



Edith's Story, Chapter 2

I started going to Hebrew school when I was 5 but it only lasted a few weeks because all that finished. My father took me on the motorbike to the nearest town, which was Rockenhausen. I think we went around 3 or 4 times. I got as far as learning the Jewish alphabet, that's as much teaching as I got over there. After that, this was already in 1933 and things gradually altered. People stopped coming in the house, we stopped selling things. As children you don't realise it. I mean I couldn't understand why all of a sudden people didn't come to the house because we were used to people coming in. We didn't sell a lot of things but we sold washing powder, soap, loose flour, loose sugar and that sort of commodity that people didn't have. Then another shop opened in the village and then gradually we stopped. The travellers stopped coming and we couldn't do much about it. And we had help in the house and help on the farm and they gradually left. We had once a year they came and helped us do the harvest and the hay-making but otherwise we never had any help. I can still remember as a child after the harvest all the people coming in the kitchen and eating, you know, but these are just childhood memories.

I noticed after 1933 my uncle came back which I didn't really realise till many many years later that he had to leave Frankfurt because he had to leave his job so he came back home. That was my mother's brother. In the family we had an old auntie and my grandfather had a brother who was all his life in the army. When he died in 1934 the army was represented when he died, for his funeral which was very strange for the village and everybody else to see because things weren't so good by then. I can vaguely remember the two men that came. They were in uniform but they were army uniform. And then gradually things, my grandmother died and various people left the village and the other family there with 2 boys left and went to live in America and we just carried on but things weren't right. Which my mother tried I think to leave but she had all these old people. Her mother, her father, her uncle and her auntie who lived at the beginning of the village. School was, the children were frightened and there was one or two that weren't very good after Kristallnacht. Well before Kristallnacht they left us alone but they were not as friendly as they could be and the only people that came in at night, the neighbour. Only to get away from his family who was about five women there. So he came and he used to talk to my father, my uncle. Change, but as children you don't really

understand. I mean now, not now but years later when I thought about it you realise what was happening. And then of course Kristallnacht was really the awakening for us. They came for my father and my uncle in the middle of the night, the only thing was they weren't in uniform, they were dressed in ordinary things, and my sister didn't know what was going on, but I was sat on top of the steps and I realised they were taking them away. We suddenly, it came home to us. We knew what was happening by then, we'd had a radio and we knew things, but to see it actually happening was a big shock to all of us. My mother especially, she left us with the aunt a few days later and went to Koln to see if she could get them out and after a fortnight, a fortnight or three weeks they came back but they were never the same.

In what way?

They were quiet, both my uncle and my father who never was a big talker, they didn't talk about it, they didn't say anything. We just had to carry on with the few animals we had, we had two horses and we had still part of a farm to see.

So during Kristallnacht when they came for your father and your uncle, was there any damage done to the synagogue locally?

Yes they took all the stuff out of the synagogue and burnt it. But they didn't burn the synagogue because it was very near other buildings. It's since been knocked down, I mean, they knocked it down I think in 1972 and there's a park now.