

BDOHP INTERVIEW

Dennis Amy: career outline. (With, on right, page numbers in the interview relevant to the career stage.)

Born 21 October 1932

Entered FO 1949 pp 2-3

Royal Marines 1951

Returned to FO 1953 (Finance Dept. and 'Cairo nucleus') pp 3-4

(Married Helen Clemens 1956)

Athens (after aborted posting to Beirut) 1958 pp 4-6

2nd Secretary and Vice-Consul, Moscow 1961 (ending
with period of illness) pp 6-13

FO 1964 (Home Accommodations section: involved in
amalgamating the FO and Commonwealth Relations Office) pp 14-17

Diplomatic Service Administration Office 1965 pp 14-17

2nd Secretary and Passport Officer, Canberra 1966 pp 17-19

1st Secretary, Ibadan 1971 pp 19-22

Seconded to Department of Trade 1974 (Commercial Relations
and Export) pp 22-23

FCO 1976 (Nationality and Treaty Dept.) pp 23-24

1st Secretary, Santiago 1978 pp 24-29

FCO 1983 (Asst. Head, later Head, Migration and Visa Dept.) pp 29-32

(OBE 1984; promoted Counsellor 1985)

Consul-General, Bordeaux 1986 pp 32-33

Ambassador to Madagascar 1989-92 (CMG 1992) pp 33-35

NB The interview closes with some general comments (and contributions by Helen Amy) on:
ministers (Howe, Brittan and Hurd) on p 36; PUS's (principally Acland) on pp 36-37; the role of
wives (37-38); commercial work (38); and health problems (38-39).

Interview by Liz Cox of Mr Dennis Amy, CMG, OBE, on Thursday, 19 March 1998.

LC: I thought we might start at the very beginning because to me it looks quite interesting that you joined the Foreign Office very young.

DA: Yes I did. I was sixteen. I joined the Foreign Office, though not with a diplomatic career in mind. When I did what was called Matric in those days, in 1949, I didn't know what to do and it was suggested I join the Civil Service. My father was very keen on that having experienced the depression of the 1930's, even though he had not been out of work but he thought the Civil Service was a prestigious, safe and worthwhile career. It was considered to be in those days.

LC: In terms of security?

DA: Security, pensions, good job and I suppose status, though I didn't have any clear idea about status. I decided to sit the Civil Service Clerical Officer exam and stayed on at school for six months to do so. Then it was, 'which department?' A friend of my mother's, who was always treated as an aunt, worked for Sir Malcolm MacNaughton, a High Court judge. You needed a sponsor in those days, and so I asked him. He was the best sponsor I could possibly know and he agreed. He said "You must put down for the Foreign Office and the Treasury because those are the best departments." He had worked in the Foreign Office during the First World War and had been knighted for his work there. So I put down for the Foreign Office and the Treasury and I was accepted for the Foreign Office.

LC: Without having any strong views really whether you would have preferred the Foreign Office or the Treasury?

DA: Not really, I thought the Foreign Office was quite exciting, going abroad, but the Treasury had a great status or was alleged to have. I think I preferred the Foreign Office because it had something of a romantic cachet about it. I had no concept of the diplomatic life.

LC No family in diplomatic life?

DA: No.

LC: Then did you go into a training programme?

DA: No. Not at all. I reported for duty and they said; "Do you want to work with people or not?" I said not and in those days if you were a B6, which was the lowest of grades, you went into archives or finance and I was put in finance. I worked on what they called overseas diplomatic accounts for two and a half years, very happily. I liked it and learned a lot about accounts and finance and the use of money, how the system worked - which was to stand me in good stead later.

LC: This was on the spot training from the people you were working with.

DA: Oh yes, nothing more.

LC: They didn't go in for sending you away for a week at a time.

DA: No, I had no training courses at all. After two and a half years it became time to do my National Service. I went into the Royal Marines for two years and then came back to Finance Department doing travel accounts. Again no training. It was there I met Helen, she was in Travel Accounts.

LC: So she also started off as a member of the Foreign Office?

DA: Yes, she was a B5 let it be said. The B5 exam was very difficult. They took very few people, only about three every six months I think from the direct school entrants. I tried to do this and failed several times before I joined the Royal Marines. I passed the Grade B5 limited exam having taken the National Service exam and then went to another job in Finance Department called Special Missions and Services. This may sound terribly dreary but it was the best job in Finance Department. We did all the things that were out of the ordinary, and did not fit into the normal budget. United Nations conferences such as the Bermuda Conference. If there was a sudden Summit conference, (and they were popular then) we handled the money. We had no, as it were, political input but we knew what was going on and we could organise the finance which the geographical departments almost scorned. I was quite good at using money which stood me in good stead for the rest of my career. I understood that, even at that very early stage, that money was crucial. You can only do what you can afford to do. There wasn't any

appreciation of finance then. It was unfashionable and unconsidered. That was my first nine years.

LC: And then did you begin to feel that you had enough or you wanted to see something of the world outside or was it just sprung on you that ...

DA: No, we all wanted to go abroad, everybody did, that was why you joined, that was the whole raison d'etre for being in the Foreign Office. You wouldn't have been there if you didn't want to. We were put on the Cairo nucleus. At that time the Cairo Embassy was shut, I'm talking I suppose about '57 and '58. They formed a complete Embassy within the Foreign Office of people who would go out if they suddenly decided to reopen it. I was put on as Accountant of the Cairo nucleus which was a bit of a non-event in as much as you weren't then eligible for a posting.

LC: You had to sit and wait in case?

DA: That's right, yes. They had a group of people who were available and in case they were suddenly needed. Then they posted us to Beirut, this was how Personnel worked in those days, they posted us to Beirut the week the American marines went in and we evacuated all the women and children. They called me in and said; "You are going to Beirut," and I said: "No I am not because my wife and child can't go," and they said; "But you're not married," and I said: "Actually I am married and I have a child." They looked me up in the red book and said; "My word so you are." We declined to go to Beirut because the whole purpose was travelling together'. I said if I had wanted to go abroad by myself I would have stayed in the Royal Marines. Beirut was about the only post in the world at this stage where families could not go. They were very huffy about this and then the post of Accountant in Athens fell through. The Ambassador refused to have a woman accountant, we were available and they sent us at three weeks' notice. So we arrived there, almost fortuitously, to fill the gap.

LC: How big was the Athens Embassy in those days?

DA: About thirty five UK-based staff. It was during the time of the Cyprus Emergency. Grivas came to Athens and there was a great fuss. We lived quite close to the Embassy in a street they re-named after the Cyprus martyrs, two men who we hanged during the Cyprus Emergency. We

were on the ground floor and had a policeman outside the front door of our flat, which was great because we could ask him when the shops were open and things like that.

LC: He was very friendly?

DA: Yes, they were very friendly. We didn't speak very much Greek, particularly at the beginning, it is a very difficult language but we took lessons. You were allowed fifty hours. It was inconceivable that you could learn to speak it with so little training and inconceivable you could afford to pay for your own lessons. It was a very interesting job, and I could do accounts. It was one of the jobs, and I had a number of them, that senior people didn't want to know about. They don't want to know about accounts, they want you to get it right and make it easy for them. In fact we had a very good time and I was promoted to B4 at the end of that posting which was most unexpected. I was given preference over a lot of people, largely because there was never any trouble with the accounts. They always appeared on the right time and they were always right and so on. I suppose that I shielded people from worrying about them.

We had a Head of Chancery called Fred Warner who was a very significant man, F.A. Warner, who became Ambassador in Tokyo ultimately, we all called him 'do-it-now Fred' and he transformed the post from a really rather poor post to an efficient one. Being Head of Chancery he could pull the whole thing together. It became something good, working for a man who knew what he was doing. I don't say the others didn't, it showed more with him. It was just rather a pleasant place to be.

LC: When you say, he pulled the post together in terms of personnel working together or in terms of the aims ...

