
- Would you write these cards and receive similar messages? How did the Red Cross mail work?**
- 13:30 I'm pretty sure that Mother wrote, probably to the International Red Cross, Geneva. It took a long time to go through but it did, and then the family would do the same.
- 14:00 Thanks to the American Ambassador we were on their books.
- How did it come about that you told that you could leave Oliveto Citra?**
- All we were told was...the local authorities
- 14:30 told us that information had come through that we could be put on a special train if we so wished to leave by such and such a date. They gave us very little notice I might add. I've sometimes wondered more about that, but I don't think it was an exchange
- 15:00 of prisoners. I think it was simply...this is how I feel. The Allies were about to land very shortly at Salerno beachhead and they knew the moment they did, the Germans who hadn't really come down on force all that way. They were mainly up north. The moment the Allies landed, the Germans would swoop down
- 15:30 and of course they did. And so with the International Red Cross, I think they tried to get as many people out as they could. It was a very interesting train loads. People of many nationalities really.
- Before you got on the train you had to leave your brother behind.**
- 16:00 **Can you explain that situation in more detail?**
- You can't. It was just suffering on both sides. It was because of what he said that we went. Mother said, 'I can't bear to leave you behind.' He said "I'll hide. Everybody knows me here now, we're all friends.
- 16:30 I'll go higher up into the mountains where they had goatherds and the like, making cheese and so on." He said, "I'll go up there and I'll hide. Nobody ever comes up there if they have no reason to." That was his reasoning anyway. I believe he probably could have hidden almost anywhere. I don't think...the Germans wouldn't have know



17:00 that there was someone there of any interest I suppose. But in any case he said, "With the Germans coming down, you'll either go back to a camp in Germany or far worse as women." He said, "You must leave." So we did.

**What was your brother's political status?**

17:30 **Why could he not come with you?**

Because he had an Italian passport. Because he was born there.

**How did he avoid being conscripted into the army?**

Yes good question. Well I don't suppose they could literally forced him

18:00 and because he had lived most of his life out of Italy, it was a complex situation. That fortunately did not arise because he would have gone against his will. No way.

**He would have been considered a spy anyway.**

18:30 **Can you describe the scene on leaving Oliveto Citra?**

Well the train didn't come as far as Oliveto Citra. We left by bus, and then another bus to Salerno where we caught the train. I can't...

19:00 I can't. I don't think we ever quite recovered from that. It was never quite the same again. Somehow...

19:30 Because although we thought it wouldn't be long before he would join us, it was a long time before he did. And as far as he was concerned we were going into very troubled waters anyway. But...

20:00 it was his decision and he was old enough to decide. I'm glad he did in one way. He was quite alright as it turned out except for the brief moment he appeared out of the mountain side and shouted to the American soldiers... 'Hey!' And they nearly

20:30 shot him because they thought he was a spy.

**Can you briefly...we won't go into it too much, but can you briefly tell that story. Later on when you were in Italy he told you this story?**

Yes he told us. So he went higher up into the mountains with a couple of the peasants and they were hiding because they knew...the Germans were swarming around and when the Germans disappeared slowly and the Americans were then

21:00 coming. I suppose they had a hidey hole. In other words, there was means from where they were...they were pretty high. They had means of discovering who was where and they saw the Americans, so he thought, that's fine, we're liberated. So he jumped up and rushed down the side of the mountain calling out and waving his hands. And the Americans then..

21:30 but until then he'd been quite safe, probably existing on milk and cheese.

**On that bus and train ride, what did you know of where you were headed?**

Well we had been told that we would get back to England. That's all we knew. We knew the train would take us up to the

22:00 North of Italy which it did. We went up as far as Bologna. We spent one night in Bologna in quarters. Then back on the train across France, Spain and Portugal. Every station that we stopped at there was a row of German soldiers

22:30 along the train, but in France behind the German soldiers there were French ones going.....making the V for victory sign and winking at us. Eventually we arrived in Portugal and that was like a fairy tale. Just

23:00 like a fairytale. So we were put in what was then quite a nice spacious one or two star hotel, in a very fashionable suburb

23:30 called Cascais. Felix and I went back years later to see if the hotel was still there when we went to Portugal. And it was still there but it was definitely crumbling. But we were told it would be a matter of days before we were flown over to England. We were there finally for six weeks because one of the planes

24:00 taking off had Leslie Howard on board and that was shot down. We were told that they thought it was Winston Churchill. Don't know. I was later told that Leslie Howard was in fact doing undercover work for the allies. I don't know,

24:30 I've never found out exactly. But to be in Portugal...to be free even if we didn't have any money. The food! White bread and coffee. I must say that it seemed, it was like a ...

