BDOHP Biographical Details and Interview Index

HUGH-JONES, Sir Wynn Normington (Hugh Jones)
(Born 1 November 1923, died 5 July 2019)

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Interview of Sir Wynn Hugh-Jones at Fosse House, Avebury, Wiltshire by Malcolm McBain on Monday 15 August 2005

Early life, education and military service in the RAF

MM: I see that you were born on 1 November 1923 and that you were educated at Llangollen County School and Ludlow Grammar School before going on to Selwyn College, Cambridge. Could you tell me just a little about your family and why it was that you moved from Wales to Ludlow and then please mention study at Cambridge?

WHJ: My family was a mix of Welsh and Yorkshire - a slightly unusual combination I suppose. We lived in Wales. My father was headmaster at the County School at Llangollen. He served in the First World War. He was at Llangollen until 1937 and then unfortunately he died of cancer. At that point my mother had to take up teaching again to look after me and my brother. She found a post in Ludlow in Shropshire, and I continued my schooling at Ludlow Grammar School. While there, I managed to get an Exhibition to Cambridge and went up there in 1941, early in the war. I was there for two years and did the degree in two years.

MM: And then you went into the Royal Air Force? Military Service was compulsory at the time of course. What did you do in the RAF?

WHJ: I was given the option of going into the RAF, Navy or the Army or research or anything else they could think of at that time. It was rather interesting because the main interviewer was the well known novelist and the Master of Christ's, C.P. Snow. I said: "I want to go into the Air Force" and they said: "Good" and the interview was over in a matter of minutes. I went in as a Signals Officer because in those days I was a scientist. I took my degree in natural sciences. The Country was very short of scientists and engineers. The Government introduced a scheme, I think it was called the Hankey Scheme, of special scholarships for people prepared to study science or engineering and commit themselves to fulfil technical jobs in the Services or otherwise during the war. It was a farsighted scheme, because in fact technology transformed the war effort and helped to save the country. I didn't play any noble

part like that. I joined the Air Force and was drafted into Signals, became a Signals Officer and served for three and a half years in that capacity.

MM: And did you serve abroad?

WHJ: Yes. After training I was sent abroad, first to Cairo and then promptly - because I asked for it to Italy, where the action was. I served in Italy in two posts, first near Naples and then to the frontline in the north-east - the Ancona area. After a month I was pulled back and sent to the south of France to take part in the invasion there. It was a fairly bloody affair, but over pretty quickly. The Americans were very keen on that operation and led it, with the Free French and British. They called it Anvil and we called it Dragoon. Churchill was against it. He wanted the forces in Italy to go on north to strike the German underbelly.. We were stuck on a line from Pisa to Ancona, under the command of General Alexander. Churchill thought we could beat the Germans and sweep into Austria and stop the Russians getting to Vienna first. The Americans wouldn't have that. They were single-minded on northern Europe and they wanted the south of France invasion to sweep up the Rhone valley and help Eisenhower's forces in northern Europe. In fact it didn't work out quite that way, but near enough to satisfy the Americans. Not that we had the vaguest idea on the ground of the grand strategy at the time, but we read about it afterwards. (Addendum 2006. I have since revisited the airfields I was on and the invasion beaches, at the invitation of the government, under the 'Heroes Return' programme, and now know what I was doing there).

MM: And you were finally demobilised in Cairo?

WHJ: After this period in France I was sent to Algiers for three months, then Sardinia and finally Cairo. At that time the war in Europe was over and we were concentrating on trooping people back and forth to the Far East.

MM: Anyhow, your number came up and what happened then?

Return to Cambridge University

WHJ: I decided I was going back to Cambridge although I'd got my full degree. I wanted to go back and to switch from science to history. A rather unusual thing to do, but I suppose during the war I learnt that I was more interested in animate objects than inanimate objects. That's not a fair description of science. I have never regretted my science period and particularly absorbing the scientific method. But I had found an interest in international affairs and people told me about this special reconstruction entry into the Foreign Office and the Home Civil Service and encouraged me to have a go. I found it totally improbable. I didn't belong to that world really.

MM: Because?

WHJ: Well the Foreign Service had a very elitist reputation. I think that something like half the Ambassadors on the eve of war were Old Etonians, or from a small select group of public schools. That was the tradition. And you also had to be wealthy because you were expected to dip into your own pockets. It was a very efficient but very exclusive service. But then came the post-war revolution, as in so many other fields. I think it was in 1943 that Eden, who was Foreign Secretary at the time, was persuaded to carry out some reforms and plan for the reconstruction of the Foreign Service after the war in just the same way as the Civil Service was going to have to be rebuilt. The reasons for this were obvious. One was that they were desperately short of people and the second was that there was a feeling that the base would have to be broadened and modernised. The third was that they had to amalgamate the Foreign Service, the Consular Service and the Commercial Diplomatic Service. And I think they foresaw, wisely, that things would be totally different after the war. The pre-war Diplomatic Service was essentially political. They didn't have to deal with things like economics and finance and now they were going to have to. The first post-war Foreign Secretary was not in the tradition of Eden and Halifax. He was an extraordinary Labourite called Ernie Bevin who had no experience of foreign affairs, but he was a very remarkable man. He was a trade unionist. He was not particularly personable. He was certainly not elegant and suave in the usual tradition of Foreign Secretaries, and he had very little International experience. But he proved to be almost a genius at it and the Foreign Office took him to its heart, not just the

newcomers like myself but old stagers as well. We later put up a bust to him in the Office. So I came in at a time of extraordinary change. First of all, there had to be structural organisational change. A lot of the newcomers coming in would not be of the same background, and also they had active war experience. So there was a potential clash not only on social grounds, but because not all existing members of the service had been in the armed forces.

MM: But the newcomers had been officers?

WHJ: Indeed. Some had been POWs. Some had been at work in the resistance movement. Some had been Air Force. Some Navy. Some Army. Some had been Indian Civil Service. How did it succeed? Well, I think it succeeded firstly because both parties had things to gain. The old stagers were in senior positions. They were doing very well. They had the top jobs and would keep them for a long time while the newcomers worked their way up. So that was a fair balance. But I think the thing that mattered most was that we found ourselves doing enormously expanded jobs compared with before the war. Now suddenly we had vastly more countries to deal with, with the break up of the Empire and the independence of these countries. Secondly we found that it was essential in terms of security as well as for economic and other reasons, to try to work in multilateral groups and this was a whole new area. We suddenly started creating international organisations - everything from the Security Council to fighting the Colorado beetle, and the Foreign Office had to deal with all this. They couldn't just give it to the Home Civil Service. And the third reason was that the economy was in such dire straits and our reserves were so low after the war, the Government felt that we had to control trade and financial payments very tightly; that we had to have agreements with everyone - trade and financial agreements. And this involved enormous negotiations. We negotiated with the Argentine over beef. We negotiated with Brazil over oranges, even down to counting how many we could import. And we calculated the effect on the balance of payments as well as trade. The Foreign Office insisted, I think probably Ernie Bevin insisted on this - that the Foreign Office chaired those inter-departmental meetings of the Treasury, the Board of Trade, Ministry of Supply etc. So we had to do all that and we had to, quite rightly, bring a few women into the Service for a change. The women

weren't allowed to carry on if they got married and I subsequently discovered they weren't paid a pension, which I think was pretty poor.

MM: Going back a long way.

WHJ: I had one staying with us the other day. She married a German actually, and she doesn't complain, but I was shocked to hear about the pension meanness to women diplomats. However, it all changed, and because it was all changing I think that's why we all got on so well.

MM: Of course it's worth just mentioning that when you say that we negotiated with the Argentines over beef, we owed the Argentines a vast sum in Sterling that we couldn't afford to repay in cash, so it had to be a question of paying for the beef in exchange for exports from this country over a long period of time. They had credits at the Bank of England that we had to persuade them to draw down only gradually.

WHJ: Yes, we came out of the war with huge debts.

MM: Tough time.

WHJ: Yes, although I think, and I said so at the time, that I thought we were going too far. We got into too much detail in our committees and negotiations about the number of oranges. There was a balance. You see the Treasury were so control-minded they really dictated the strategy. I think by the end we struck a balance.

Posting to Saudi Arabia 1949-52

MM: Anyhow, your first job overseas with the Foreign Office was in Saudi Arabia from 1949-52. What were you doing there?

WHJ: You might well ask. It was all a bit of a surprise – if I can digress for a moment. The theory underlying the way the Foreign Service posted people in those days was they would try to work out people's careers and direct them fairly. Well it wasn't quite like that in practice. Sometimes you had quite extraordinary associations

of names – if you were Hugh-Jones you were liable to follow Hope-Jones; if you were Comfort you followed Joy. This was literally true. I used to tease our postings officers. The Personnel Department were very good, especially under John Henniker Major. They really did try to work things out and at least to do them properly and fairly. Now I didn't mind where I went in the world really. I think I said I'd like to go to the United States – who wouldn't. But they chose Jeddah for me, and no argument.

MM: Quite - you went where you were sent.

WHJ: You did. And that's how I got there.

MM: And what did you go there as?

WHJ: I went there as Commercial Secretary. The most junior Secretary in the Embassy. It was a small Embassy. There was an Ambassador, a Counsellor and three Secretaries the third one being Commercial. I was there for three and a half years, which is at least a half-year more than anyone else, but then I was a bachelor and I wasn't an Arabist. I'd rather got myself involved in everything there. I was made Head of Chancery in the end and I enjoyed that. But I got stuck there. It was an experience. It was a pretty awful place to be. We were in Jeddah - the diplomatic capital, on the Red Sea. They'd only recently knocked down the town wall. There was pretty well nothing beyond it except desert.

MM: It wasn't even the capital was it?

WHJ: No and every time we had important business to do with the Saudi Government we had to go up to Riyadh and see the King. We went up by air because we had three aeroplanes by this time. I'm told that a previous Ambassador, not many years prior to this said that Saudi Arabia must be the only country in the world where it was more difficult to get in touch with the Government to which you are accredited than to your own, because it took a convoy journey across the desert of several days to get to see the King. But we had aeroplanes by the time I was there.

MM: What, your own aircraft?