DA: Well, the aims, the efficiency of the Embassy and I think the relations with the Greeks too. He was the driving force and a brilliant man. I am not in any way decrying the other people but some people, the Counsellor who was a first class chap and I won't say his name but he was really there waiting for his seniority to extend to something else as many Counsellors seemed to do in those days. It was a bit of slot where you had a puff after being Head of Chancery working very hard and before you became an Ambassador. It was Fred who really got a grip on the post. The Embassy was to be moved to a new building and it all went quite wrong. The man who was selling us the Embassy didn't really own it, he'd given options on it to other people and Fred,

who was a great investor in all manner of things and probably a rich man, I don't know, said we will buy all these people off. I got really very large amounts of money and we went round buying them off. I just got the receipts and paid the money and Fred did all the negotiating and staved off what could have been a public accounts disaster. He was very good. He was one of the earliest really very significant blokes we worked for.

We finished in Athens after two and a half years because that was what you did. We were happy there. We had a child who when we went there was just under one and our daughter was born there. It was a good place to have children, medical facilities were quite good and the climate for small children was fine. Nice weather. We saw a lot of Athens. There weren't many tourists, it was quite difficult or expensive to get there. You could go to the Acropolis free on a Thursday afternoon or Sunday so we could go any number of times with our pushchair.

LC: It was before the traffic congestion?

DA: Yes, driving was a little bit unusual but the roads were not blocked. In about 1960 they installed traffic lights in Athens. Before that there were none, it was really rather a gentle place, and things were accessible. We used to go off in a very old car bought from a man called Powell Jones who used to run it into absolutely everything. It wasn't a very old car, it just looked an old car. We toured around Greece with our small children who were fed out of tins and things like that and we took water for them. Helen was feeding the younger one anyway. You could stay at any small place for half a crown a night by approaching the police. We were able to tour extensively on the mainland even though we had little money. But not the islands because while the children were portable in a car they were not on boats which were often overbooked and disorganised.

So we finished there and went to Moscow on a cross posting after leave. I did a lot of security training before I went to Moscow.

LC: You were Second Secretary Admin in Moscow, no longer the Accountant?

DA: Yes, that's right. I was Second Secretary Admin and Vice Consul. I also looked after the internal security of the Embassy. I had courses from MI5 and MI6.

LC: So you did have quite a period of preparation before going to Moscow?

DA: Yes, we had seven weeks leave and I worked six of them. We were so pleased to go because we were being promoted which was quite remarkable, and our salary certainly went up by something like 60% and we thought this was great to be a Second Secretary.

It was quite a serious time for security in the Cold War under Khrushchev. They were certainly bugging all our flats. I used to give some protection to our people who were taking them out because they were not diplomats. We took a couple of hundred microphones out of living accommodation.

LC: Was this part of your brief then as Security Officer?

DA: Well, to ensure that it happened, I am not a technician. I was made responsible for the organisation of our searches. Hanslope Park had all sorts of theories that there must be certain things here there and everywhere. We did find new installations I know and it was important to know that there were microphones. We had eight microphones removed from our flat. Some people got very jumpy about this. We never did, we didn't mind if there were microphones in the flat and if you took eight out of your flat it didn't greatly help because there could well be another eight. In fact in some ways sweeping and taking them out gave people a sense of security that they had no right to expect. But if you are not attacking the Russians things would get worse. We kept at them, slowing them up. The Russians attitude towards us was really terrible. Being a Vice-Consul I also came in touch with tourists who were in trouble. There weren't many tourists but there were some and the Russians would set people up. Young people may be fair game but they would set up middle-aged old ladies, you know in bed with people, take pictures of them which was absolutely inexcusable. It blighted their lives. We had one man who was a mathematics lecturer at Manchester University, a very senior man, who came out because Russia, as you know, is a centre of mathematical excellence and they drove him mad. They really gave him a hard time. I got him home and he was admitted to Virginia Water because he was upset and the day he came out he killed himself. The Russians killed him just as surely as they had shot him by the pressure they put on him. They would go to any lengths to compromise people. They would drug people, they would do the beautiful blonde in bed bit and so on. I remember going round the flats, we always used to look in flats when people were on leave. Sure enough there was a blonde in bed but there were two of us, we weren't that stupid. I

took a very dim view of the Russians (and still do actually). It was quite interesting, we had our young children who were, by now, five and two. We were very happy. We didn't live in the compound. We lived in blocks of flats and because I was Assistant Admin Officer we moved to poorer accommodation because you've got to demonstrate this, that everyone is equally badly off.

LC: These blocks that the Russians had agreed could be used by foreigners?

DA: Yes they were, only foreigners. During that time we had a very good refurbishment campaign. They gave us £20,000 worth of furniture which was a great deal in those days. The flats were really very small, very poor. The Russians thought they were very large. We furnished them. Standards were poor but London seemed uninterested. But, one day a Security Guard was going home and he sat next to Commander Courtney on the plane. He was quite famous in those days. Commander Courtney asked him how he was getting on and our man complained bitterly about the living conditions. Commander Courtney asked a Question in Parliament, which caused a ripple but gave us £20,000 for furniture. Part of my job was security and security and morale are essentially bound up together. You can keep people happy, by giving them a new bedroom suite perhaps. It sounds a little bit silly but it isn't at all. If you care for people they will behave and at that time standards of behaviour expected were very high indeed. We had, for instance, the Vassall case came up at the time, you remember this homosexual Admiralty clerk. Well, that caused a tremendous scandal, at that time homosexuals were terribly vulnerable to blackmail. I don't think we had any. In fact I was asked whether the current Admiralty clerk was a homosexual. I said no, he wasn't but maybe the Naval Attaché was! Problems like that gave the Russians a lever because you demand such a high standard of behaviour. They did blackmail people, there were people sent home and careers destroyed and so on. We were quite ruthless about it because that was the game. That's the way you played it, if people couldn't behave they went home and they probably didn't get a very good job in London and they might well get dismissed.

During our time we had two very good Ambassadors. Sir Frank Roberts, who died only a short while ago, was an absolutely super bloke, desperately hard working, totally brilliant but he really did care for each and every one of his people. He would talk to anybody about their problems in marriage or whatever they were. There were ninety five UK-based staff in the Embassy and he was an absolutely wonderful man. He could switch from talking about Kremlinology at the

highest level to football with workmen. I picked him up at a party at the Ghanaian Embassy, I remember, talking erudite Kremlinology, brought him back to a party we were giving for workmen for electrical work brought out from Britain. He talked about his supporting Bolton Football Club and so on. He did not talk down to them. He cared about them.

Then we had Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, later Lord Trevelyan. He was absolutely super too and his wife Peggy was great and they led the Embassy superbly, both of them. They were both great men in their own right, quite different. Sir Humphrey was a relaxed character while you wouldn't call Sir Frank Roberts relaxed. But both admirable people who you could work for.

We stayed there for eighteen months before we had leave. This was quite difficult and most unusual, leave was every twelve months. But it was necessary because the Admin Officer was changed and I was Assistant Admin Officer so we can't both be off. After eighteen months we came home to the coldest winter Britain ever and went back again to snow in February. In the August of '63 I was working desperately hard because we had the signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and Helen went home on the plane that Douglas Home came out on and then back again because we filled the plane with people, mostly wives, as the plane could not overnight in Moscow.

When Helen came back she thought I looked ill, but I was working very hard because that's what you did, we had a delegation from Britain to accommodate in Confidential areas, large numbers of senior people. There was much to do. I wasn't doing the negotiations, I was making sure other people could. I went to the doctor and he said you don't look very well and it transpired I had TB. So I was flown home and went to the Brompton hospital for a couple of months and had six months off. There was a lot of TB in Moscow, nobody got it in the Embassy although I caused a minor panic. Everybody was dashing along to have their X-rays done. I don't know why it was, it was susceptibility or probably hard work and a poorer diet because while we had good diets you couldn't get a lot of things that you would expect you could.

LC: You lived off imported ..?

DA: Yes, the flat was full of stuff, not only booze but Rice Crispies and flour. In winter we flew out fresh produce on BA from London after a time because it was expensive but the allowances were alright, people did it and it worked very well. Generally come the spring the Russians were

in desperate straits physically, they really were. Could hardly cross the road a lot of them, it really was like that, they were badly subject to malnutrition. We weren't deprived, but it was quite a hard life, not a physically good life but people didn't get ill, well they did get ill but they didn't get TB; but anyway I did and I came home. And this was a time when there was a great deal of pressure, particularly with the Americans about spying and other people being PNG'd and the Americans said you should insure yourself against being PNG'd and it was a sort of 33 to 1 shot, you paid £3 and got a £100 back if you won. I can't remember the firm's name, they were in Maidenhead. They all did it and so we did it and I came home and was put into hospital and lo and behold I had been home a fortnight and I was PNG'd which was absolutely wonderful. It made no difference to us and we got £400. This was at the time of Khrushchev and the Cuban missile crisis.