25:00 it was a very busy city with people from everywhere. I have no doubt it was a hot bed of spies quite

possibly.

### **Were you in Lisbon?**

No, we were just out of Lisbon but I think Lisbon would have been a hot bed of spies. Anyway we were at the holiday resort, Cacais which was beside the beach,

- 25:30 and we wanted to swim and we didn't have adequate...one of the girls...she was English and had an Italian father I think. She had knitted for little girls, bathing costumes and it was...there was no lining or anything like that, but it was a fairly loose knit, and they
- 26:00 only came up to about there. About waist level and so we thought with those and a scarf tied judicious over the top we could just make it So we did go swimming but in Portugal in those days they were very strict and we were looked at I'm sure, with surprise.
- 26:30 But anyway we did go swimming and I wish I knew the name of the British Consul because the group... we were mainly woman of course on the train, some of the them went to see the Consul and said, "Look we know perfectly well that when we get to England, there will be coupons for this and coupons for that and they will be short of everything
- 27:00 and we won't be able to buy things. We need shoes and clothes." So the British Consul did the best he could which was to issue them with coupons so they could go and buy shoes and so on. They were going in two by two and when our turn came Mother and I set off and I said, "Some of the shoes that they have
- 27:30 bought, I reckon they've bought them at the local Woolworths. They're pretty..." Mother said, "Let's be thankful for what we can get." This was such a day. We went in, sat down, were received very nicely by the British Consul and Mother looked at him in her funny way and she said...let's say his name was McIntyre. She said, "You know, you look
- 28:00 exactly like a Miss McIntyre in the year '20 something or other going between Adelaide and Perth." He said, "That would have been my sister." And he described her and Mother said, "That's who it was. We travelled all the way between Adelaide and Perth." So they chatted and chatted and after a while, he had a pair of
- 28:30 pince nez [reading glasses] and he looked over his pince nez at my feet and he said, "Now dear I presume you want a pair of Topi sandals don't you?" And I was very fashion conscious at that time. And I said, "Yes I would." And he put his hand in his pocket and he took out ten pounds sterling from his wallet and he said, "Now dear you go and buy yourself the nicest pair
- 29:00 of Topi sandals that you can find." And I did and I've blessed him ever since and I wore them for years and years and I thought that was a lovely thing to do. Every day we would receive notification. We were going, we weren't going and we had to get ready and then when eventually the time came
- 29:30 we took off late at night and all the windows were wooded in. It was a Dutch plane. When we arrived in England the Customs were very careful.
- 30:00 One woman, she was...funny enough I thought she was German so why she would have been interned I don't know. I thought she was German. She certainly was a singer. She had a lovely voice. She entertained us a few times in the hotel. She, while waiting for them to go through her affairs, she started to make up and she produced the lipstick and she was going through all this.
- 30:30 And the Customs Officer said, "Just a moment, may I have the lipstick?" He took the lipstick and turned it upside down and emptied out the other side and there was a diamond about this big. Anyway we were hustled on and then we were searched.
- 31:00 Nicely, but we were searched and then so to London. I think we were so tired, I don't remember the train trip. It's hazy. We were so tired. I just remember arriving at Paddington Station and
- 31:30 Mother saying, "There must be rooms near Paddington Station." And that's where we found rooms at Paddington Station. Nice landlady and every time there was an air raid alarm we went down into the cellar because the shelters on either side were too far. So Mother tried
- 32:00 to contact the Bank of Australasia to find it had been bombed and because of that their records had been lost. They had no signature. So it was going to take weeks for any money from Australia. So she said, "What am I going to do?" So she thought we'd go straight to St Pancras. So off we went to St Pancras,
- 32:30 flattened. Nothing there. And then we saw this little old lady walking across St Pancras Square and Mother said, "I bet she's a local, she'll know." So she said, "Bishop Crotty?" And she said, "Yes, down at Hove. I can give you the address." So we contacted Bishop Crotty and darling Bishop Crotty lent us, I think 50 pounds sterling
- 33:00 which was a lot of money in those days. Mother also had a cousin, a distant cousin, Lady Abinger, who

lived up in Scotland so she contacted her and she sent us some money until finally we received money from Australia. We were