WHJ: No, oh no. It was run by TWA and I think there were a couple of Dakotas and couple of Bristol Freighters that we had sold the Saudis, much to the fury of the Americans. And we bounced around the sky. It was not a very comfortable journey. We took our own liquor up there and concealed it under our Arab gowns, because we had to put on Arab dress as soon as we arrived, and we were taken straight to see the King. That was the tradition.

MM: All diplomatic members of the Mission that is?

WHJ: Well yes. I met the King down in Jeddah first. He'd come down for the Haj – the pilgrimage. The first time I went up to Riyadh I went with the Ambassador, Alan Trott, and the Counsellor, Scott Fox, and we took one of our archivists and Mrs Trott, the Ambassador's wife. And we went on tour to the east coast; visited the oil fields and we went across to Bahrain to visit the British Political Resident in the Gulf, who was King of the Gulf in those days.

MM: Who was that?

WHJ: Sir Rupert Hay, a very splendid ex-Indian Civil Service officer, and when he stalked the Gulf it was always said the sheikhs quaked. He was the last of the great line from India.

MM: The great proconsuls.

WHJ: Exactly. So that was my first visit to Riyadh and beyond.

MM: And did you do that tour by air?

WHJ: Yes. Nothing would get me on a camel.

MM: When you got to the oilfields, say, you would be deposited at an airport. Where – Dhahran?

WHJ: Yes.

MM: And then how did you get around?

WHJ: We were provided with vehicles. Oh yes. I don't know by whom – the Saudi Government I guess. I remember we went and called on the Emir of that region who was a great warrior buddy of King Ibn Saud – Emir Bin Jilawi. He was the only other man in the kingdom who had the power of life and death. And he used it. There was an awful lot of executions, there's still an awful lot, but they would be authorised by the King or by that particular regional governor. The oilfields were American of course and owned as well as run by the Americans in those days. While I was there a great deal was done between the Saudis and the American oil company, Aramco, whereby the Saudis took a 51 per cent or 50 per cent share, and this was a world-shattering event in the oil world. It had never happened anywhere else.

MM: What was that deal – the partnership deal?

WHJ: Yes. Everywhere the oil companies owned the fields.

MM: The British owned the oil field in Persia, didn't they?

WHJ: Anglo-Iranian – now BP, and they owned some of the fields in Iraq and Kuwait. And some of the Americans also did. Getty owned the concession – it was an extraordinary thing – in the undefined neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Nobody knew what the boundaries were. But he owned it and that's where he made his great money – John Paul Getty. He had a representative in Jeddah, an American, who was a friend of mine and my colleagues, Bill Peyton.

MM: As Commercial Secretary in Jeddah did you have very much business on behalf of these companies?

WHJ: Yes, that was the whole purpose.

MM: Oil?

WHJ: No, I can't say that. Our interest in oil was not company, it was governmental. Even when the Saudis took over the 50 percent share they stipulated that a proportion of the revenues they got from Aramco should be in Sterling, because they had traditionally dealt with Britain and because the pilgrimage brought Muslims mostly from Commonwealth countries – India, Pakistan, Malaya, Nigeria, Sudan. That was important to them. They still had a coin currency. They didn't have paper money. King Ibn Saud didn't believe in usury. He wouldn't have it while he lived. He didn't like banks. Personally I think he was plum right (laughter).

MM: So how valuable were the coins?

WHJ: They were silver Rials which we minted for the Saudis during the war. I think they got the Americans to do it or someone else later. And Maria Theresa dollars of which I still have a couple of specimens made up into ashtrays. I don't know where they got them from. I think they were current in the Hadramaut, the area east of Aden. The interesting thing is – I never saw this myself - these supplies of currency, were delivered during the war in a warship because it was such valuable stuff.

MM: It must have been in serious quantities too?

WHJ: Large quantities. And I was told by people there that the extraordinary thing about Saudi Arabia at that time was that there was no crime. You had your hand or your head chopped off if you committed a crime. So there was no crime. The sailors with the currency would arrive and set up a guard over these huge boxes of coins, run them down the gangplank because there was no proper port, and they would find a local Arab with a donkey and a cart waiting for them, and no police or anything. Then they took them off to the bank, and in the bank they were just opened and strewn on the floor and no-one pinched a single one. And the British Navy could never understand this at all (laughter).

MM: Well they might have if they had their hands chopped off. But you said to a bank and they didn't believe in banks. Did they have foreign banks?

WHJ: They wouldn't have a bank of their own. But there was a Dutch bank, and eventually a British bank and a French bank. There was a gruesome side to all this – I have to mention. I think the last beheading in public took place just before I arrived. The Governor of the Hejaz, western Arabia, at that time was also one of the King's sons, Prince Faisal, who was also Foreign Secretary. He subsequently became King and was sadly assassinated. He was an outstanding man. And he was against public executions, but he was over-ridden on this particular case. It wasn't a particularly awful crime. I think it was theft. But the powers that be in Riyadh decided that there must be an example, and the poor chap was singled out. There hadn't been one for a while, and they couldn't find the executioner, and they couldn't find the deputy executioner. So they recruited a Turkish barber to do it. He made a bit of a botched job from all accounts. I recount this story for two reasons. One – life was quite gruesome in some ways, even though there was no crime, and, secondly, my colleagues at the Embassy pulled a fast one on me when I arrived. I said I wanted my hair cut and they said they'd get a man to come to me, and he'd do it in style and so he did. I sat there in the office. A huge bearded character came and cut my hair and I saw his face in the mirror. I thought I don't like the look of him, when he used an old fashioned cut-throat razor. When he'd gone they told me he was the guy who'd been recruited to do the execution. But Jeddah was like that, if you know what I mean.

MM: But going back to your job as Commercial Secretary – were there any serious British exports to Saudi Arabia?

WHJ: Oh yes but that was only part-time. I became Economics Secretary and my principal occupation was to follow the economic affairs of Saudi Arabia, writing it up for the Board of Trade Journal, advising companies on the economy and the Saudi's resources. The Commercial side was essentially putting British exporters in touch with Saudi importers and their representatives. It was also trying to get contracts. There was beginning to be a lot of money – like road contracts, water supplies and public services and it was a battle essentially between British companies and American companies for those contracts. There were some British trading houses also. One was the well established Gelatley Hankey which did shipping and air travel as well as trading. Another one was Mitchell Cotts, one of whose local directors was

St John Philby, who appeared on the scene occasionally – father of Kim Philby. A roguish character. Controversial, very contrary, but undoubtedly eminent in the Arab world. I'm talking about the father. I never met the son. Even in the Foreign Office.

Transfer on promotion to Paris 1952-56

MM: Interesting. After Saudi Arabia you were sent off to Paris?

WHJ: Yes. I think this was intended as compensation. They were very good in those days in the Foreign Office. They tried to be fair.

MM: What rank did you go to Paris?

WHJ: Oh I had promotion from Third Secretary to Second Secretary. Which was nothing particularly great because it was automatic. Rather like going from Second Lieutenant to First in the Army I think. So I went there and I was Economic Secretary to begin with. I got there at the beginning of 1952 in the middle of winter straight from Arabia. Paris was a romantic place to go, but I have to confess that for the first six months it was such a transformation from the desert of Arabia and the heat, to the glory and romance and cold of Paris, that I hadn't the foggiest idea where I was. But after that I got settled and enjoyed it and I reckon it was the happiest posting I had in the Service.

MM: Were you still a bachelor?

WHJ: Yes. That had something to do with it. There was such a great social life and I suppose a bachelor is in demand. But looking back, being brought up during the war, then at university you just had to put your nose down and work. You'd be chucked out if you didn't. Then in the Services you were deprived of social life especially if you were abroad. Then I was sent out to Jeddah. Well there was a social life of a sort. You were just in each others' apartments. There was a foreign community in Jeddah of about 100. We just went from party to party. But there was nothing, as it were, more intimate than that.

MM: So you wouldn't associate with the Saudis?

WHJ: Well we did, but they weren't allowed to drink, you see. They did, some of them. They'd come and drink. But it was very rare to go into one of their households. So Paris was a complete transformation for me. It was a wonderful opening of social life. It was natural to take advantage of it. But it took me a little while.

MM: But it would also, no doubt, be fairly expensive?

WHJ: Yes I suppose so. And the Foreign Service didn't exactly pay us much then. When I first joined the Foreign Service in 1947 I was paid £300 a year and a poor secretary, I mean a secretarial secretary, would be paid £100 a year. You were expected to live on that. I was told by someone that if I claimed overtime I could get another £60 a year, so in due course I did, because we were all working overtime regularly. In Paris, as far as I was concerned, it was a hectic life. The work was interesting. Economic work was interesting. Things were evolving. Politics in France was a maze. It was the time of the 4th Republic. I think in seven post war years before I arrived France had already had twenty Governments. They came and went. But the Civil Service ran the country; ran it remarkably well.

MM: As it still does.

WHJ: Yes.

MM: What about inflation?

WHJ: I don't remember inflation being a problem at all in those days. I don't remember it as an issue. I've always had a feeling that we invented inflation in the 1960s.

MM: The UK was obsessed with the balance of payments.

WHJ: Balance of payments was the great thing.

MM: Nobody worried too much about inflation.

WHJ: No. But in any case I don't think we – well we certainly didn't have it like we did in the 1970s and 1980s.

MM: In 1952 I think, but it might have been '51, I note that an invitation arrived at the Foreign Office for Britain to join the Coal and Steel Community and it was of course immediately turned down by Herbert Morrison, who was at that time the Foreign Secretary, on the grounds that the Durham miners would not stand for it, and I presume that by 1952 the French were firmly members of that Coal and Steel Community?

WHJ: Yes. Round about 1953. First of all when Bevin was Foreign Secretary, but a sick man, and I think was losing his grip. Bevin was dead against getting involved in Europe.

MM: I've just thought. It must have been 1951 or earlier, because a Conservative Government came in in 1951 and I know that it was Herbert Morrison who authored the remark about the Durham miners.

WHJ: I'm sure you're right. What I'm saying is that it was cross-Party. After all Churchill had suggested integration in his famous Hague speech and now he was backtracking on it. But Labour weren't keen either. I'm perfectly sure that in the case of Labour, the main reason was they feared that the idea of European integration would deprive them, a Labour Government, of running the British economy as they wished. They thought they would lose the independence to nationalise things and run it their way.