The Russians were totally terrified, they would actually speak to you in the street and say 'we do not want war' and things like that. They were very bitter against the West but not particularly against Britain though they did have minor demonstrations; we locked the gates and things like that but the Americans they bombarded with ink bottles. In Moscow one of the great things was that while you didn't see much of the Russians, we didn't speak Russian for instance, you saw a great deal of every other country you could think of and we collaborated with the Americans. We had two very large Embassies, we looked after the Commonwealth people who had small Embassies, the Americans looked after the American Embassies as you might say. We would 'sweep' the European Embassies' flats if they wanted them 'swept' and helped and the interaction meant you met vast numbers of foreigners, not Russians.

LC: And not eastern European, that also extended to the Hungarians ..?

DA: Oh yes, we didn't meet them at all. They were even worse than the Russians, we had nothing to do with them, but a great deal to do with the Americans and knew the Americans extremely well. I worked with their security people and helped them. We were actually much better at it than the Americans, they knew it, unashamedly you know, they were willing to admit as much. There was a strange thing there, they had nobody under thirty in the American Embassy on the grounds that these people were young, immature and so on and vulnerable, and we great numbers of people under thirty on the grounds that if you had a community of younger people they would keep themselves quite occupied. I think we were probably more successful but it's a point of view. The Americans think themselves more sophisticated but they are not as

good at that sort of thing as we are. We understood the situation much better.

LC: And that was really then the end was it in Moscow, PNG'd and so on ..?

DA: Well, yes. When I got TB I was brought home. We had expected to be there for a further six months. Obviously I wasn't well at all. The Russians would have treated me. I had medical examinations over there and they got them exactly right. They would have given me similar medicines though in totally different amounts. The Brompton hospital which was thought to be one of the top chest hospitals in London were impressed.

LC: So you used the Russian medical facilities?

DA Yes. We had a UK-based doctor in the Embassy, a Treasury Medical Service doctor, called Townsend Coles, absolutely super. His wife had been a matron in Khartoum where they met and they were really very, very good and long before I was thought to be ill he would say 'are you alright, you don't look very well' and I would say 'I'm fine' and I thought I was but he had this instinct of a good doctor, he would be a man of fifty and he had the good GP instinct, he knew how people were, which was very important. We had had a very jocular young doctor, everybody had tummy upsets there and he would give them medicine - Townsend Coles would say 'don't eat anything for 48 hours and you'll be fine', and it was so. He was a great asset and we got on with him. The Embassy was full of good people, if they were nasty people they couldn't be lived with and didn't last. I don't think there were any really awful people though some did a year and were shuffled off.

LC: It must have been very important in a place like Moscow that people got on well together.

DA: Yes, the Russians were always having a go to see if they could upset you. They used to do things like ring you up again and again and again and there would be nobody there, and you'd leave the phone off the hook to jam their line and they would put a 'blaster' on it. This was generally fine as far as we were concerned. We were a happy family. But hard on the young people, the girls, who lived in single flats. They would call each other and say 'it's time to wake up', and the Russians would tape record the person saying that and play it back to themselves on the telephone. Most people took this very well, some did not, and it was one of my jobs in the security team to listen to people. Always listen to people, it's a thing I always remembered ever

since. People want to talk to you about some things there and then, and you've got to listen, whatever happens, even if you are due to see the Ambassador you've got to listen to them there and then or they may never tell you. Bye and large through doing that sort of thing you could calm their fears, or even realise that their fears could not be calmed, which was equally important. The Russians were stupidly spiteful. If ever I went out to work and Helen was in bed and the curtains were drawn they always rang up. It was an odd situation looking back. Living there was rather like a Le Carré novel, you were followed, which was fine, you could never run into problems. I remember coming back from the airport with the new doctor, it was snowing very hard. The airport Vanoukova was in the middle of nowhere. We came back on a dark, dismal road in our car. The car got stuck and he was very anxious, 'what are we going to do ... wolves outside probably', I said 'they are following us, they'll be along in a minute, they won't leave us here', and of course they came. We were quite safe.

LC: Did they come up behind you and say, 'can they help you'?

DA: Well, they came up and said "What are you doing here?". If you wanted to go anywhere you had to have permission and you had to stay on this road. We had a car, most what we called 'junior' staff didn't, and if you failed to appear at the next check point, which we did on one occasion because we had a picnic, they came from ahead, they weren't following, it was very strange but they did that all the time. They never left you alone.

LC: Could you get permission to go out of Moscow to visit other towns?

DA: You never knew until the last minute, it was very odd, it was the same with ballet or opera tickets, they didn't tell you you'd got them until 6pm on the day of the race. If you wanted to move more than twenty five miles, forty kilometres, away from Moscow you had to get permission. We went to Novgorod on one occasion, we used to go to Zagorsk. We arranged to go to with a Nanny we had for a short while, who spoke Russian, and a man from the Australian embassy, who spoke Russian. At 6 o'clock, we were leaving at something like 7 o'clock at night, they said that they couldn't go but we could, just to be difficult, and knowing they were being difficult, we were difficult and went. We got on the train at the station and we all got off at Vladimir, which is no great shakes but a centre of church architecture which we were interested in. There must have been a hundred people standing in the square and a taxi came around and they said 'it's your taxi'. Everybody knew who we were, and they took us to our hotel. The

restaurant was absolutely packed and we had a table for about eight but nobody would come and sit at it. We didn't look particularly odd but they knew they should avoid us.

We were lucky having little children because service in Russian hotels was terrible but they loved little children, they would come and ply them with chips. An odd existence but we quite liked it, felt no fear at all. We were not brave we just were unconcerned by the pantomime. I think in some ways that as it was our job to support others we didn't think about ourselves. A lot of people were younger, we were only twenty eight but a lot of people were younger and a lot of people more vulnerable. We were a strong family unit. We had a very good Embassy club, in the Embassy and we used to have Scottish dancing and we had films, around twice a week, flown out by the Army Kinematic Corps in the 'bag. Helen ran the library and we had lots of new books from Britain. We used to make money by charging a reasonable amount for drinks at the Embassy bar, so people didn't get drunk, and then we had too much money so we would run a dance and fly out food from Harrods to use this money, (only the large shops knew about all the rules and regulations). We would charge 5 Kopecks, (6 pence,) for every drink because they didn't bring their glasses back if you didn't charge, that was the only reason. Still we made money. We bought an urn from Britain for the library and had tea and biscuits, 5 kopecks, and this made money. I used to run the entertainments which was quite easy because we had ample money and Embassy premises and facilities. When Frank Roberts left we completely redecorated the club overnight. We had Embassy workmen, we had staff help, we had money, we had enthusiasm. If you said to people now I want you to come and clean this place up they would come. It was something to do, and there was a sense of community. It was great, very good, we liked it, we had a good time, we felt fortunate to be there, we were doing a useful job, we thought we were doing a job for Britain and indeed we were. Hard times perhaps but we enjoyed them greatly.

When we came home, I was in hospital for a bit and then I went back on part-time to a job called home accommodation. I left Moscow in September 1963 but if you were sick you were not posted anywhere, you were left on the Moscow list. The records all show me as coming home six months later when I started work in London. Our transfer allowance was delayed six months too.

LC: So you were glad you had your insurance, your PNG?

DA: Yes. I said 'can we bring our car home with us to London'. I was lying very ill in bed with doctors saying you must not worry this man. But London said no, you haven't been posted to London!

LC: But that meant you could continue to draw Russian allowances?

DA: Oh no, that all stopped, it was just a silly anomaly, people didn't really care in those days. But I started a job after sick leave running what they called Home Accommodations section. I used to work from 10 until 4, a gentle job and there were only three of us running all Home Accommodations. I came back to London in '64. The structure of the service was changing at that time. I learned a lot about it because we were going to build a new Foreign Office earlier on because it wasn't a very useful building, economically speaking. We were going to knock down the Home Office and the Foreign Office, build another one. I was Secretary to the Chief Clerk's committee and from there I learned how the Foreign Office was structured because we were planning the inside of the Foreign Office. I learned a great deal about how the Service worked. We didn't build one, the Buchannan report on Whitehall came out, and all our work went down the drain.