- 33:30 in this boarding house for a few weeks and then Bishop Crotty came up to London and said, "I can find you better accommodation. One of my young curates has a nice little flat near St Pancras church...that isn't. I'm sure for a nominal rent you will be able to have that."
- 34:00 So that was fixed. We moved in there. In the meantime Mother went immediately to work close by in an American club, and then to the Boomerang Club. Everybody had to be actively engaged in the war effort, or entertaining the troops or whatever.
- 34:30 So it was decided that I would go and apply to Sadlers Wells. I knew I hadn't done any dancing for two and a half years, but they might take it into consideration and start classes with a hope that...so I went with what information I had, the gold medal and certificate. So yes they accepted me in the classes
- 35:00 at Sadler's Wells in the classes. And so I started very slowly and the Met...Ballet was Russian, Salgeff [perhaps Nicholas or Konstantin Sergeyev?] with very little English and very little French. And so when I explained that I must go slowly, that I was very stiff, 'Nyet'. He just took my leg and ...
- 35:30 So I was in a lot of pain and collapsed. I called a taxi to go home. I notified the doctor and the doctor said, "My dear, I'm very sorry but there's nothing much I can do. You need to rest. Hot compresses and then cold." He said, "If it had been peacetime you could sue him but now you can't do anything."
- 36:00 So I was in bed for a short time and then I received notice that I was called up. But I applied for a job at the Foreign Office because of my languages, and so that was really the end of the ballet career. Even when I came back to Australia it was never the same again. So that was that.
- 36:30 On the train coming over was some interesting people.

#### **On the train from Portugal?**

Yes.

#### **Tell us about those people?**

Yes. There was an Italian lady from Sicily. Her husband was the Consul for Messina. For some reason

- 37:00 I don't know, but he escaped with his son and eldest daughter. And his wife and youngest daughter were left behind. She was 15 going on 16 and we became friends on the train and friends in London.
- 37:30 After I started work at the Foreign Office she said that she intended to work somewhere and she wondered if she could get a job there. Well she hadn't of course finished her education but she did at least speak Italian and she could read and write and she applied. She got a job. She was readdressing letters and things like that. But good enough. She came into the office one day sporting a diamond ring
- 38:00 the size of an enormous cherry, and she said, "You must come and meet my fiancée." I said, "I'd love to meet your fiancée. You're a bit young." "Oh, (ITALIAN) that's the way, we get married young." And so it was arranged that we would go and meet the fiancée. Mother and I. We arrived on time.
- 38:30 He wasn't there yet but the mother was a true Sicilian lady. And get the daughter married early, settled. She said, "His family are doing very well. They have two milk bars." And when he comes in he was short,
- 39:00 balding...I couldn't believe my eyes. His name was Michael Forte. If that doesn't mean anything to you, he was the brother of Sir Charles Forte [English hotel owner]. Does that mean something to you now? Yes. And they married. But they were later on
- 39:30 divorced. When I went back to England I tried contacting her and talk about getting into the lion's den. I had to start on the street to the man on the front gate and tell my story and then go up to the first floor and then the second and right up to the top. And they said, they were divorced. So I never saw her again.
- 40:00 **What was the atmosphere like in London when you arrived?**
- Exciting. Everyone was living...it was like living on the edge of a cliff really. I mean you had air raid sirens going at any time, bombs...I was in
- 40:30 Bush House beside Australia House when it was bombed. Bodies were brought in and blood every where and I nearly fainted. Somebody said to me to put my head down between my knees which I did. But you can get accustomed to anything, but it was exciting.

## Tape 9

### 00:34 Tell us about your life in London, yes?

My day off from the Foreign Office I went to work at the Boomerang Club, serving luncheons and teas and coffee and so on, to our boys. And that was fun. I upset some scalding hot tea on a wing commander once on his bald patch. Terrible.