MM: But they had already nationalised practically everything.

WHJ: But they feared that this power would be taken away from them. Just as I think the left-wingers in the Wilson Governments later on were opposed on those grounds.

MM: But France kept with it. How did they manage? In many ways France was more left wing than England.

WHJ: The thing I discovered when I was in Paris – I was instinctively in favour of us getting involved in Europe from the start – the thing I discovered when I was Economic Secretary in Paris – I studied from a distance as it was fully reported – the affairs of the European Coal and Steel Community, and the great fear in Britain was that they were going to have majority voting and others would impose their will on us. I discovered it wasn't working that way at all. I couldn't find any trace of any votes, of majority voting at all. What was happening was they were voting by consensus. Of course, you had to recognise the fear that if you couldn't reach an agreement by consensus, there may be a demand to impose the majority vote. They had that as the secret weapon behind the scenes and that undoubtedly played a part. But I remember making this point to my colleagues, and said: "You know all this business about us being subject to majority voting if we join is phooey". They work if they can always by consensus. And I remember talking to Gladwyn Jebb about this when he became Ambassador. It was one of the reasons I thought that we, the Embassy in Paris, ought to bring some reason into the debate in London and really weigh in heavily and make that point. There was another point – even more important - and that was the scepticism in London as to whether the Community would happen. The Coal and Steel Community had happened. Euratom had happened. But there was scepticism when it came to the Common Market proposal – great scepticism, that it would ever come to anything and so we didn't want anything to do with it. Now in fairness to the people in London, part of the reason for that was that after the Coal and Steel Community the French and the Germans came up with the idea of a European Defence Community and that was far too ahead of its time. That was a great issue in France for much of the time I was there, until finally Mendes-France became Prime Minister and he, instead of dithering, put it to the vote in the Assemblée Nationale and the Assemblée turned it down. So that killed it. I'm digressing a bit now. But it was a very important period. Eden was Foreign Secretary and was briefed by the Foreign Office. One of the purposes of the European Defence Community was to bring Germany and Italy into European defence because they weren't members of NATO. Eden's project was to do that by a different means. We

would bring Germany and Italy into NATO and we would bring them into the Brussels Treaty; turn it into a Western European Union and allow them to have limited forces within those structures. That idea took hold and undoubtedly saved the situation in Europe, whereas the European Defence Community was then lost. But as a result of this, there was extra scepticism in London when the European Six came up with yet another proposal, this time the Common Market, so we were very doubtful about it, but mistakenly so. That's my view anyhow and was at the time.

MM: Did you get around, and did you make a lot of contact with French political leaders?

WHJ: No. I didn't. I was too junior in the Embassy. I would meet them but I had no great dealings with them. I met quite a lot of them, but socially more than in business – not to negotiate with them, not to deal with them in that sense. I would meet them as a diplomat. You would always take every opportunity to talk to people, to learn what people think and what's going on.

MM: So it was a good time really?

WHJ: Yes. I think it was a good time. It was frustrating. I was convinced straight away by the Common Market proposal after the revelation of how the European Coal and Steel Community worked. I tried to find out more about the Common Market proposal and how serious they were, and I soon came to the conclusion that they were dead serious. All this talk in London that it would be another European Defence Community – a silly idea that would come to nothing and cause a lot of upset – was wrong. It was obvious from all our contacts with the French authorities, the Press Corps, the big Diplomatic Corps and the newspapers – that this was a serious business and London ought to take it seriously. Although I was a junior Secretary in the Embassy, when Gladwyn Jebb came as Ambassador it was totally different. He was a great man and he didn't even notice what rank you had. If you had something interesting to say he wanted to hear it. I remember putting up a suggestion that we should start weighing in with London to try to persuade them to redress the balance and get people to view this great initiative in Europe more positively. And we had a very interesting talk. He grilled me. My God, he grilled me. I was mightily relieved

half way through when he had to take a telephone call from the Foreign Office that gave me time to breathe. But he did …. and he became totally convinced, and a great advocate of this. He played a part in finally convincing Whitehall and ultimately the Macmillan Government that we had to play ball with these people in our own interests. It didn't stop Whitehall sending as our representative to the Common Market Conference in Messina – instead of sending a diplomat we sent a dried up stick of a fellow called Bretherton. I shouldn't say that, but he was - from the Board of Trade. Came away half way through saying: "It won't succeed and even if it does, we won't have anything to do with it. It's no good".

MM: It's classic.

WHJ: It's classic yes.

MM: Of course you were there at the time of Suez, that great tragedy for Anthony Eden. Did that impinge at all on your career?

Posting to Western Organisations Department of the Foreign Office, 1956-59

WHJ: Not really. I wasn't a Middle East specialist of course. I'd been to Jeddah, but I didn't have the opportunity to learn Arabic and I didn't want to either. I wasn't marked down for that area. But being in the Foreign Office, I knew the Foreign Office was up in revolt when it happened, and it had all been done so secretly. And it was such a botched job. Although I was a member of the Travellers Club at that time and some of us, when we could afford it, used to congregate in the cellar common table there: about twenty people you could get at a table. I wasn't there on that day but understood that 10-15 Foreign Office chaps happened to be sitting round that table talking freely and all saying: "This is crazy" and so on, not noticing that there was an additional person sitting there, an MP called Nigel Nicholson, who was not one of the brightest. He went back into the House of Commons and declared the Foreign Office was in revolt.

MM: Son of Harold?

WHJ: Son of Harold Nicholson, yes. Which was a very silly thing to do and was a breach of confidence anyhow, but there was uproar in the House of Commons when this fellow got up and said the Foreign Office was in revolt against the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. But I was not there.

MM: Who was the Foreign Secretary at that time?

WHJ: Selwyn Lloyd.

MM: So we needn't dwell on that particular episode. Of course I presume that by the time Suez took place you were back in London at the Foreign Office? What was your job there?

WHJ: I was in the Western Organisations Department dealing with Europe.

MM: And were you still a Second Secretary?

WHJ I must have been Second Secretary. My first job was to deal with the Council of Europe and did the best part of a year on that and other things. There were always other things, and then I was put in charge of the Western European Union which had then come into being. I mean in charge of our relations with the Western European Union, which we used as a base for consultation with the inner core Common Market countries. And we launched initiatives through the WEU. So the Common Market had a profound effect on us whether we were involved in it or not. Suez was the end of the pretence that Britain was really a world power because we had not really been able to carry it through, even with the French. If the American said stop, we stopped.

MM: And we stopped the invasion of the Canal Zone in Egypt without really consulting the French too.

WHJ: Oh I didn't know that was so. That's an interesting fact.

MM: Well I'm not sure that it is a fact. It seems to me that it was the threat by Eisenhower to the British Government that the US would start selling sterling on the

foreign exchanges that persuaded London immediately to comply with American wishes – a threat that was going to affect the future of Sterling so we said: "Okay. We stop". And I don't think there was any time really to consult the French about it. They were the junior partner in any case in that military adventure. We still had an effective military preponderance over the French in 1956.

WHJ: That's interesting. I've never heard that. I worked closely later in the English Speaking Union with the British diplomat who was the liaison with the French – Sir Patrick Dean. But I didn't know him in those days. The effect it did have on my work and profoundly on our foreign policy was that it made us start thinking seriously about Europe. It made us start thinking seriously about a lot of things. One - that we were no longer free to embark on military adventures like that, even with the French, unless we carried the Americans with us.

MM: What price the special relationship.

WHJ: It made us think seriously about our defence forces. Duncan Sandys was the Secretary of State for Defence then, and he came up with a proposal that we abolish compulsory National Service and recruit a professional army instead and that was carried out. It meant reducing certain of our Forces abroad. Under the Eden Plan to save Europe – security in Europe – we had guaranteed to leave certain numbers of troops in Germany. Well after this, a professional army meant a reduction. The first thing we did was to open negotiations with our European partners by saying sorry but we want to cut our defence forces in Germany, and that caused great consternation. I was involved in that right up to the neck and had long meetings. I learned a technique of negotiation that I'd never seen before. It was from Selwyn Lloyd who sat in the Chair. He was chairing the meetings in London of Western European Union. The Foreign Ministers of the Six were all there and representatives of the Americans, the Canadians, SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander in Chief). Lloyd said: "This is what we're planning to do", and he just sat there and listened to all the objections, and then pleas for changes and pleas to do this and pleas to do that, until they all got so tired they gave in. It went on until about two in the morning. He was like a Sphinx. He got away with it, but it left a lot of bitterness. So we then started conjuring up ideas to try and make us more popular in Europe and one of the things we came up

with was an idea of David Ormsby-Gore. Ormsby-Gore was a Minister of State in the Foreign Office at the time. He later became Lord Harlech and Ambassador in Washington. His idea was called the 'Grand Design for Europe' and he persuaded Selwyn Lloyd to accept it. The idea was just to choose a great initiative that looked good to the Europeans. If you examined all the organisations with which we dealt in Europe at that time it was mystifying. There was NATO, OECD, the Western European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Community and the European Coal and Steel Community, you name it. And we also had quite a number of European Parliamentary parties and that was even more confusing. We had the Council of Europe Assembly, the European Parliament, a NATO Assembly and a Western European Assembly and the MPs used to go round and attend all these meetings. Ormsby-Gore's idea was that we should have one parliamentary body for Europe that could divide up. It could meet in smaller groups of members and thereby achieve cohesion, and the public could begin to realise there was one happy family – a slight exaggeration, but that sort of context. It was a nice idea. The only drawback was that it was totally impracticable. I was saddled with the job of devising a scheme for it, and I spent a hideous weekend working it out. I wrote up the problem and I wrote up the Ormsby-Gore solution, and spent the whole of Sunday trying to marry the two. I was brought up a scientist. Scientists do not jump to conclusions. You must have a logical sequence. ….That day I finally came to the conclusion late on the Sunday evening that they would never marry, so I did something that I felt ashamed of - fairly common in the political world. I wrote down the problem. I wrote down the solution and said: "Here's the paper". And my colleagues said: "Well done". And it went through and I got saddled with negotiating it. It went on for months until finally my masters said I think we've done our bit now. Our colleagues in Europe are not going to accept it. It was illustrative of efforts that were made by the Conservative Government then, to try and get back on good terms with our European friends.