Then in 1966 we set up DSAO, we had to co-locate new departments which were set up. They talk about the amalgamation of the Foreign office and Commonwealth Office. We were there when it was happening and it was an interesting time. I think something that isn't really understood is why it happened, what prompted it. It was always going to happen but we set up in the Foreign Office the Commonwealth Office at that time there were two special things. If you recall there was an Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation, they were at each others throats for some reason. Why should that matter? Because the Foreign Office dealt with Indonesia and the CRO with Malaysia. So we set up the first common Department, Confrontation Department, and that was how it all started. It was the first time they had these groups of people, working together and we had very different ways of going on.

I believe that the amalgamation of the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Office started with the Indonesia-Malaysia confrontation Department. This Department was set up, staffed by half the one half the other, was over the archway opposite No. 10 where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office met. They knocked a hole in the wall and used the adjacent offices and I remember organising this accommodation. We were Foreign Office people doing it. The thing I

remember most of all is that we were totally staggered that the Commonwealth Office put their names on the doors, it was just absolutely amazing. At that point the Foreign Office had no names on the doors, the only names on any door was the Ladies' lavatory; the Mens' were not named, if you didn't know where they were, 'tough'!

LC: They were numbered were they?

DA Yes, they were numbered. But we just couldn't understand that people had actually put their names on the door on a little white card, there was a certain culture shock. We operated tolerably differently from the Commonwealth Office, who were, whatever you might have thought, to all intents and purposes, Home Civil Servants. Anyway, from there it blossomed, there was formed a DSAO, Diplomatic Service Administration Office, in which I was part because I was doing Home Accommodation and I learned more about the joint office as some departments were re-structured; you didn't need a Foreign Office Southeast Asia and a CRO Southeast Asia, they were amalgamated and I had to move a lot of people. It was a very difficult job. We were given the Government Offices in Great George Street and we organised all of these moves, hundreds of people, in the middle of which there was a General Election and George Brown said; "I want the Government Offices, Great George Street for my Department of Economic Affairs," so, having just come off sick leave, I was working not only hard during the week but weekends and everything. But it was really an interesting time and it stood me in good stead.

LC: This was when George Brown went from being Foreign Secretary ..?

DA: No, no, he was Wilson's man, when the Labour Government won the Election in 1965 he was in charge of the Department of Economic Affairs.

LC: He wasn't Foreign Secretary at the time?

DA: No, he wasn't, he was Deputy Prime Minister. He would appear in very nice suits in the lift, he seemed a nice man. I had a very difficult job, I was moving people from poor accommodation into poorer accommodation and I knew it and there was nothing I could do about it, and the senior staff at the Foreign Office were not particularly susceptible to battling with other Government Departments, they didn't want to know. The Foreign Secretary for some

of this time was Butler who was totally incapable in the Cabinet and for a long time we lost out. I was given a lot of blame for this.

LC: You mean the Foreign Office lost out?

DA: The Foreign Office, yes. I was the Second Secretary, I was a B4 at the time and it was perceived that we would not put senior people in to bat, every other Department would, but not us. I was sent.

LC: Do you think that the people from the two departments were treated equally well, the Foreign Office and the ...

DA: Every effort was made to do so, I'm quite sure they don't think so ...

LC: They always felt, I believe, that promotion didn't go to them equally with their colleagues from the Foreign Office and did the same go on with clerical offices and accommodation ..?

DA: Yes it did. The Commonwealth Office really worked a number of very bad flankers at promoting a lot of people before the amalgamation, they certainly did that and there is no question of it, to the detriment of the Foreign Office, who didn't. But the accommodation I know all about and when we were re-organising things it was never any question that the Home Department person mattered, their job mattered, not who they were, and that was the way it went. I know this happened because when I was moving people I was told at a very high level you have got to do it, and when people, even heads of Department, would say, 'I'm not going to do it,' I would say, 'I will here and now ring up the Chief Clerk, Sir John Coulson.' I know that people felt badly done to, I know people always do, but I am totally satisfied in my own mind that as far as accommodation was concerned we never did favours to one Department or the other. Never.

It was an interesting time. We obviously worked alongside Commonwealth colleagues. In my section they put in a Commonwealth person which was fine, he was quite normal. The Commonwealth Office people didn't know whether to join the Foreign Office or not. They quite liked being part of the DSAO, to see what it was like, quite a number of them didn't join, they could leave it without any stain on their character and many did. But an awful lot stayed on, I

couldn't tell you the numbers. At the lower levels, Second and First secretary and below. Obviously there were clashes of personality, but there were no great difficulties, there were difficulties of what we perceived as professionalism we thought we were more professional than they were. I think we were, but people were not despised.

LC: Right, so are you ready to move on to your next posting?

DA: Towards the end of my London posting I got hepatitis, believe it or not, (an epidemic in the Medway towns.) We both got hepatitis and I was off for eight weeks and I moved into Personnel Department to take over, temporarily, a job of somebody who had a heart attack and for a year I worked in Personnel Postings which was great. Then we were posted to Australia. We were posted to Australia partly because I was still under the doctor, as they say, and I had to have a good climate, I was perfectly well but they weren't going to send me to darkest Africa. I went as what they call Passport Officer. This, again, was quite interesting because it wasn't long after the amalgamation and it was run entirely as a Commonwealth Office post, where the Head of Post, Sir Charles Johnston, was a Foreign Office man. Having said that he had recently been the Governor of Aden so you could argue he was a Commonwealth Office man. I was sent out there to do immigration, nationality and consular work, which again was a fascinating thing because I did courses on this and I knew about immigration.

LC: A new field for you though?

DA: Yes it was, but I did courses about it and I knew more about our policy than anybody else in Australia, it sounds very grand but I did. It is again one of these sections that people would like your advice but do not want to get involved in it. Even the High Commissioner would say; "I'd like you to help with my Indian maid," which is fine and I dealt not only with Australians going to Britain, but with passports. We used to issue about 25,000 passports a year, and the nationality questions in Australia can be very complex because in quite a number of cases a second migration is involved, people had been living in one territory in Africa or Asia, which had become independent, they had not liked the new regime and had gone to Australia and in the meantime they had children and had nationality complications. That made it very interesting, it wasn't just a rubber stamp business. Immigration was said at that time, when the withdrawal east of Suez finished, the thing that caused most irritation between the two Governments at a political level thus it was important. I also dealt with disgruntled British migrants of which there were

great numbers and had a very hearty exchange with the Australians who were very up-front and aggressive. I was very up-front and aggressive. That was how you got on well with Australians and I did.

The immigration situation was very interesting, Australians coming to Britain were being tolerably badly treated by the immigration acts despite the fact that all statistics showed that they came home and were not a threat. They were never a social threat to Britain. I remember the Secretary for State for Commonwealth Relations who succeeded Arthur Bottomley, a Welshman came out, he became Chairman of the Independent Television Corporation, but I can't tell you his name. I remember having a very long discussion with him as best I could. All members of the High Commission, this was how things went on, even in those days, were invited to have tea with the Secretary of State at 11 o'clock in a particular room, bring your own tea. I got talking to this man and he was very interested in immigration and I was invited to give him a paper the following morning which I did. He was very interested but totally talked out by all his advisers, Sir John Sutcliffe and Sir this that and the other, but in my eyes there was no question that the Australians were not being treated fairly. I think that'll come as a surprise to a lot of people.

LC: This is a time when lots of young people went to Britain for a year or two ...

DA: Yes, but they were given a harder time than they should have been. They came to Britain for a year, every statistic showed they left after a year or so, which was all we wanted. We wanted them to come, we wanted to have this impact on them and they weren't a problem. They were not the Jeunesse d'Or. They were ordinary Australians who went home, had a family, whose best time they ever had was spent in Britain and they would tell their children. Their perception of Britain would go on. The Home Office could not see that, or would not do; they said, you're letting in these people at the expense of the blacks, just totally absurd. They were not influenced. Something like 5% of Australians were known to stay in Britain and these were 90% female. And I assume they got married to a British person, whereas if the man got married they would go back to Australia. It was one of these very blinkered points of view of do-gooding people who said, if the Australians were black it would be different. It wouldn't be different at all. The perception of immigration is seen very much along lines which are quite crude and stupid, and not generally done for the benefit of the host country, rather done for the benefit of the immigrants. My job was, and later in immigration was, to look after what Britain

wanted not what the immigrants wanted.