01:00 And then we saw so many come in wounded, scarred, sad, awful. But I went...I became a member of the Overseas League and I went to dances at the Overseas League where I met Polish Air Force, French Air Force, Belgium Air Force if there was one.

01:30 Americans by the millions and Australians, and I must say as a general rule, all the air forces were well behaved. The Americans too. Very polite. Very, very nice and thoughtful. Running late, ring you up, catch a taxi, yes. And

02:00 I was spoilt. Totally spoilt. I had a lovely time. Dreadful isn't it. War time. And then we had in the meantime made the broadcast to Australia and so family over here had heard the good news. My grandmother in hospital had heard the news but my cousin, Scott Macphillamie [?] and his friend, Sir James Rowland [RAAF Air Marshall and later Chief of Air Staff; Governor of NSW 1981-89] to become...,

02:30 they went to Canada and then came to England and called on us, and that's when Mother said...the first moment she saw him, they came into the flat...This is Jim Rowland. "Jim, you are going to do great guns." Which he did. And...oh, we went down one weekend to Tintagel...Land's End.

03:00 I had my grandfather's sister was married to the Vicar of Tintagel, and there he was and we went and stayed at the vicarage. Freezing cold in the middle of summer. That was very interesting though because it was supposed to be haunted and we had a feeling it might jolly well have been.

03:30 We came back to London. Yes general work in the Foreign Office and running up and down...in the building where we had our flat there was no cellar and we were far away from the closest air raid shelters.

04:00 Everybody in the building was told to go into the corridors, take their tin helmets, lie down and try and go to sleep and hope that the glass windows wouldn't be blown in...and the building wouldn't be...There was an Australian journalist in there, Keith Hooper who worked for The Truth.

04:30 He was in a flat on the floor above. And this for the company he would come down with his tin hat and lie down beside Mother and me and chat until we went off to sleep.

### Who was Keith? Tell us about Keith?

He was a funny guy. Good company. He really was very nice to a young girl.

05:00 He took me sometimes to parties and on one night he brought some home to his little flat and he let off a Verey [flare] cartridge and the smoke went everywhere. People came out. Silly Keith. And then he rang up one morning and said, 'Guess what?

05:30 Lion's Quarter House has a special on. Tomatoes and bacon on toast, are you coming for breakfast?' So we went.

### What was an Australian journalist doing in London?

Yes, particularly as journalists...he was a war correspondent. And war correspondents had a chain on the front of their helmet with WC [war correspondent]...and everyone used to make fun of the WC.

06:00 But whilst waiting to know if I would get the job at the Foreign Office, there were two restaurants owned by Australians, Quality Inns. Allan Hall and Ken Hall,

06:30 and I believe the father was Attorney General for New South Wales for many years so I went into see Allan Hall. I told him my story and he said, "My dear, I would love to help you. You could do dozens of things here but I just don't have a spot at the moment." And just at that moment in walked his elderly father.

07:00 He was in early '80s. He said, "I've been listening and I want to learn Italian. You can give me Italian lessons in the meantime." Well, he was very very nice. So we saw quite a bit of him. But Ken Hall went on to form Cinesound.

### Your escape and return to England was reported in the Australian press...

You saw the articles in there.

07:30 Anne Matheson interviewed us over the air and then the article appeared in the Women's Weekly and in the Herald.

**You must have been quite a celebrity back in Australia?**

I wasn't here to know.

08:00 That's how my cousin's family, Scott's family... subsequently he heard and came from Canada with gifts for us.

**What was the Australian community like in London?**

Fantastic. I think the Australians were respected...I was going to say loved, but liked certainly.

08:30 I mean every time I went to a nightclub and there was an orchestra and we came...I mean they were always down under, down stairs. We walked down the stairs, the orchestra would stop and they'd play Waltzing Matilda. I felt like royalty.

**What became of Keith?**

What became of Keith? Well the last I saw of him was when we left England. I don't

09:00 know whatever became of Keith. I know he went over on D-Day [allied invasion of Europe in 1944] and he actually told us beforehand.