MM: Under the pressure of the disruption with the Americans?

WHJ: Of course, there was another side to it too. We still didn't want to join the Common Market so this upset our European friends enormously. We came up with

the idea of the European Free Trade Area which would involve the periphery of Europe and the Scandinavians, the Swiss and ourselves and the Austrians.

MM: The Irish?

WHJ: And the Irish.

MM: Who else?

WHJ: Sweden, Denmark and Norway - if the Swedes would join then possibly Finland. And we created it – Reginald Maudling was the promoter of that. I think he was Paymaster General at the time that he was given this function. He was very keen on it, and it was created. It was regarded with grave suspicion by the European Community, the Common Market which was underway by then, and was beginning to make ground. As you know, the Common Market hit a good economic period and did wonderfully. There was great prosperity in fact for years. Something major was going on about Europe in every quarter at the time. It was hard to follow, but as far as I was concerned it was an interesting period.

MM: Did you ever feel, or consider, that maybe our remaining imperial connections and obligations had some influence on the reticence of the British to go into Europe?

WHJ: Yes undoubtedly. There was a concept in the 1950s in strategic thinking that we could be at the focus of three circles – the meeting point of three circles. Britain was in a pivotal position in the world. The three circles were the Atlantic Alliance, Europe and the Commonwealth and we were there bang in the centre and we were well-positioned. It was hankering after a new world role and we were stung of course by Adlai Stevenson who said we'd lost an empire and not yet found a role.

MM: I thought it was Dean Acheson who said that so memorably.

WHJ: Yes you are right. Anyhow not that that was what motivated us. But I remember talking to people like Roger Makins former Ambassador to Washington. He was a passionate believer in the circles concept. As one of the younger

generation, I found it to be slightly pie-in-the-sky. It was hankering after a new world role. But I think too there were strong loyalties in the Commonwealth and after all so many of the Commonwealth countries – not just the old ones, the new ones – had come to our aid during the war and that was still not far away in time.

MM: Well, yes, but Indian regiments were generally speaking deployed in defence of India, Indian territory. I think we had volunteers, small numbers from the Caribbean and I think we had African regiments, but doing work in Africa.

WHJ: But I meant they fought and died for our cause. And we still ruled many of these countries. There was a sentiment I think. And there is another aspect and that was trade. After all, the Commonwealth had been built on imperial trade and New Zealand butter ended on the British market.

MM: We paid a huge price in order to reconcile the New Zealanders in particular to our wish to join the EEC.

WHJ: So to that extent it worked.

MM: Have we dealt with that period 1956-59?

WHJ: Yes, I think so. I'll just mention another thing. I remember writing a submission on stiff blue paper in the hope it would get to the top saying in very diplomatic language, not as I'm about to describe it – "I think we've got to cut through all this and realise the European Common Market is going to succeed and we are going to have to join it. Why don't we start thinking seriously how this might come about". It never got beyond my Under-Secretary. He just initialled it off.

MM: Who was that?

WHJ: Sammy Hood – Lord Hood. He was very shrewd and well informed. He knew it would not fall on receptive ears. He had direct access to the top level. It would have gone straight to Selwyn Lloyd who didn't want to know.

MM: And Selwyn Lloyd knew how to sit like a Sphinx. In 1959 you were transferred out of London to Africa?

Posting to Guinea in West Africa as Chargé d'Affaires in 1959-60

WHJ: Yes. I don't really know how these things happen, but they say I volunteered for it. I didn't actually, but I did enquire. It was interesting. You see the great thing in the Foreign Service in those days was that if you were in a central reasonably important department you saw all the issues – a lot of telegrams an inch or two thick every day. So you knew all the issues coming from the posts and what their instructions were. The African Department at that time was headed by an outstanding man called Adam Watson who got very worried about the Cold War in Africa - everything revolved round the Cold War in those days - and particularly the Soviet bloc incursions into Africa, which appeared on the surface to be fertile ground for their expansion and for an East/West conflict. And the French appeared to us to be behaving rather foolishly in Guinea in leaving it open to the Russians. It may seem a bit obscure because nobody had ever heard of Guinea in Britain before, but it was part of the French Empire. It was next door to Sierra Leone and the Gambia. General de Gaulle was back in power in France and had instituted a new constitution, the Fifth Republic. His great problem was the war in Algeria. But he was also concerned about the future of French colonies in Africa. The French approach to colonialism of course was to turn the Africans in their territories into little Frenchmen. Ours was always quite different, to let the Africans evolve into independence. But he did offer all French territories in Africa a new form of French Union in which they would be granted self-autonomy, a degree of independence. And he went round Africa offering this and they all said: "Yes, yes. Thank you very much", except Guinea. The President of Guinea Sekou Toure listened to the offer and as he saw de Gaulle off at the airport he said: "My answer is no". De Gaulle was mortally offended. He was a fairly prickly fellow anyhow, but it really was when you come to think about it, humiliating. He ordered all the French military and administrators out of Guinea, and meanly they took everything with them.

MM: Like the Belgians in the Congo.

WHJ: Yes. And it left a degree of bitterness. Meanwhile we knew the Russians had moved in and some of the Eastern Europeans were coming in too, and Watson got it agreed that if the French wouldn't resume relations with Guinea, we should send someone in. They started off with the notion – it's almost unbelievable - they were going to send a British diplomat to sit in the forest there and report on what was going on. Well, that was a pretty impractical proposition. He was going to take a secretary with him too. Heaven knows what they would do in the jungle (laughter).

MM: You'd have to pick a nice one.

WHJ: They picked a secretary who was absolutely charming and then they asked me if I'd go and I said yes, but on condition that we did this sensibly. Apart from anything else we were going to have consular duties because Sierra Leone was on our doorstep. I needed an assistant and we were not going to be in the jungle. We're going to be in the thick of things. I went on that basis to open an Embassy. No one had opened an Embassy in living memory (laughter), but I found a fellow who had the foresight – he was head of our Conference and Supplies Department – to think through some of the things I might need. He foresaw my new mission would be followed by others in Africa. It was soon after Macmillan's great speech on the wind of change. He pulled a bit of paper out of the drawer and said: "You've got to take so many pins, tags and flags and consular records and things like this". So out I went assisted by one or two people and set up an Embassy and was left in charge for two years and it was a fascinating period. It was much the most interesting post I had, because it turned into the near Cuba of Africa. It didn't go Communist, but very nearly did and I think our work there undoubtedly helped to prevent it. The main thing was the conviction of the President that they were Africans first and Marxists second. But he wouldn't have hesitated to break with the West and go completely Communist if that was the only option left – if we all followed the French way of ostracising them. So it was a fascinating period. It was most interesting, too, to see a country into independence. This was happening all over Africa then.

MM: Didn't the French relent and send in an envoy at more or less the same time as you?

WHJ: Yes, by arrangement with me. When the Quai d'Orsay eventually woke up to the fact that we were serious, and I'd been appointed and I was going, the Head of the Quai d'Orsay, the Secretary-General, rang the French Ambassador in London – Chauvel – and asked: "Is this true?" And Chauvel said: "Yes. I told you it's true". Chauvel replied: "Then we must send someone to keep an eye on this fellow Hugh-Jones. Is there someone on your staff who fills the bill; who's the right seniority and knows him personally"? "Oh yes. I've got a fellow called Francis Huré who has worked with him in the Western European Union. They know each other very well". "Well you tell Huré he's got to go". I learnt this from Huré. I was that day lunching with the Ambassador. Chauvel had invited me and I arrived and found – only the French could be so wonderfully rude – I found that he was flanked at table by his two senior Counsellors, Huré, another First Secretary and me, and I was put at the bottom of the table. It was a very stiff lunch, and at the end of it Chauvel said to me: "Oh, by the way, I've got something to tell you. Francis Huré is coming with you". Huré had only been told two hours beforehand. So he and I repaired to an inner room, and he said: "Look we know each other well enough. I've got to get there first, haven't I, for obvious reasons?" I said: "Yes if you're prepared to do it. This is what it's all about. Trying to make you do something. If you won't, we will. If you will, fine". So he said: "I've got to be briefed and so on. Can't you postpone your trip?" I said: "I can't do that. It's all organised. It's all announced. They're expecting me at the other end by a certain date". So in the end I said to him: "Why don't you just go out there totally unprepared, present your credentials, then come back to Paris and get briefed and kitted up?" He did not like it but in the end said: "All right. I'll do that". In due course I found reason to stop en route at Dakar while he went in. So strictly I wasn't the first western diplomat there, but the Guineans always regarded me as such. I was able to establish good relations with them. I worked on the basis that we should go with the wind of change. We should get in a strong western representation and be as constructive as we could. We didn't have to match the Russians in aid, on everything they did, but we should make ours more effective. The Russians rather scattered their gunfire. When you look back it was a remarkable operation watching how they infiltrated and sought to take over a country, and working out, on almost a daily basis, how to counter it. They had every Eastern Bloc country except, I think, Romania, represented there, all under the direction of the Russian Ambassador.

MM: Probably paid for by the Russians as well?

WHJ: I suppose so. They all played their part. The Czechs went in first – the Czech Ambassador – and he took a leading role, but they were all there – the Poles, the Bulgarians, even the Outer Mongolians came.

MM: East Germans?

WHJ: East Germans yes, and all active, and all of high calibre. The Russian Ambassador was the man who negotiated the big Libyan arms deal and had also been notoriously active in the Lebanon – Daniel Solod. I got to know him, and he revealed to me that he had worked out a great strategy for establishing Communism in Senegal and Mali. He even described it to me. In the event it didn't work. (laughter). One of the benefits of a small diplomatic community was that I got to know these things.

MM: It's surprising how frank the colleagues can be.

WHJ: He was. This was when I was leaving. He was in the middle of it when I went to pay my farewell call, and he was clearly proud of it. I think he just thought he would tell me; and he did. Of course they used every means at their disposal in Guinea. They used defence agreements; supply of military equipment, loans, gifts, cultural missions, trade missions, trade union missions. They got technical assistants straight into departments, the services and schools. Everything you could imagine and they still didn't succeed. The Guinean leaders had been trained by the French CGT. So it was a fascinating period seeing the territory coming into independence, but above all it was a great Cold War battle ground. I was very lucky because I think we'd won by the time I left, and then the job became rather dreary and the Guineans turned in on themselves. Sekou Touré became a bit of a monster. I know my successor didn't find it as interesting as I did.