We had a great time, we had a young daughter at school in Australia, education was first class, Canberra was a nice place, rather dull place, to live, we did a lot of Scottish dancing, we could sail on the lake, we went to the Methodist church, we had vast numbers of Australian friends.

LC: It must have been a change after Moscow to be able get to know the people of the country in which you worked ...

DA: Yes, but you had to make an effort, Canberra was a place where they shut their doors at 5 o'clock. You had to belong to something to know Australians, and they are nice people as we all know. That was a good posting. During that time I was notionally promoted to a B3, a First Secretary, and we asked for a job in a small post in black Africa.

LC: What was the reason? Just because you hadn't had experience there ...

DA: Firstly our children could both be at boarding school at this stage so it didn't affect them, we did want that experience and some of the best jobs at B3 level, were and I think still are, in black Africa because they don't upgrade you to the A stream. Incidentally I have always been a B stream person, I was never bridged.

LC: This was you looking out for your own career, you didn't have a lot of help from Personnel, you didn't feel that Personnel were plotting your course ...

DA: No, no. When your file came up, and I know, I worked in Personnel, these files would circulate and there was never a career plan on them. There was a post preference form and this would be in the front cover of your INDIV file, so no, we plotted that, we asked for that, and we got it. We came home and they said don't spend any money because Heath had implemented the Simonstown Agreement and the Nigerians were very peeved about this. They said they would close our post. Or may close it. At that time we had outposts at Ibadan and Kaduna, the other one at Enugu was shut. These were formerly the capitals of the three regions of Nigeria where we had traditionally been and we wanted to keep posts outside of Lagos.

LC: Were they Consulates or trade posts?

DA: Both, they were Deputy High Commissions. So at the last minute we weren't sure we were going, but we did go and they didn't close Ibadan. But, they again said they might, and we destroyed three-quarters of our documents in case of evacuation. They said destroy anything you don't want which was wonderful because it meant for years afterwards you could say, actually we destroyed that. It was sensible because we would have been moved, not that we had highly classified stuff there, but we did have classified stuff and we had stuff that may have been embarrassing, we obviously commented on the Nigerians. We liked Ibadan. Firstly I did a commercial course and an information course before that so I learned a lot about it. I did a lot of commercial work there, and a lot of information work which was easier than Lagos. If you wanted something published in the Lagos papers, you could get it published in the Western State papers and have it picked up in the Lagos papers. The Lagos papers wouldn't take stuff from the High Commission so we were terribly clever at this, and we got column inches by ourselves. A very good job, I liked it, I was also Head of Chancery and I ran the administration of the post.

LC: How big was the British based staff?

DA: There were six of us but, again, you did everything and you had close contact with the Commissioners, the Ministers were called Commissioners of the Western State, a very large area. We did quite a lot of commercial work, it was the time of boom in Nigeria and we not only promoted products but whole factories. We liked the Nigerians, we understood them and got on very well with them, we had access to Ibadan University, Ife University, Wole Soyinka was at Ife, there was quite a lot of cultural activity going on, British Council were there doing aid and education. The only other foreign post there were the Americans who were useless at understanding Nigerians. But we understood them, they understood us, there was an on-going relationship, very, very good. You would often be at a party, an immense party for something or other and we would be the only white people there, which has this great advantage. Everybody knew you were there, whereas the Americans were black and they were there but nobody knew they were there.

LC: This was policy was it, to send black Americans?

DA: It seemed to be. It wasn't very wise. I think it was policy but it was a silly thing to do because everybody knew Helen and I, they would stop you in the street, they knew perfectly

well who you were, the whole of Ibadan knew, a million people in Ibadan knew, partly because we did a lot of aid work, we had this £20,000 a year that the Deputy High Commissioner controlled. We helped hospitals and all sorts of things like that, and made a great song and dance about it because that was what you were supposed to do. We were well known, we could be on television, Western State television was the first in Africa, very much highly regarded and we had a very high profile, not because we wanted to for us, it was for Britain. You do it, and if you can do it, you do it. The money we gave, the £20,000 a year had a huge effect on Anglo--Nigerian relations. Helen and I worked at it very hard. In one case, for instance, we helped a school for deaf children by giving them lots of playground equipment. We gave them all this equipment, not only for them but so other children could come to play with them. We did this to bring people in and, as it were, hearing children come play with it so that was very good. So we did work very hard, we worked in the church also, we worked in the church in Australia and in Nigeria. We had a most wonderful church, the United African church. There was a special thing about it. The Methodist and Anglican churches decided to amalgamate in Nigeria, we were very pleased about this, Helen is a Methodist and I am an Anglican. We were very pleased. They came together and in Ibadan they set up a church a month before the amalgamation, the only one they set up, terrific. A week before when people were almost on their way the Methodist said; "Oh, we're not sure about this," it was all over accommodation and property. And then it did not happen but it did happen in Ibadan where there was the only example of the church. We went to this church, All Saints. It was 99% Nigerians, we loved it and we had lots of very good friends. It's amazing, how people don't think about church life. But if you are trying to get into a community, looking for links with a community, a church is an absolutely fantastic way of doing it. We didn't do it for that reason, we have always been to church, wherever you go you look around for a church. In Australia we looked at each one, in Nigeria we couldn't because there were only about two.

It was a very good posting, we came away from there on the last sailing of the *Auriole*, a packet boat and came home for a posting. The High Commissioner in Lagos at this time, Cyril Pickard we knew very well, but when we got there Leslie Glass was there, we knew him quite well, Cyril Pickard used to come up quite a lot and we were always very lucky because when High Commissioners came they were virtually on holiday and therefore well disposed towards you. You could give them a very African experience.

LC: Did they stay with you?

DA: No, they stayed with the Deputy High Commissioner, I was No 2. Cyril Pickard was extremely good and then Martin Le Quesne came. Martin Le Quesne was a somewhat dictatorial man, an extremely good man, a brilliant man, who was said to have depended on his relationship with Lady Tweedsmuir. I don't mean that in an unkindly way. Lady Tweedsmuir came out when we were there. I looked after her and gave parties and took her to see the Alafin of Oyo, and the Alafin brought his Court. Something you couldn't do in Lagos, it could have taken place a century ago. Martin Le Quesne came up and did immensely good work, a very good man, sorely treated at work. I got on particularly well with him because our name is Amy and we come from Jersey originally, he knew that we must have. Martin Le Quesne comes from Jersey. He is still alive, but not at all well. He is one of these men that you get in the service, though less of them than people suppose, totally brilliant, he understood everything, whether he cared or not is quite another matter. I remember we went to see the Oni of Ife, the senior Yoroba chief and Donald Middleton, the DHC, and I went up with him to Ife. We went to see him at 10 o'clock in the morning and the Oni had his Court and we all drank Drambuie, that's what he did invariably, and he was a charming man, we joined in which was absolutely the right thing to do. I remember when we came out Martin Le Quesne said to Donald Middleton; "Do I really have to go and see these smelly old buggers?", and Donald said; "Yes you do", and you did. OK, it may have been a smelly sort of affair, but it was an absolutely wonderful experience.