**Did you meet anyone special at that time amongst all these boys who were taking you out?**

09:30 Yes, one very nice boy from Queensland. I had become a trifle interested in looking at people's hands because of what Mother had done. And one day

10:00 I said to him, "Let me have a look at your hand." And I could see it, a very short life line. Yes I might have married him eventually if he wasn't killed. But...

**What happened to him?**

Shot down. His plane shot down, missing, gone.

10:30 He never came back. There were so many. He was a gunner. I remember, he was a gunner. I can't remember all the names of some of the interesting people I met. There were a couple of very interesting

11:00 Americans. They had their insignias I guess covered over. And somebody said it was because they were doing special undercover work or something like that. I don't know. But they were very interesting people. I met a very interesting Englishman.

11:30 He was an anthropologist and...did I say an Englishman? He was Australian, and he was in the army as a matter of fact. He definitely said,

12:00 "I'll see you when you get back to Australia." He did and he was a very interesting man. He even came up to the property, yes...so many.

**What was your main job at the foreign office?**

12:30 Going through the Italian newspapers picking out items of interest, or what I thought were items of interest and translating them into English. That was the main thing. Nothing very complicated. Never very complicated really. Translating.

13:00 Who did we meet? Our boss...and when I say our boss, there was two of us working in the office, and we were approached by our immediate boss one night and he said, "I have something to ask you two girls. There are some very high ranking Chinese Air Force gentlemen here and they

13:30 would like to go out for dinner to a Chinese restaurant and they've asked if some of the girls from the Foreign Office could accompany them." They were looking for some female company. She and I looked at each other...we didn't speak a word of Chinese. But he said, "They speak some English and they've asked, so could you go?" So we said,

14:00 "Well why not?" Nice meal. And there were two girls and I think there were six Chinese, and one spoke just enough English. And another one, not enough English but he had a dictionary which was one inch by one inch. And every second or third word the thumb

14:30 would go leafing through this tiny little dictionary. And he tried to tell us this funny story which went on and on. Oh dear. I remember my embarrassment. We had meatballs of some description. Goodness knows what the meat was. It was in a sauce and we were only given...

15:00 what do they call them, chopsticks. So I picked up the first meatball, not without difficulty in a slippery sauce with these.

15:30 I conveyed it to the mouth, got it in and chomp...it was bone. What do you do to get that piece of bone back to the plate? You can't spit it out. There is no spoon. You have to lodge it between your tongue and the two chopsticks in your mouth to get it back to the plate.

- 16:00 I was so embarrassed. Anyway it went fine. The Foreign Office thanked us very much. "The evening went very well, thank you very much." Was I ever frightened? Yes. Not really in Italy. Terrified a few times in London.
- 16:30 When you suddenly hear either the sound...there's been no warning, but you suddenly hear the sound of the buzz bomb coming and you look...and a mile up there you can see the sign for the underground and another one up there and on one occasion there was this big building in front of me,
- 17:00 sand bags up all over the place and a guard standing right in the doorway, and he saw my dilemma, looking right and left and he said, "Come on in here missy, come on here missy." So I jumped in beside him and the two of us cowered under the bags. But we came out alright. But at times it was very frightening.

**Can you describe that sound and the silence after it stops?**

- 17:30 The sound was like a buzz which was why they were called buzz bombs. It was a buzz. A loud buzz and suddenly it cut out and that was a terrible silence. And then bang, smash or whatever it had hit.
- 18:00 Oh, and the underground. People piled up in the underground with nowhere else to sleep. And Mother was of course, every night that I went out, worried that I wouldn't come back to the flat. It was always on our minds. But when you live with a thing like that all the time you just go on living. You did this and you do that and you normally wouldn't do it, but you do it.

**18:30 How long did you stay in London for?**

Just under two years, and Felix has always said, 'How did we happen to come back from England before the war was over.' Why did we get permission to come out on the ship with the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester?' I don't know. All I know is, we did.

- 19:00 There were quite a few New Zealand Air Force men going home on leave on that ship. Then there was the Duke and Duchess and a fair sized entourage. And so, in the middle of the trip, they decided that once they were out of harm's way virtually I guess, to have a concert. Who could perform? So I said, I'll do something.

- 19:30 I can dance. They had a decent little band of 2 or 3 people from memory. They were able to read the Spanish music quite well enough, and so, as I said, I performed for royalty.