MM: Did you have much contact with Sekou Touré?

WHJ: Oh a lot. Oh yes. The thing I learned straight away about the Africans was from Sekou Touré's aide, Diallo Telli, a.remarkable young man. It was he who taught me in my first week that: "You've got to see us all the time. You've got to come and see the President regularly". So I followed this advice, whether I had something to say to him or not, I found something to say. There was always the opportunity. I was always frank with them. They said to me when I left – they all said to me: "You came at a very difficult period and we are an excitable people. We were feeling our way and you understood us. And we're sorry you're going". Which was very nice of them. I was sorry to go in many ways, but it was fairly hectic.

MM: And then after your posting to Guinea you went on to Rome.

Posting to Rome as Head of Chancery 1960-64

WHJ: Again – this was compensation.

MM: A reward?

WHJ: A reward if you like, but the Foreign Office, as I said, in those days tried to be fair. If you'd had a rough post, they tried to give you a nice post, and I was Head of Chancery there.

MM: So you had definitely been promoted by now?

WHJ: I was First Secretary.

MM: Diplomatic post anyway– as opposed to a Consular post?

WHJ: Yes, diplomatic at an Embassy like the others.

MM: So here you are in Rome and who was the Ambassador at that stage?

WHJ: Ashley Clarke. I don't think I can contribute a great deal to historical knowledge about those times. It was a period of unmitigated disaster in our foreign

policy. Well it was for Harold Macmillan. I remember he came to Rome – he loved coming to Rome. It was his spiritual home and he came at a time when the whole world appeared to have collapsed round him. Anglo-American relations were in crisis, because the Americans had promised us a nuclear weapon – Skybolt – and then dropped it. So Macmillan had to go and meet Kennedy in the Caribbean and plead with him for some substitute, which was eventually the Polaris. The Commonwealth was in crisis because a new element in the shape of Nkrumah, Prime Minister of Ghana had appeared and broken up the usual friendly Commonwealth gatherings where they chatted away before they went off to Lords – and said he wanted more serious business. It's always alleged – I don't know if this story's apocryphal - that the Pakistani President, General Ayub Khan, was there and complained before they went to Lords: "Prime Minister, I don't think this fellow's a gentleman".

MM: Which one?

WHJ: Nkrumah. He proposed the expulsion of South Africa on apartheid grounds and that split the Commonwealth. Meanwhile Macmillan was finally persuaded by Heath and others to attempt to get into Europe, and we went in and we negotiated. Heath led the negotiations and suddenly De Gaulle said: "*Non*". So it was disaster on all fronts. The Atlantic Alliance, the Commonwealth and Europe.

MM: All three circles?

WHJ: All three circles – exactly. Macmillan came to Rome, to find solace. Officially he came to have a meeting with the Prime Minister of Italy – a periodic one with Fanfani. Heath came with him , Macmillan seemed to me a broken man. It also seemed obvious, for the first time, that Heath was the Dauphin. We were meeting on the Saturday morning for briefing before they were supposed to go off to meet Fanfani. Macmillan shuffled in half way through our meeting, and just sat there without saying anything until suddenly he burst out - we were in the middle of talking – "Rome wasn't built in a day".

MM: Do you think he was going gaga?

WHJ: It seemed he was going gaga. Nothing happened for a while so we carried on. Then again and again: "Rome wasn't built in a day": He then went off to the meeting with Fanfani, which Heath conducted. He went back to London. He made a great speech in Liverpool. What was the theme? "Rome wasn't built in a day". He'd got his slogan. All these troubles with Europe, America and the Commonwealth – it didn't matter – Rome wasn't built in a day. So Rome was very interesting in that sort of a way because we had a lot of visitors. British Ministers loved coming there. We had a great Embassy. We had a first rate Ambassador, Ashley Clarke. He left and then we had another one not of the same calibre. The Italian domestic scene at the time was interesting if you followed those sort of things and that was pioneering what they called the 'apertura al sinistra' – the opening to the left. That was Fanfani, the Prime Minister, in fact bringing the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats together in coalition, but personally I found Italian politics tortuous. It was very difficult to follow.

MM: I think the Italians do too.

WHJ: We had a Queen's visit which was a great success. We had the first meeting of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope ever. Archbishop Fisher came. We had a press conference in the Embassy afterwards because our Legation to the Vatican was too small. It was a great gathering – I have to tell you this – and all the journalists wanted to know was who spoke first and who said what. It was Vatican protocol not to reveal Papal conversations. Fisher carried this for an hour and eventually one journalist got up and said: "If you're going to leave now Archbishop please tell us who spoke first and what did he say?" So with a great twinkle in his eye he said: "Well, I'll tell you. I spoke first". "And what did you say Archbishop?" they all called out. "Well, Dr Livingstone, I presume" came the instant reply. The Archbishop's press man unfortunately lacked his master's humour. Amidst the merriment he was heard to cry : "Off the record. Off the record." The only other thing of note of my time in Rome was that I made a point in most posts of establishing sporting activities and I managed to found the Rome Sports Association.

MM: And then after Italy back to the Foreign Office?

Return to Western Organisations Department of the Foreign Office,1964-66

WHJ: Yes I went back to my old department – Western Organisations – to be Assistant Head of it. Still as a First Secretary. There was a great blockage of promotion in the Service. When the reconstruction White Paper was written in 1943 they foresaw this and said this must not happen, and of course after the war the whole idea was that we were going to be a huge service. But as reality dawned, the pyramid became narrower. They had envisaged in the reconstruction that people at the top who were less than top notch would be decently retired. Ernie Bevin never liked doing that. He reckoned that anyone who'd worked his way up loyally should be allowed to see out his time to fifty, sixty. And that became established and cumulative, and of course there were quite a lot of people from the old Service who'd been promoted too rapidly to fill gaps after the war, so there was a fair amount of dead wood at the top, but they wouldn't dispose of them. Meanwhile the pyramid had narrowed by economies and they wouldn't let them go. They were very possessive. In addition, it was finally decided to amalgamate the Foreign Service and the Commonwealth Service. But they couldn't get the Commonwealth Service to stomach it at one go. There were great battles and so they did a halfway house, which they say they had no option about, but in fact it was a bad move. We ended up with three Services – one Service with three administering departments – the Foreign Office, the Commonwealth Office and the Diplomatic Service Administration Office, and that DSAO grew into a monster, expanding and sending out regulations by the volume. The whole thing was bureaucratic. And they started making lots of mistakes. They also ceased to have sensitivity in personnel relations. They should have done what the military services did, and that was to let people retire early with a financial handshake, a bloodletting system. Instead the Foreign and Commonwealth Services said: "Oh no, we'll lose all our best people if we do that". Well so what? There was a surplus of talent in the Foreign Service. It's still the most popular career in the country. And so instead of following the military, for a long time they remained possessive and it got worse and worse until at that time – well by the late sixties anyhow – it was reckoned that anyone in the Foreign Service was two ranks below what he would be if he were in the Home Civil Service. It was a mess. And this creation of the Diplomatic Service Administration Office prolonged it – made it worse. So that said, the Foreign Office was not very happy. Throughout the whole

Service it was not happy at that time. It wasn't very happy either because we had a succession of Foreign Secretaries who were a bit ineffectual. One – Patrick Gordon Walker – because he couldn't get a seat…

MM: Lost his seat at an election.

WHJ: And then again in a by-election. And then Michael Stewart who was a very able man. Very underestimated Foreign Secretary. By this time we were getting into the Vietnam War and Harold Wilson was keeping us out of Vietnam. His relations with Lyndon Johnson weren't good anyhow, but they became really bad. The left wing of the Labour Party was giving him some trouble. They supported the Trade Union barons. And they were bitterly anti-American; bitterly anti the Vietnam War, and poor Michael Stewart had to keep up good relations with the Americans, while being stabbed in the back over this. So it was a very unhappy position. I've always had a lot of time for Michael Stewart. But you know Wilson wasn't the most loyal of Prime Ministers.

WHJ: It was personally for me not a particularly happy period either, on two other accounts. I got landed with handling a project that the Head of my Department, John Barnes, was very keen on, called the Multilateral Force. It was an American idea. It was a sop to the Germans and others who said: "Look – it's all very well you Americans deciding war strategy against the Russians. If there were to be war it would be on our land and you're going to be popping off nuclear weapons without consulting us. It's not good enough". So the Americans tried to meet this concern and they came up with this idea of a Multilateral Force which was a totally new nuclear force made up of about seven nationalities – the ones who were making the fuss. It excluded the French because they refused to be in NATO. John Barnes persuaded Rab Butler the Foreign Secretary at that time (Alec Douglas-Home was Prime Minister). But there was no enthusiasm for it in other quarters in the Foreign Office and no enthusiasm for it among our top brass, particularly Lord Mountbatten then Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, and Solly Zuckerman, then Chief Scientific Officer, and very influential. I got saddled with this whilst Barnes eventually took off on holiday. I personally could not persuade myself in that day and age, where we were beginning at last to negotiate with the Russians on reducing nuclear arms – here

we were talking about setting up a whole new nuclear force. In addition, it would be madly costly, and thirdly it wouldn't work. How on earth were we going to get an American and a Turk and a German and a Brit and a Dutchman and an Italian together, and say shall we press the button or not? I considered it a monster, but I had to be loyal and negotiate it. I didn't enjoy it. I don't think I would have made a good barrister and prosecute a court case I didn't believe in. I did it and took some stick for it. But this is getting a bit too personal. However it was illustrative of the Foreign Office at this time that on many counts it wasn't the happiest of places.