We came home. I didn't know what to ask for next when we came away from there, no idea. I asked Martin Le Quesne to tell me what he thought I should do and he said; "What do you want to do," and I said; "I like commercial work," and he said; "Well, they will offer you a job in the Department of Trade, take it." I said; "Why, I shall be out of the main stream." He said; "The next time you come up for a posting and say you want to do commercial work, nobody can possibly refuse you." So I did. I went to the Department of Trade and I was promoted to senior First Secretary, grade 5 I suppose, after only four years as a Grade 6, which was, again, wonderful. I have always been lucky with promotions because I have been given jobs I can do. That may sound modest but its not modest at all. If you get a job you can do you do well at it. I went to the Department of Trade and I looked after Central America and the Caribbean in what they called Commercial Relations and Export, which I found very, very difficult indeed, I could do the work but I couldn't get on with the system. The system was amazing. In the Foreign Office telephone list it never gives anybody's grade, in the Department of Trade it does, you must talk to your own grades, if you have a meeting you must not invite senior people because

they don't come. I was given no help in what I was supposed to do. Please yourself, do it your way, this is the way we do it round here. Absolutely pointless. I found the senior officials quite frankly, spiteful, unkind, didn't like the Foreign Office. I did a job which I liked doing but found it thankless. Having said that, I don't regret being there because nobody knew you were in the Foreign Office, there was no reason why they should. Even the Foreign Office people didn't, remarkably enough. You went to interdepartmental meetings in Whitehall representing the Department of Trade, the Foreign Office always arrived late, before they came we all talked about the Foreign Office, they disliked the Foreign Office, they thought they were arrogant, which they were, they sent junior people which they did. I learned more about the Foreign Office in Whitehall, and how to deal with it than most people in the Foreign Office. Basically they were right in what they were talking about. I did a lot of work in Brussels with the European Union meetings about my countries. If Mexico wanted a third country agreement you went to the discussions. One thing about the Department of Trade which I liked was consultation. I was the desk officer for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and if Peter Shore, who was the Secretary of State had somebody come to him about Mexico he sent for me. It was quite remarkable. You can't imagine a Foreign Office Secretary for State ever sending for a grade 5 but Peter Shore did and he listened to what you said. I had the very good fortune of going to Mexico and Cuba with Peter Shore and his wife Elizabeth, Dr Shore, and seeing at first hand how a Secretary of State got on. A very nice man, a very clever man, a good man at operating, a man who listened to everything you said. His immediate entourage were not very nice, they thought they were awfully clever, perhaps were, I don't know.

I came out of the DTI suddenly, I was removed from there. I really did very badly out of it. The Foreign Office suddenly said, we want him back, which meant that my final reports were coloured by the fact that they despised the Foreign Office even more by this stage and they didn't like me. But since they didn't report on me for about three years it didn't matter. I was brought back into Nationality and Treaty Department as Assistant for another eighteen months so I was at home for something like four years.

We were talking earlier about career planning, I found on an INDIV file sometime after I had been to Australia a note saying that the Foreign Office should have a list of people who specialise in immigration and nationality and gave a list of the people who should do it. I was top of this list. It was most extraordinary. Years later I was made Assistant in the Nationality and Treaty Department which, again, knowing about it, I enjoyed immensely. I ran half the

Department under a very good Head of Department, Alan Brown, who went off to be in the International Labour Organisation in Vienna, I think, he was very good, but a disappointed man, and then George Smedley took over. There were two Assistants, essentially there was the Treaty and then there was Nationality, and I did Nationality and Passport Policy. I used to go to Brussels to talk about the Common European Passport which we didn't like, wouldn't have, and believe it or not, at that time they wanted to put on the front of the passports, EEC, as it was in those days and underneath that the country. Twice it went to Cabinet, because we recommended that should happen, and twice the Cabinet said, United Kingdom will come first. We tripped up everyone for seven years, amazing but we did. These was the Owen-Callaghan years. Again good experience, I had some experience with Brussels so I could do that, I knew about nationality, I was promoted to grade 5 (S) which meant you got another thousand pounds a year or something.

We went then to Chile. When your allowances are worked out they do a sacrifice of your salary, and they didn't have a grade 5 (S) salary to sacrifice on, so my sacrifice was always on a lower salary.

LC And you went out as a First Secretary, Commercial then, not on nationalities?

DA No, I went out totally commercial, I ran the commercial section there. It was very good. I was the No 2 in the Embassy at a time when we didn't have an Ambassador, he had been withdrawn years ago over the Sheila Cassidy case and we had a Chargé d'Affaires. The Ambassador was withdrawn in about '75 I think. It was during the Pinochet regime. It was a fascinating time, I found, politically. Commercially the Chileans were doing very well. Their economy was very good, we could sell things there if we wanted to, a lot of work to be done. Helen and I went up and down Chile, selling things quite well, they had the money to buy, they loved British people, we loved them. The Chileans were always said to be the English of South America, we got on very well. Helen spoke Spanish and I learned Spanish and I could talk about, not 'how are your children doing at school', but about 'Hydro-electric power, dams and mining'.

LC: Were you selling British Government things rather than an intermediary for British firms?

DA: Oh, an intermediary for British firms in general. Absolutely yes, mining equipment,

electrical equipment, heavy engineering and they were buying it too, and the copper, they had the biggest exports of copper in the world, the cheapest exports of copper. Due to the recession in the world, which meant that not enough copper was being bought, the price of copper was low, but Chile was quite happy about that because if the price of copper is depressed other mines in the world are closing down, the Chileans could produce it more cheaply so were not closing down. When the resurgence came the Chileans were ready. We liked it very much.

After we had been there something like six months Eric Anglin who was Chargé d'Affaires was sent off to Melbourne on posting and I was made Chargé d'Affaires, for three weeks they said. We were going to bring in another Chargé d'Affaires and make him up to Ambassador. The Chileans made it quite clear that was not going to happen, if we were going to get an Ambassador it was going to be a new, polished, bright, shiny new Ambassador. Then we had to negotiate the return of Ambassadors. I had to do this, it was absolutely fascinating because it was a small post, we had a Second Secretary, Political, who was quite good but not very good, he didn't really understand people or right ways of working. By this time I was quite long in the tooth in the service, I did understand what was going on and I was quite tough and up-front in the negotiations, they were pushing us around and we wouldn't be pushed around at all and if they didn't want to have an Ambassador, 'cheers'. But before that I had done quite a lot of moving around as Commercial Secretary and had been to see Intendentes, State Governors and, before I had been there, for years nobody had ever been because we didn't like the Pinochet regime and they wouldn't visit, I would and did, because what was quite clear to me is that the Pinochet regime was running the country well. He was a much nicer man than anyone would tell you, he is not the wicked, big, bad wolf that they tell you about on television now even. It was clear that he was running a very good economy for which most of the population was benefiting, not all, but most. The poor of Chile were a very great deal richer than the poor of most other South American countries. The oppression was marginal, and most important of all, he was a popular Governor. If he had stood in a perfectly free election he would have won hands down and it would still be his Government, I have no doubt about that at all. I know that because I used to travel on the buses, and I talked to absolutely everybody. That was so and I hope this goes down in the records because the stupidity that is being talked by the media, the left-wing media about Pinochet is totally absurd.

Anyway I was left to negotiate the return of Ambassadors which was an absolutely wonderful experience. I was being paid as a much higher grade than I was. I did my best but got stuck.

Hernan Cubillos, who was very pro-British man, was Foreign Secretary or whatever you called him, and a very great man, wrote a letter of what you might call apology about the Sheila Cassidy escapade to Lord Carrington and thought that was enough and London said; "No it isn't enough." I think you would need to go back over the Sheila Cassidy thing to see why did we break off relations with Chile, we broke off because they imprisoned and tortured Sheila Cassidy. I have very little to say about Sheila Cassidy except she seems a most unpleasant woman. If you read her autobiography you will see just how unpleasant she seems so I don't need to dwell on her. From the political point of view, they put her in prison because she failed to report that she had treated, (she was a doctor,) a man who had been injured by gunshot wounds. They took her in and said; "Did you treat this man," and she said; "No I didn't treat him." And everybody says what an awful thing, why should she have reported it. In Britain it is a crime not to do so also, the law is the same as in Britain. She then, clever soul, and this is in her book, they said to her; "Tell us where this man is," and she knew he was in the Ecuadorean Embassy, in South America, if you get to the Ecuadorean Embassy and you have the right to go to Ecuador, whatever you have been accused of, you've got the right to do it and it's still so.

LC: You say get to it you mean break in and sit there?