**Before you left London how were you able to involve yourself back in the dance world at all?**

- 20:00 Not at all. Only cheek to cheek and head to toe.

**Any other incidents in London before you left that come to mind?**

Oh, well interesting

- 20:30 to me and my mother particularly, when the first prisoners of war came back from Germany, and one was a young man who had become a doctor, a surgeon of some repute I understand, from Bathurst. Doctor Brooke Moore and he volunteered to stay
- 21:00 behind when they were captured at Crete. He volunteered; being a doctor to stay with his men and so was sent to Germany into camp there. We were told that the Germans thought so much of his surgery that they actually filmed it, and how long he was in camp I don't know exactly, but quite some time. And so we heard in the Boomerang Club
- 21:30 that the first men were coming and Mother and I were both in the club that day and in walked this...he was very, very tall and Mother was as little as I am. He recognised her immediately, and he strode in, in front of the coffee bar, picked her up and went round and round and round.
- 22:00 Yes that was a special day for us to know that he was safe and well. He suffered terribly. He was as thin as a rattlesnake but he was well. I'll probably think of things tomorrow.

- 22:30 Don't we always.

**We'll better keep going back because we'll run out of time. Did you get to meet the Duke and Duchess?**

Oh yes we played deck tennis opposite the Duke and beat him. There were four of us mind you. I was playing with a naval commander

- 23:00 who had suffered frost bite. I mean you couldn't see his feet but he couldn't move normally, but he was very tall and he stretched so far to grab the quoit. Mother was really quite charmed by one of the ladies-in-waiting,
- 23:30 Lady Clive she was. Lady Clive said to Mother, "I know the Duchess will miss her ...or Prince William who was little, they will miss their puppies, would you be able to help us find the same...I think they

were corgis, when they first come to Sydney?" And Mother said, "Of course I'll

- 24:00 help. No problem at all." Which she did and we delivered them to Government House and Prince William was sitting up in his pram; although he could walk, he was sitting in his pram and someone had attempted to lift the dog...I can't remember if it was one or two. And he said,
- 24:30 "Put that dog down please." But we did see quite a bit of Lady Clive until they went to Canberra. And Mother also went to Lady Clive's wedding. One of the ADC [Aide-de-camp] was Schriber, a very very tall man. They fell in love and she was a widow.
- 25:00 Lady Clive married I think Commander Schriber, so Mother was invited to the wedding in Canberra. I did meet a gentleman who was one of the few originally selected to be chosen to be ADC.
- 25:30 He was not finally chosen but he did decide to come out to Australia. I met him through my friends the Debroisay's [?]. He was a friend also of the conductor...well known conductor. Oh dear...
- 26:00 So I was able to go to some beautiful rehearsals of the orchestra, and I met Mackerras as a young man. Sir Charles Mackerras. He was just a young man then, starting on his way to become a famous conductor.
- 26:30 Lady Clive was charming. I felt rather sorry for the Duchess of Windsor. At one of the dances I suppose she felt she must mingle, they have to I guess.
- 27:00 It was a very hot night. And this man who invited the Duchess to dance...well I guess you could smell him a mile away. But she had to dance with him and she did most valiantly until she was rescued by one of the ADCs.
- 27:30 These things happen.

**Can you tell us about arriving back in Australia?**

Oh yes. I think the day, the very day that we got off the ship, we sat down on the wharf and ate bananas and passionfruit brought to us by friends

- 28:00 and family.

**28:30 How did you pick up your life again when you got back to Australia?**

Well you do. Just picked it up. It was new again. Another new life. I started teaching Spanish dancing. I went back for ballet classes because I loved ballet and I went back to Leon Kellaway. He was much older too.

- 29:00 He was very happy to see me.

**How had you changed though?**

Physically and mentally of course. I shared some of my lessons with a young girl

- 29:30 who went on to join the Australian Ballet and became one of its stars, Kathleen Gorham [dancer, 1932-83]. When she was, Felix and I went to one of the ballet performances and we went back stage to see her, and we said how much we enjoyed her performance, and she said, 'I'll never be as good as you were.' That was very nice of her wasn't it?

- 30:00 But she died too young. Sad. She was a very good little dancer.