Aborted posting as British High Commissioner to Brunei 1966

As far as I was concerned, a lot of it was to do with this administrative organisation which didn't create the right spirit. Then personally, again it was to do with the amalgamation with the Commonwealth Service. The Foreign Office wanted to get some willing Foreign Service Diplomats into the Commonwealth Service. I'm afraid we regarded the Commonwealth Service as pretty second rate at the time, probably unfairly, and I was singled out because I was a bit venturesome. They offered me the appointment of High Commissioner to Brunei. And I said: "Fine". My wife and I started preparations and engaged a nanny for our two small children and began to learn Malay. The Sultan said: "Yes", the Queen said: "Yes" and so we prepared to go. But the Commonwealth Office bungled it and said: "Well, two things must happen. One is the Sultan must become more democratic and give his Parliament more power, so we're not going to send Hugh-Jones unless they do that". That was pretty silly because they did not equate. Although the Sultan wanted a change of British High Commissioner he didn't know me and ceding power to his Parliament was very much more important. Actually I was not just to be High Commissioner. Under the protectorate treaty arrangements I was also to be the Foreign Secretary of Brunei, believe it or not. The High Commissioner sat in the Sultan's cabinet, so it was quite fun I suppose. The other strange feature derived from the fact that the British Colonial administration always managed to get the local people to pay for as much as possible, and then when they became independent they took it over automatically. In the case of Brunei we were dealing with a Protectorate which was wealthier than us, and when it was suggested to the Sultan that he should no longer pay for the staff of the British High Commissioner, that it wasn't right and proper

because it gave the Sultan too much authority over the British High Commissioner, the Sultan said: "Nuts to you. I've got plenty of money. I'm going to go on doing it". So it was made a second condition of my appointment that I would be paid by the Foreign Office, not by the Sultan. Imagine two authorities fighting for the privilege of paying me! But the Commonwealth Office bungled it, so neither did. The Sultan came over and they had a meeting and he refused to accept either condition. So the Commonwealth Office quietly dropped the idea of sending me, though they never got round to telling me, which wasn't very clever. Nor did the Foreign Office.

MM: DSAO were supposed to tell you.

WHJ: Well they didn't either. So that wasn't very happy. So I got a bit disillusioned at that time. Perhaps I exaggerate the unhappiness in the Foreign Office but as I have said it wasn't the happiest of places at that time. And the Permanent Under Secretary wasn't very popular.

MM: Who was that?

WHJ: Harold Caccia. He was a very able man. He'd been Ambassador in Washington and he was Permanent Under Secretary, but he was not a man who would tolerate dissent, whereas with his successor, Paul Gore-Booth, it was the other way round, perhaps too much so, but a delightful man.

MM: So anyway you didn't go to Brunei, but you went instead to Elizabethville?

WHJ: The reason I went there was that the DSAO came up with the absurd suggestion that I should go to Hanoi. Some MP friend of Harold Wilson had persuaded him that the North Vietnamese would accept a British representative with whom they could engage dialogue which would help to produce peace with the Americans. It was pie in the sky. However, Harold Wilson was persuaded and so he instructed the Foreign Office to find a vigorous fellow who would go out and do that, and they picked on me. I said: "Look. What am I going to do with my wife and two small kids?" I certainly couldn't take them there. They said rather off the cuff: "Well

take them to Saigon. Leave them in Saigon." Well Saigon was a garrison town and with American troops you don't leave your wife and two small kids unprotected.

MM: And anyway if you were going to be in North Vietnam ..?

WHJ: "How would I get there?" I said. "Oh there'll be a daily flight". I said: "Don't be ridiculous. There are no flights between Hanoi and Saigon". "Well, I mean you could come via Bangkok every weekend". I said: "Look, don't be silly". They had offered me actually Sarawak – Deputy High Commissioner for Malaysia – after Brunei but they'd said; "Look. No skin off your nose if you don't want to do that". So I had had my chance I suppose. Hanoi - I should never have put myself in the position – I mean technically I said no to Hanoi and they held that against me. By this time, talking to my wife, I said this is getting too much. I started looking for possible other careers and I told them so frankly. They were very shocked.

MM: Vindictive too?

WHJ: It was vindictive. I probably blew my top with the Head of Personnel, and he wasn't very forgiving. Well, they took their revenge on me and in the new year it was a new Head of Personnel who said: "You'd better make up your mind, the deadline's now and we want you to go to the Congo". Again I'm just illustrating how I think they weren't very well organised. By this time I was going as Counsellor on promotion.

MM; Wouldn't you have been a Counsellor as High Commissioner in Brunei as well?

WHJ: Yes I would. That's correct. Because they devised some scheme to keep us quiet. Just a bunch of us had been promised promotion as soon as they found posts for us. That's right. It was something exceptional. I'd forgotten that. I would have been Counsellor there. So I said to them: "Am I going as Counsellor in Leopoldville – as it was then – or did you say something about the Katanga – Consul there?" "Oh I don't know", they said. Which didn't impress me. But subsequently they said they wanted me to go to Katanga. It was all to do with Rhodesian UDI. We were a supply post, a listening post, perched not far north of the borders and that's why I went there.

Posting as Consul, Lubumbashi, Congo 1966-68

MM: But it was a bit of a hot seat?

WHJ: Well it was. I didn't deal with Rhodesia at all. My Vice-Consul could deal with that work perfectly adequately, but instead it became a very disagreeable consular problem. I don't know whether you want to dwell on that, but in a nutshell, if you remember when the Belgians pulled out of the Congo, they found a fellow called Mobutu who was a bright spark among the graduates. But he had local support and he was very vigorous and effective, I suppose. And he became in no time Commander in Chief of the Congolese Armed Forces. Tshombe declared independence in Katanga. The United Nations moved in and Tshombe was deposed. The secession of Katanga was ended. It was all very disagreeable for people out there. Katanga was very much a Belgian Shangri-la. They ran the huge copper and minerals mines there and the refining industry. Tshombe made his peace with the people in Leopoldville – now called Kinshasa - and was given the job of Prime Minister. He didn't last long. Mobutu got him out, took over and in no time at all started an obvious attempt to break up the Katanga. The reason for that, if you were charitable to Mobutu, was primarily intended to make sure there was no further revolt. But he also had his eyes on the mineral wealth and I arrived just at that time. The Americans had picked out Mobutu as the guy. The main reason that he was in charge was that he was anti-Communist. The British Government had gone along with the Americans on this. I came there and said: "Look this guy – I can see what's going to happen in the Katanga – this guy is not the one we want to be associated with". And that rather stirred the dovecots …. but that's how it appeared to me at the time. And it became steadily worse. He began by incarcerating the Governor of Katanga.

MM; Who was a Belgian?

WHJ: No, a Congolese. This was after independence, you see. A very fine man called Munongo. Mobutu broke up the provincial government of Katanga. He put in the troops and in particular the paratroops, who were a very irresponsible lot: they were scared out of their wits because they all came from what's called the Bas-Congo

– the Kinshasa end – and here they were in what was foreign territory to them – the Katanga – among totally different tribes. They were drugged half the time. They were ill-trained and ill-commanded and carried their weapons around loaded. And a new Governor was put in and there followed a whole succession of events that shook the Congo. Mobutu engaged private troops largely from South Africa, to help keep the peace. They had been Tshombe's force – he paid them. Mobutu now recruited them. But they rebelled. They were up in the north-east of the Congo.

MM: They were mercenaries?

WHJ: They were mercenaries.

MM: How could they do that? How could they rebel?

WHJ: Because they didn't like how Mobutu was employing them. ……..The spark was when Tshombe was pushed out and went to Europe, and Mobutu managed to abduct him to Algeria. You wouldn't think the mercenaries had any loyalty at all, but they had loyalty to Tshombe, who was still keeping in touch with them, and so they rebelled. Tshombe was incarcerated in Algeria at the behest of Mobutu. I don't know how he fixed it. That's what happens in the Congo. And so it was not just the rebellion, it was the repercussions right through the Congo. The Mobutu government had a nasty habit of closing the frontiers when there was any trouble, so we were all trapped. By this time Mobutu had also forced the great Belgian mining company – the Union Minière – into making an agreement with him whereby the Congo took control and they called it GECOMIN. When that happened most of the Belgian employees wanted to get out, but that would have brought the mines and refineries to a standstill. So what the Congolese did was close the frontiers. No one could get out. Everyone had to stay. It was rather unpleasant. That was crisis number one. Crisis number two was when the mercenaries led by a fellow called Schramme rebelled in the north-east. The Congolese immediately closed all the frontiers. And the paratroops were brought into town and allowed to roam freely. Then there was a third crisis which I won't bore you with and a fourth crisis, all to do with this and we had a new Governor who was an absolute brute – a man called Manzikala – he was a terrible man. He was alleged to have done all sorts of things. …… which I'm

sure he had. And each crisis got worse, and the troops got worse, and eventually there was no law and order. The place became lawless. The troops were roaming the streets and accosting, thieving, raping, doing anything they cared. The officers had no control whatsoever. The Government was in a state of panic. I eventually decided this could not go on. The moment this Government opened the Zambian frontiers temporarily I advised all women and children under my consular jurisdiction to evacuate. I did not do it dramatically but quietly through an emergency network I'd set up in the community. I had a community of about a thousand there and another thousand up in Bukuvu. I told them to evacuate the women and children quietly. And they did. The Americans were hopping mad. They were so pro-Mobutu they put relations with him first. I was rocking the boat - Washington complained officially to London. But the next time it happened they were the first to evacuate their women and children. It was an extraordinary place because you had these terrible crises in which we actually lost more Europeans, (mostly Belgians) killed in one year than Kenya did in the Mau Mau in eight years. So it was pretty bloody. And yet it would go from one crisis back to calm almost overnight and a lot of the Belgians who had gone back to Belgium, suddenly returned because when peaceful it was a Shangri-la.

MM: Presumably they were employed on very good terms.

WHJ: Well there was sunshine and spaciousness, instead of the cold and congestion of Brussels. I had to go up to Kivu too, because that was part of my province – where most of the trouble is today and I had to negotiate with the Governor to let my community there out. He took my word on trust. I said: "You give my people authority to leave and I will show you that they will not leave unless they have to". He said: "Well if you give me that assurance". And that's what happened. They were mostly Ismailis – a stalwart lot who followed the Aga Khan. But eventually even they had to leave.

MM: Where did they go?