DA: Yes, you say I am a political refugee and they say fine, if it was the British Embassy we wouldn't let you out because you'd be nabbed outside, but not in South American countries. And for some reason she said; "Oh, he's at 312 High Street," or something like that. So round went the Carribeneros and, looking for the man Nelson Gutierrez I think, who was a gunman and had actually been involved in a gunfight, they shot through the door, bashed it in and raced in on a dear old couple sitting there over their cocoa at night. It was purely serendipity address. Then they got very angry and it is alleged they tortured her with electrical probes. I think it is highly likely they did, she said they did, they said they didn't, but probably they did. But having put her in prison we made a fuss and they let her out, sent her home. Jim Callaghan said; "I'm going to break off diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level," and did. Now that was not very sharp. I know it makes a good socialist and all that sort of thing but how can you then ever return them? If they had broken off relations before she was out of prison there would have been a reason, after, they couldn't think of a reason to go back and for years we didn't have an Ambassador, at a time when the economy was booming. It was a stupidity. Cubillos wrote this letter saying, "sorry about this, tougho, big mistake, why don't we have Ambassadors?", and Carrington said; "Not enough." So I went back and said; "It's not enough," at which stage they were going

absolutely spare about this and said; "What else do you want, blood on the floor?" and all this sort of thing.

LC: Both Carrington and Callaghan?

DA: Were doing what?

LC: Well, were ..., did you say Callaghan before or Carrington?

DA: Well, Callaghan. When we withdrew Ambassadors it was a Labour Government, later it was the Thatcher government.

LC: So both Labour and Conservative Governments were playing hard to get?

DA: Well, yes. Lord Carrington was playing hard at the time, it was a nice letter, you know, Dear Peter letter, it was a very British letter ... anyway they wouldn't take it, and there was a lot of stupidity about this and people were moved around, John Ure, I shouldn't really give names, John Ure who had been in Chile himself doing my job, came back because the Ambassador in Brazil died, George Hall died, and there was a great shuffle and John Ure came back. It wasn't working very well. But I used to trot around and talk to them and say 'what else' and they would say 'no', and suddenly Carrington said; "I don't want anything more to do with these agreements until I solve the Rhodesian problem because I am not alienating part of my Party to help Chile while I need them over Rhodesia, just stop." So I stopped, which meant that I was, in total, Chargé d'Affaires for over seven months, not three weeks. It was wonderful because I knew how to run Embassies, I knew how Embassies worked and I had a very good time.

LC: Stressful though?

DA: Not really. I knew what I was doing. It was very hard work. We went to everything. We were asked out, on an average, over twice a night every night. I, as Commercial Secretary, was supposed to do 150 trade visits a year, I ran the commercial section, I did more visits, got more commercial exports than any officer, still ran the political thing and made sure the administration ran and got the Embassy ready for any moment when the new Ambassador would appear. We had a chauffeur. Really a chauffeur is the best thing you can ever have, you can do twice as

much work with a chauffeur. We also had bodyguards because that was the way it was. One of the snags of being a Chargé d'Affaires is you cannot change major things because that's not what you are there for, and so we never got rid of the bodyguards even though there was no threat to life. We redecorated the most beautiful Residence, and we picked it all out in Wedgwood blue and white and it was absolutely gorgeous. The previous Chargé d'Affaires wanted to paint it in beige but we didn't have any beige.

But, over the return of Ambassadors finally Carrington said; "OK, let's start again." We did but we were stuck with the refusal to accept Hernan-Cubillos' apology and so we didn't know what to do. We made no progress, and a man's name I can't remember, who was a political director at the time, Sir William ..?, a great friend of Anthony Acland's, looked very like him, tall, slim, a great bloke, said; "Why don't we have a third person Note and not a letter from the Secretary of State." Why nobody had thought of that I don't know but certainly nobody had. So I wrote Cubillos's letter in Spanish as a third person Note, took it around and said; "Would he sign that?" He looked at this and said; "Perfect." Nobody apologised, the Chilean Government wouldn't apologise. And if you look at the Note of apology it says in the middle 'Her Majesty's Government', which no Chilean would ever say, that was the only mistake I made in the Note. They said: "Great", and it was decided this would happen. We had a man called John Heath, from Chicago, who had been waiting to come. When he left Chicago he said "I am going to go as Ambassador to Chile", and he sent all his goods and chattels to Chile but we couldn't clear them because he wasn't Ambassador. If they had known of this presumption they would have refused him. His goods were going to be sold and this was very worrying, anything left in the Port for more than two months is sold in Chile, because they get tired of people holding them up. The money doesn't go to the person who owns the goods, it goes to Customs. I didn't know what to do about this and I felt I would have to go to see Admiral Merino, or Fernando Matthe, members of the Junta, and say: "This is the way it is", because you can't allow everything to go. I rang the Foreign Office, the only time I have ever done this, I rang the Foreign Office and said: "Look, I'm in dead trouble, I need £500 totally unaccountable to get these goods out, can I have it?" "Yes", they said, which was quite remarkable. It was quite clear that I was possibly going down the road of bribing somebody. I never did, because it was unnecessary. We persuaded one of my commercial friends and said: "Could you get this load moved to a duty-free place." He said "yes".

We had a wonderful time. I stayed on with John Heath, quite a difficult thing to do because I

had run the place and he was to a certain extent insecure and jealous, at least I imagine he was, so it was quite difficult but I worked very hard on commerce which I could do. We did very good work on the commercial side and did some super reports about Chile. By the time I left I really knew absolutely everything there about that great country and about Pinochet. John Heath was succeeded by John Hickman and we came away from there in 1983. I'd like to say a word about John Hickman.

LC: But not in your time?

DA: Yes, John Hickman succeeded John Heath. John Hickman was a superb professional. I had a great admiration for him. He ran the Embassy, he knew how to run it, he knew how to get the best for Britain, he wasn't a soft namby-pamby person. He wasn't rough either. He was a good man and a first class professional. We came away from there in early 1983 but before then there was the Falklands War.

LC: What was the Chilean attitude towards them?

DA: They hated it. They loathed it. Everybody hated the Argentines. The Argentines are not popular in South America and the Chileans despised them. They really are immensely nice people. Their government was great, their economists were totally brilliant; Chicago School of Economics, totally brilliant. The Chilean economy was well managed and successful. Delightful people; the church was super. There are a lot of Anglicans in Chile. There were three Anglican bishops in Chile.

We came away from there and were sent on about three months leave, as we hadn't been able to take very much leave. After a fortnight they rang and said we need you in Migration and Visa Department, starting on 1 August, because somebody is dying in NTD and we're having a shift round. Absolute rubbish. I started on 2 August because I wouldn't go to the leaving party of my predecessor. It turned out to be true that someone was dying, the head of the department had a brain tumour poor man, and he died. I started as Assistant in MVD. Again I was back in migration, immigration ...

LC: A bit of a change of position and scene there. Did you find it difficult to cope with?

DA: No, not at all. London is normality. No, I didn't find it difficult, it was a department of fifty people, it was a managerial organisation and the head of department was a bit laid back, on his last year or two and didn't really interfere. There was a tremendous amount to be done both during my time as Assistant, and when I became Head of Department. We were fighting off the Home Office, cutting out our own territory, making sure that the Foreign Office kept a grip on immigration overseas, making sure that our people abroad who were not always properly disposed to do the right thing, did the right thing.

LC: You found it important that the Home Office shouldn't take this over?

DA: Absolutely vital, yes. We used a lot of their people because we hadn't got enough essential immigration persons, Grade 9, but the policy of immigration is different in the Home Office and the Foreign Office. The Home Office do not want foreigners to come to Britain because they will stay and this is nasty. The Foreign Office says we want people to travel and visit Britain because they see what a wonderful place it is. They should travel. The departments would never be seeing things the same but let there be no doubt the government policy was what counted. We didn't have any ideas that the blacks are nice, or not, or anything like that. If the government policy said what it was then that's what it is.