**Where were you when VE [Victory in Europe] Day...**

So I was sharing a flat in Elizabeth Bay with a young girl who my aunt had introduced me to. She came from Townsville and

- 30:30 this young girl was working just as a secretary for a man who owned a fleet of taxis. But she was very nice looking, a nice personality, intelligent and go ahead, and then the Old Vic Company came out, and somewhere along
- 31:00 the line she was introduced to Dan Cunningham from the Old Vic Theatre Company. He had been a prisoner of war and had suffered quite a lot. They fell in love and she went back to England to marry Dan Cunningham which she did. But things became very difficult for him. He couldn't get enough work eventually and he
- 31:30 tippled [drank]. And she got work for a firm which I believe was called...it sounds funny, but Huntly and Bottomly or something like, that made woollen garments. And in no time at all, Mary was on the Board of Directors, and I knew all this because it was in the papers here.
- 32:00 On the Board of Directors, and she had been the one who had invented what was called dyed-to-match. This firm brought out the skirt and the twin-set to match one another. And this was her bright idea. So she was doing very, very well. But the marriage went on the rocks because...and eventually she went off

to Italy

32:30 and she married a count and she settled in Rome. And we took her to dinner years later. Interesting.

**Where were you when the war ended with Japan?**

In Sydney.

33:00 **Can you recall that day?**

Yes. Sydney went mad. Sydney did. It was fanfare everywhere. You've seen pictures and motion pictures too I have no doubt. That's what it was like exactly. People went mad.

**What about VE Day? Victory in Europe Day when the war ended?**

33:30 **Do you recall where you were then?**

I was in Sydney. What was the date do you remember?

**May...goodness I should know it off the top of my head? May the 4th I think.**

I can't remember where I was that day.

34:00 No I can't remember where I was.

**Looking back to that time, how do you regard that period of your life?**

The internment?

**Yes that great...things didn't work out and you didn't go on to...**

Well

34:30 I can only say as I've repeated so often, one of the greatest blessings of human nature I think is that when you look back on suffering, and there were definitely very hard times, you think of the better times. So that now I remember the days of internment more happily than sadly. It's not that I

35:00 forget the difficult moments, but I remember the kind people that we met and some of the happy times we had.

**Any regrets?**

How can you regret something over which you have no control? Yes I regret I wasn't able to become a prima ballerina. That mainly.

35:30 But I had really no control from the day Italy came into the war. That was that.

**How do you look back on that war now? It swept a lot of lives away, many people were changed...and you amongst many people were changed. But how do you look at the necessity for the war or about war in general?**

36:00 I can only say that reading, seeing films which I've subsequently seen, people that I've met, people who came out on the ship with my brother, a Polish doctor...ours was a picnic in comparison. So I have a lot to be thankful for. Ours was a picnic.

36:30 **Can you tell us of the reunion with your brother?**

Yes. I told you he is non demonstrative. He was definitely...but it was extremely tearful on my part and my mother's part and

37:00 our celebration at Romano's Restaurant in Sydney...when he went to ring up and the fellow said, what name should I say and he said, 'Romano.' Yes, the best table! But he didn't know what to do with himself. He thought that he would go back to Bathurst and

37:30 perhaps manage the farm and do architecture by correspondence, which he finally did. He was

38:00 okay. I mean he made plans for motels in Bathurst. He never became a top-notch architect and he as never cut out to go on the land. So later on he moved into town and started his own arts supplies. And he was quite happy with that because it gave him time to paint and draw, and he sculptured

38:30 most beautifully I thought. He drew most beautifully, but I didn't care so much for his painting because I didn't think he had the sense of colour.

**Adele, do you follow the ballet still?**

Oh yes of course. Of course I do, yes.

39:00 **We're nearly at the end of the tape. The archive will be kept for posterity, 50, 100 years. Based**



**on your experience especially during your internment and when you look back over your life, is there anything you wish to say to people watching this in 50 or a long time?**

39:30 No matter how difficult things can become, say to yourself, you will overcome them because you will. And then when you look back on them they're not nearly so bad as what you thought at the time. That's what I think. Make the most of

40:00 what you have. In my case it included food and everything. We made the most of everything we could. And believe in people.

**Thanks Adele for talking to us this afternoon.**

**INTERVIEW ENDS**