WHJ: Mostly to Uganda. That was their basic home, I think. To get there I had to go to Kinshasa and hitch a lift with an American Hercules that was going in dropping food. So I went up to Bukavu on the back of a cargo of dried fish to Kigale in

Rwanda and then by car. But to get out, I had to find my own way. I had to go across the border into Rwanda, pick up a little plane from Kigale to Bujumbura, which is Burundi, where the President for some reason known only to himself declared me *persona non grata* … and another plane from there to Kampala in Uganda. Another plane from there to Lusaka in Zambia and then up to Ndola in Northern Zambia and a car back. It was quite exciting stuff. But what does it contribute to history - very little except the eastern Congo is always in turmoil. It is a tragic part of the world.

MM: The Congo is obviously a place of great wealth or otherwise how could they afford to hire these mercenaries?

WHJ: Then they came in again from the south….. so we had another great crisis. We went through all this wretched business again.

MM: Well anyway, that's the Congo. It's a mess, isn't it?

WHJ: It's a terrible mess.

MM: I see that you quoted in your book a report which is available in the National Archives – giving your report on the worst of the crises in Katanga which seems extremely interesting. I think that anyone who wanted to get further details could either look up your book or your report in the National Archives at Kew under FCO 25/64 – which I think is a wonderful report.

WHJ: It wasn't the happiest period of my life, but it was a lot more unhappy for those who lost their lives and possessions, particularly among the local people.

MM: Grim. And after that you were off to Ottawa?

Head of Chancery, British High Commission, Ottawa 1968-70

WHJ: A compensation again, although with a special function. It was a Commonwealth post. Again I was in a sense a pioneer. I wasn't the first Foreign Office appointee there, indeed I succeeded one. But it was an extraordinary

arrangement. The High Commission had both Head of Chancery and Political Counsellor. Normally they are one and the same. But the Political Counsellor was a Commonwealth Relations officer and she was well embedded there and loved Canada and wanted to stay.

MM: That must be Eleanor Emery? She is a Canadian.

WHJ: Is she now?

MM: Always has been.

WHJ: Well, I didn't know that. How extraordinary.

MM: I knew her when she was in New Delhi in the British High Commission there.

WHJ: Were you in the Service? I thought you must have been. I'm sorry. I was talking as if you weren't. How interesting. Were you in the Commonwealth Service or the Foreign Service? Yes, well I've been rude about the Commonwealth Service. I withdraw what I said.

MM: So they had this rather strange set up?

WHJ: I was told by the Foreign Office that it was my job to amalgamate the two posts. But I should handle it with care. She wanted to stay. So I said: "Well why don't you tell her?" "Well no, we want you to bring it about". It was the Diplomatic Administration Office at its worst. Anyhow I went out there and did that. It wasn't very pleasant for me. I assumed the work of both and she left. She went I think to be Ambassador to Botswana or Lesotho or one of those posts.

MM: Yes, High Commissioner.

WHJ: Yes, High Commissioner. Canadians are lovely people. Ottawa wasn't the most exciting post, but the great thing of historical interest was that I arrived in time for the Liberal leadership election following the retirement of Mike Pearson and I'd

never seen a North American razzle-dazzle election before with all the girl troups and cheer-leaders and things - and they elected Trudeau. So I was there for the first two years of Trudeau's premiership which was possibly the most interesting period in Canadian history in many years. He certainly was enigmatic. You never quite knew, but he fairly shook things up and I had the job of following this within our High Commission. My first High Commissioner was Sir Henry Lintott. Delightful man but a home civil servant. He was never happy in the job. He was replaced by Colin Crowe, a Foreign Office man whom I had known. Crowe had been described to me by a leading civil servant as simple but shrewd. I think that well summed him up. He was a very nice man. He went on to be Head of our Delegation to the UN. Ottawa was a nice family post. By this time I had a third small child and we had ill health in the family. My wife wasn't well. After two years there I decided our family circumstances were no longer compatible with diplomatic life, not at any rate with the obligation to go wherever you're told. I attached great importance to that commitment. Some didn't and found ways around it. I didn't like playing that sort of game. And so I came back to London and said this is it, I'm going to have to change career.

MM: So you withdrew from Ottawa?

WHJ: Well, I came back on leave and made up my mind in London and told them. By this time the DSAO was being abandoned and we were forming a genuinely single service. The administrators were much brighter, and understanding. They sought to persuade me to stay on. There were plenty of people in my position. They would find jobs for me at home, until I could go abroad again. But I have always held that if you could not fulfil the obligation of the Service, you should leave, and the service would never solve its structure problems until this rule was observed. So I decided to change career. I went back to Canada for a few months. Colin Crowe asked me to do that, to see him out (to the UN). I returned to London in October.

Reflections on the kidnap of Jasper Cross in Montreal in October 1970

MM: And of course there was the kidnap of Jasper Cross.

WHJ: That was immediately after my departure. I spent the evening with Jasper and his wife in Montreal before catching my plane. We had supper at his place and Barbara was very much on edge. She must have sensed something I think. I'm perfectly sure they had no warning. The High Commission had had no warning whatsoever.

MM: And anyhow the principal target was the American Consul, not the British.

WHJ: Well that's what my American friends keep telling me. They probably think that they count for more than we do, but I don't know. Do you reckon that's so?

MM: Well, I've done an interview with Jasper Cross.

WHJ: Oh you have?

MM: We know them well.

WHJ: Oh do you. Well you give him my kind regards. I saw him when I came back to London. I felt strongly that he was not treated right. That there was an attitude in the Foreign Office that said it was his own fault. This had never happened in the Foreign Service before and there was an inclination to try and blame someone. I was on a business management course at Oxford at the time …. I went to the FCO Personnel people and said: "I hear these stories. I don't like them. If there's any suggestion that Jasper is to blame, forget it. I was one of the last people to see him from the High Commission before he was kidnapped and can vouch that neither he nor we had any warning whatsoever". So, is Barbara all right?

MM: Yes fine. They're coming to stay with us this weekend.

WHJ: Really. That's a happy coincidence. Please say I've never forgotten them and I say so in my book. Warm greetings to them.

MM: He goes back, or has been back to Ottawa recently at the expense of the Canadian Government for reunions of the principal actors and television replays of

the kidnap. It's still regarded as a significant political event in Canada and Canadian schoolchildren are taught about it.

WHJ: I'm glad to hear it. He wouldn't like doing the piece - not an extrovert - he was not like the next one who was kidnapped, Geoffrey Jackson – who was Jasper's opposite number in Toronto before he went as Ambassador to Uruguay and that's where he got caught. Now Geoffrey was an extrovert and made the most of it. All credit to him. He retired from the Service and went lecturing on the experience. Jasper was a shy man in many respects, not like that anyway in public. He was not a man who would like to parade it publicly. Would he? He didn't strike me that way.

MM: Well, I don't know about that. He had and continues to have a great sense of public duty. I think maybe he reacted quietly out of a sense of duty. He was treated extremely badly by the Foreign Office. I think their behaviour was absolutely shameful and disgraceful.

WHJ: I'm glad to hear you say that. I thought I was a lone voice.

MM: Well my voice doesn't count for anything. But he was treated extremely badly and he felt that it was his duty to accept what the Office said. He is definitely not a shy man. Both Barbara and Jasper Cross were prominent members of the amateur dramatic society in Delhi and he's a great performer. A lot of personality really comes over in amateur dramatics, but he had lived under a real death threat for 60 days. It may well have been something to do with the disbelief displayed by colleagues afterwards.

WHJ: He never played much vocal part in our meetings – I saw quite a lot of him. He was always quiet; not pushing at all.

MM: He went on to be a Deputy Under Secretary in the Department of Energy.

WHJ: Well it wouldn't surprise me about that. I think he'd be more at home there than in Quebec.

MM: Possibly. A real job to do.

WHJ: Well he had a job to do and did it well, but I think he regarded himself as being a trade man, whereas our major concern there was trying to fathom Quebec politically.

MM: So you're back in London and they've asked you to go back to Canada briefly to see Colin Crowe out ?

WHJ: I had very long leave, went back to Canada, saw Colin Crowe out and then came home. I didn't wait for the new High Commissioner. He was Peter Hayman. He had tried to persuade me to stay, leaving my family permanently in England. I was not prepared to do that.

Search for a career outside the Foreign Service 1970

WHJ: I then proceeded to search for a new career. The Foreign Office kept coming up with odd jobs that they wanted me to do. It suited me because it gave me more time to look around - and it turned out to be fascinating.

MM: You had this job to study BBC television.

WHJ: And ITV round the country…. And in those days there were 14 regional companies. I went to nearly all of them. And some in Europe.

MM: And official coordinator of the pro-Europe campaign in favour of the Common Market.

WHJ: Yes. In May '71 Heath had a meeting in Paris and finally got the green light from Pompidou that the French might tolerate us as members. He had said up to that point that we could not present the case to the British people until we knew what the case was. But he came back and he said: "Right we open up now. We've got to present the case". It meant we had to mount that campaign at very short notice.

MM: Prior to the campaign in Parliament?

WHJ: Prior to the debate and vote in Parliament because that was our traditional way. And he actually wanted it towards the end of July and have the vote then, and we all said to him: "Well hang on. If you're going to have a countrywide debate you've got to allow more time for it". He agreed and the vote was postponed until early October. He wanted a White Paper produced. People were working on that side. I wasn't involved in writing the White Paper. But he wanted someone to mount a great campaign in the country. I'd never done anything like this before. It would be under Willie Whitelaw who was Lord President of the Council and also Minister of Information, and he appointed Tony Royle (Sir Anthony Royle) who was Parliamentary Under Secretary in the Foreign Office to be the Ministerial coordinator. They were looking for an official coordinator and rang and asked me if I would do it. I was at that time just about to sign up to one of three jobs that were offered to me. Three careers in fact. Fortunately I'd said to all of them that if I was asked to do something on Europe I would do that. So I said yes and took on that job. It was I believe the largest public information campaign that has ever been conducted in this country in peacetime. And probably even more than in wartime because in wartime they didn't have television. That's how it turned out. The major task which has a relevance to any new Europe campaign we may hold today was at that time – in the first few months of '71 - public opinion stood at between 60 and 65% against us joining the European Community, even though we were negotiating for it, and only 18 to 25% in favour. Once Heath had announced that Pompidou had given the green light, public opinion changed. But it was still over 50% against in the opinion polls and only 30% in favour. We announced the campaign in the beginning of July simultaneously with publishing the White Paper. By the end of July we had turned that round to – forgive me, I just have to check this – well, I thought we'd turned it right round, but the chart I have here before me shows that at least we got to a majority situation, which was an enormous transformation of public opinion. How did we do it? Well, we did it first and foremost by using the Government information machine to the full. It has hardly ever been so used, but it is enormously powerful when you marshal everything. We had ministers travelling the country and speaking at meetings – we had 100 of them. We had literature that went out to every household in the country. We concentrated on providing people with the facts, not

with polemical literature. We stayed with that. So the people who say nowadays that the campaign was unfair – it wasn't. There was a strong anti-Europe organisation. Several organisations were amalgamated and were quite powerful, and they had big machines and they had raised money. We deployed everything we could that was right and proper. I concentrated as first priority on the television. And as a result of the job I'd had previously, I knew my way around a bit, and I went round the leading television companies and the top people I knew, and said: "Look this is a big thing. This is going to be a fought campaign. It's going to be news. It's going to have press interest, and do you want to know more". And they all sparked on it, particularly ITN. It happened that I was lunching with David Nicholas the Deputy Director, rounding off my previous job. I told him this, and within hours I had a fellow called Peter Snow who was a young up-and-coming TV journalist in those days, working for ITN, on the phone saying could he come and see me. I agreed readily and he came round with a colleague Julian Haviland, a future political editor of The Times. ITN wanted them to mount a succession of programmes – factual programmes – on the European Community and what it meant to Britain, taking in all the different aspects of membership for 21 consecutive nights, missing out the weekends. ITN in those days as you remember was the leading news channel. Highly professional, first rate, 10 o'clock news, and this was to be several minutes in the middle – peak viewing period every week-night, for nearly four weeks. I was naturally delighted and put them in touch with our Whitehall experts who briefed them. I told the experts: "Don't try to put anything across on them. Just give them what they want". We worked on that basis and what they produced was an astonishingly informative and balanced presentation. There was lots in it that I didn't like but I wasn't going to object. We worked on the principle throughout that campaign that we should give the British people the facts and a fair picture and rely on them to see the common sense of it. And it worked. We got to the end of July and we'd turned public opinion around. We then had the job over August – a lot of our people wanted an hiatus – I said: "No way. You can't wind up people to campaign and then stand them down, then wind them up again. You can't do it. Dampens their enthusiasm". So I kept it going one way and another. We had public meetings. We even brought speakers over from Europe. Then late in September we were into the Conference period – Parliamentary political party conferences and MPs were coming back from sounding opinion in their own constituencies. So we had this final phase, before Parliament was due to debate

and vote on 28 October. We put out more literature and more television programmes. More everything. I mean we couldn't direct the media and television, but they were very responsive and mounted it their own way and presented whatever picture they wanted.

MM: What about the Opposition? Were they not active?

WHJ: Oh yes. Highly active. And they were combined Labour and Tory, all parties.

MM: It was a cross-party thing.

WHJ: Cross-party on both sides. Most of Labour were against. There were a lot of Tories against. All the Liberals were pro except one, I think. A distinct group of Labour came over and cooperated with us. It was done fairly discreetly, but they were powerful. They were mostly the people who started the Social Democrat Party later on under Roy Jenkins. One of the principle reasons for the division in the Labour Party was over Europe, it wasn't just Clause 4. And our campaign wasn't just Governmental. We drew in this very important Labour minority, because they made all the difference to the vote in Parliament. We drew in the Liberals; we drew in the European Movement and countless other organisations and people up and down the country. We had a huge network. The Opposition did the same.

MM: Were they alleged to be presenting facts?

WHJ: They were rather more polemical than we were. It wasn't the sort of debate you would occasionally get in this country today, when everything is exaggerated. The great arguments were over identity, sovereignty, costs and Commonwealth. And underlying it – certainly on the Labour side – was a disinclination to allow Parliament to cede power anywhere (up or down). It was the same with the right wing Tories. The most difficult problem was sovereignty because it's such an amorphous concept and hasn't any legal definition. Emotive. The level of debate was pretty good. Pretty high. A lot of it was in meetings and discussions and literature up and down the country. But the crucial part was on television , radio and the press. The Independent Television did it better than the BBC, I think. They produced the

balanced programmes. The BBC rather preferred to go in for great debates and that's where the term great debate came from – the campaign was called the Great Debate.

MM: Of course that enabled them to stand aside.

WHJ: Yes. It concluded on the BBC side with a great debate on the night just before the vote and they picked the personalities so there was Barbara Castle versus Shirley Williams – that was a gem – won by Shirley Williams. I'm afraid it ended in disaster. They had an audience, of course. They had to in those days. Still do, I suppose. They took a vote beforehand and took a vote afterwards and engaged Gallup to do the technicalities in counting the vote. They counted it beforehand and the machinery broke down and they couldn't count it afterwards, and the whole thing went on far too long anyway – until 2 o'clock in the morning. It was compèred by Robin Day and he was heard to say at the end: "This isn't a great debate – it's a great cock-up". (Laughter) – but there were not many people listening by that time. The whole campaign however, was a thrilling and historic period, ending with the Parliamentary decision that took us into Europe. The following year we had the European Communities Bill in the House of Commons and that's the legislation that actually took us into Europe. Harold Wilson during the course of that debate, declared that Labour wouldn't go along with it, and that when Labour came to power they'd call a referendum, which was Wedgwood Benn's idea. Roy Jenkins and two others resigned from the Labour frontbench in disgust. He called it a farce: "this is no way to conduct a Party" in his words. When he came to power Harold Wilson did call a referendum. But that referendum has become a myth in this country. Everyone writes about it as if it was the decision to go into Europe. It wasn't even about entry. It was whether we should accept some minor re-negotiation of terms Callaghan had secured.

MM: It was a fig leaf actually.

WHJ: Yes, exactly. That's where – if you'll allow me to insert a quotation – I have to find it first. The origin of the referendum lay in a proposal of Benn in 1972 during the passage of the European Communities Bill. Within the Labour Executive, Harold Wilson suddenly changed tack and accepted the idea of a referendum. When he came

to power he, as he had warned, set about re-negotiating with Brussels the terms of our entry into Europe. Callaghan was commissioned to do that. He came back with some minor, relatively minor modifications, one of which was on the British financial contribution. Roy Jenkins, who after all should know, for not only was he involved he was a historian, says about that re-negotiation which took place in 1974 and 1975 – "that negotiation was a largely cosmetic enterprise producing the maximum ill-will in Europe and the minimum of result except for a smokescreen under which both Wilson and Callaghan could make their second switch of position on Europe within five years and the referendum was to persuade the British public to accept the re-negotiated terms and it was a cosmetic exercise". But it brought everything out into the open. It also brought all the politicians together as had never happened except in the campaign in '71 and they loved it. They found people with a common interest in Europe, whether Tories, Labour or Liberal, and actually liked cooperating. It was a unique experience. It's gone down in mythology as the great turning point. Frankly it was historically a massive ruse to get Wilson and Callaghan off their hook within the Labour Party.

MM: That's a fascinating account of that episode. By now of course you'd shed all connection with the Government machine and you'd gone off to do other things. What other jobs did you do?

Further employment outside the Diplomatic Service

WHJ: There was one other thing and that was getting the European Communities Bill through the House of Commons in 1972. The Government asked me to be part of the team, primarily to handle press relations, but I got involved in the politics. I was still a civil servant actually, but found the politics more interesting. We produced volumes and volumes of briefs for the Ministers, Geoffrey Ripon and Geoffrey Howe, but I spent a lot of time in the House of Commons and it struck me that much of the briefing was superfluous, because the Labour people conducting the anti-campaign in the House of Commons, Michael Foot and Peter Shore, weren't interested in the minutiae. There was a great battle going on in the Labour Party for the soul of that Party – whether they should go left, whether they should pull out of NATO even, whether they should pull out of Europe. That's what the big battle was about, not

about the minutiae. Foot and Shore conducted a very skilful campaign in the House. But I remember saying look: "I don't think we should be wasting time defending every minor point in the Bill. What you've got to get at is to play on the fact that people are fighting their own battle within the Labour Party". And Geoffrey Ripon said: "That's my view too". So we changed tack completely. In fact, it was touch and go whether we would secure the passage of the Bill because Roy Jenkins and his fellow dissidents didn't feel at that time they could be disloyal to the Labour Party on this legislation. It was too crucial a battle within the Labour Party and so they did not vote for us. We were down to, I think, four votes in one critical vote. So it wasn't cut and dried. Heath only had a majority of 25 in the Commons at that time anyhow, so in this case it was the Liberal votes which actually saw the Bill through the Commons. We got it through in the end and we went into Europe on 1 January 1973.

MM: I just wanted to record the fact that after you'd done those jobs you went on to be, was it, Treasurer of the Liberal Party and also Director General of the English Speaking Union?

WHJ: The first job I finally took – I did a fascinating survey with interviews in the City, business, industry, voluntary organisations, education, and I finally took the job of the Director General of the English Speaking Union. I did that for three years. It was promoting international understanding among people by educational means. But it was a great voluntary organisation – it was Britain, the United States and the Commonwealth at that time, but I started it up in Europe as well. And now it's worldwide. It's switched from international understanding to promoting English as a second language and they found there was a tremendous demand for this, and they're now established in 50/60 countries, and still entirely voluntary. … I did that for three years and then I was appointed Secretary-General of the Liberal Party. That was in 1976. Back in 1965 I'd done a little survey of possible alternative careers and I'd talked to the Liberal Party. I'd been asked if I'd like to be their Chief Executive and I said: "One day I might. If you'd like to keep me posted". They didn't for a time, but I hadn't forgotten it and I had said that if it ever came up I'd be interested in doing it because I'd been Liberal all my life. And I suddenly found an advertisement in the Economist and applied and got the job as Secretary-General/Chief Executive.

MM: Of the Liberal Party?

WHJ: Of the Liberal Party. I tried to manage politicians for seven years.

MM: Enough.

WHJ: Lovely people but politicians are not easily managed. We made progress and then when I finally retired from that, through two elections -1979 when Thatcher came to power and the 1983 election when Thatcher won again - I retired and was elected to be Joint Honorary Treasurer. So I did that for four years.

MM: Well thank you very much indeed for that. I think that is very interesting.

Transcribed by Evie Jamieson
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