I was very lucky because I worked for Ministers. It was the first time that I had ever actually had free and frequent access to Ministers. They were all junior Ministers, Tim Renton who was the junior Minister Foreign Office, Tim Eggar and another bloke whose name I totally forget, Ray Whitney. I would go and see them almost every day. To be head of a department is the best job in the Foreign Office. It is the best job in the Foreign Office by far. It's the greatest accolade in my view. There are one hundred and sixty heads of mission, there are sixty heads of department. To become head of department is much more difficult and that's where I hit my top in my estimation. Wonderful, I was terribly lucky to come in at sixteen and be head of department, albeit at fifty six. It shows that the Foreign Office is a great place in which to work. I worked with Nicholas Barrington, who became Sir Nicholas Barrington. He was the Under-Secretary and a desperately energetic man, very good. He raised our whole profile but we did this together and we made immigration important. When we fell out with the Syrians I went to Tim Renton, then a senior Minister who was holding a 'what can we do about the Syrians' meeting. He said; "What are you doing here," and I said; "Because if we suspend visas for Syrians this will hurt them." "A wonderful idea," he said, and we suspended visas which had a

considerable effect. Many more Syrians wanted to come to the UK than British to go to Syria. We cared little. We made it clear that we could make it count and made sure that the visa weapon, as it was called, was used against the Libyans. During that time I went to Rome for talks with the Libyans, four of us went, the Libyans said we must have talks. Sir Stephen Edgerton took a little group of four of us over to talk to the Libyans. We were very tough on visa regulations; we wouldn't let them come. Previous to that it was an unconsidered weapon. It was rather like money, visas did not matter, suddenly it was a weapon. Of course it is a weapon and there were fascinating talks in Rome. We were very unkind to the Libyans. We had a very good lunch with them and the only thing we seemed to have in common to talk about was religion. I had a most interesting time talking about Islam and Christianity.

Running a department of fifty people, many of whom are young, because you have an inordinate number of Grade 9s and 10s, was great. We computerised it for the first time and brought the thing up to date working wonderfully. I had a great time there.

LC: This is the time when you got your OBE too isn't it?

DA: I got my OBE for work in Chile but I got it in the New Year's Honours List 1984.

So we worked very hard in there and everybody appreciated it. It was odd how you could have an effect. You were invited to big meetings. Migration and Visa Department were known to have an interest at most posts though the great and the good preferred not to know exactly what this was. We decided in the Foreign Office to close ten posts because we needed a million pounds. There was a big meeting with all senior people, Deputy Under-Secretaries, and they said, "We'll have to close ten posts to make this saving". One of the posts, oddly enough, was Bordeaux. We need a million to a million and a half pounds, how else are we going to save it. Eventually I piped up, I said; "I will put the visa fees up and I will get you another 1.5 million pounds a year in revenue." They said there would be uproar in parliament. "No there wouldn't," I said, "These are foreigners, they don't have a constituency." We did it, we got the money and we saved the ten posts. We kept upping the visa fees, we brought in the entry certificate fee which had never been brought in because Treasury say you should charge the value of the services performed, not for the setting up of the service but the cost of running it. We made it our intention to do this. We quadrupled the visa fees in three years.

LC: And this was money the Foreign Office could use, or Home Office money?

DA: No, no, it belongs to the Foreign Office, we collect it. Senior officials began to look at MVD and say, well it's not one of these nasty little functional departments we don't want to know about, there is value in it. If you look at it now it's huge.

I went to Personnel Department after two and a half years and said, really I'd like to go abroad. I've only got 'X' years to run and I'd like another posting. Normally Personnel Department would say; "Very difficult," but they said; "OK, you've done a wonderful job in a horrible place," (which it wasn't), "where do you want to go?" I said; "Europe, because Helen's father is not well." They said; "You can be Commercial Counsellor in Bonn, Stockholm or The Hague or Consul General in Lyons or Bordeaux." So we went to Bordeaux. We had a very fine time before going, we did a lot of briefing. I was held up because I was asked to help in the Hindawi affair. He was accused, and found guilty, of getting his Irish girlfriend to attempt to blow up an El Al jet. There was a lot of hanky panky over the visa and I had to be available to give evidence in his case. I gave written evidence but was not called. It put me on the spot, in some respects. Everybody knew that I was asked to give evidence, but I couldn't go abroad until the case was over so I did not do the overseas language training which I would have wished for. We went to Bristol, because it was the 40th twinning anniversary and a very high profile event. I always remember John Harvey took us out to a restaurant and said; "Do you know a lot about wine," I said; "No." He said; "Do you speak good French?" I said; "Not very good French." And he said; "Why are they sending you to Bordeaux?" That was his concept of HM Consuls General in Bordeaux but of course it's quite different. I said I know a lot about other things.

Bordeaux was super, it was a down-trodden post, it was thought to be closing, it was thought not to be important. Absolute rubbish and we brought it right up. We installed computers, we got a grip on south-west France, about knowing everything, we increased the exports, we understood the elections. Paris was very good. Paris was full of brilliant people.

LC: Who was the Ambassador in Paris?

DA: Sir John Fretwell, a marvellous man, later Sir Ewen Fergusson. We had to forecast the elections. By computerising this whole thing, in a very difficult field, I got, out of fifty-odd

seats, only one wrong. I knew the Gironde would change sides. Paris said; "No it won't change," but I knew about it, and it changed by one seat. There was a big by-election which the whole of the Bordeaux area depended. It hinged on whether a well known national politician would beat a local doctor. This lady was quite brilliant, and favoured by our Embassy in Paris, but the local Mayor was popular. There was much discussion about it. Which ever way it went the whole thing went socialist or RPR. Paris asked me and I said; "The Mayor will win by less than 500 votes," Paris said; "No, he won't." He won by 300 votes. It was a thing about la France profonde, if you are living there you can know about it , you do not have to be particularly clever, if you're interested, if you go round talking to people, if you read the papers, you can suck it in almost. If you've got a computer and you can actually work out the chance of things happening it's even better. If you talk to the Denseignement Generaux, what we would call MI5, I suppose, they will tell you what's going to happen because they know. It's their business to know, and I did talk to them so we were very good at it. Wonderful time, Bordeaux is as good as you would imagine. Because you are HM Consul General you are invited to the most wonderful things, you are given the most wonderful wine and we had a terrific time.

LC: And French no problem?

DA: No, You talked French. You had to if you wanted to work properly. It was the same as in Chile where we never had a dinner party, we didn't speak Spanish, a lot of our colleagues we know didn't because that's the way of it. However well a Chilean speaks English, if you want to sell him something you talk Spanish and he'll buy it, if you talk English he won't. When we went to Paris we found all Embassy entertainment was in English. We were astonished. Bordeaux was super.

We then came away and Personnel Department said; "What do you want to do?", "What we would like you to do is be Consul General in Vancouver." I said; "I do not want to be Consul General in Vancouver, I've done the Consul General bit, I can do it no trouble at all but it's not a challenge, I don't want that. For our last posting we want a third-world non-English speaking Ambassadorship." They said; "My word, that's very difficult, would you like to go to Madagascar?" We said; "Yes." And we went and had a very good time. It was a most extraordinary time, it was a two-man post. We were told that we should come two days early so you can present your credentials, and I said; "No we are not coming two days early." We had arranged an important briefing in Paris. They said; "It'll be weeks before you can present your

credentials and the President will be furious and you will have a terrible time." We set off from Paris and should have been there at 5 o'clock in the morning. Our plane was delayed seven hours. As Ambassador you are allowed to fly out 1st Class. We were delayed actually on the plane. The 1st Class became something of a cocktail party so even before landing we had made some very useful Senior Malagasy contacts and met the US Ambassador. We arrived in Tana at twelve and they said; "You are presenting your credentials at 4.00." Far from not getting on with the President Ratsiraka, I was lucky. He had just had credentials presented by the Zambian Ambassador who couldn't speak French and he thought this was awful. I could speak French so he thought I was alright.

So we arrived there in this great flurry, terrific, wonderful thing to present credentials, have your national anthem played, terrific. The next day I went in to work, found out what the combinations were, or didn't in fact. Just met people really. The day our No 2, the only other UK-based person was doing a dress rehearsal for Agatha Christie's 'Ten Little Indians' and contrived to fall on a hunting knife, nigh-on killing himself. He had an emergency operation and we had to stay up with him most of the night because the nurses didn't look after him in the night. We medivac-ed him to La Reunion. Suddenly we were all by ourselves. We had a great time in Madagascar, we actually had a trade mission out there which was selling well, we had a naval visit which there hadn't been for eighty five years, we had a wonderful celebration of 50th Anniversary of the landing on Madagascar by the British Expeditionary Force to clear the Vichy French out of Madagascar, we had an immense interaction with the Malagasy and we helped them with aid, we cared about the fact that they were desperately poor, very nice people. We had a very good relationship with their government, even the President, President Ratsiraka who was a socialist dictator who was ousted by a free democratic election after a six month general strike and four years later was re-elected in democratic elections. We knew what was going on, we could help the government, we could get a vote, Madagascar's vote in the UN General Assembly any time we liked. It doesn't sound very much but if you've got a difficult vote in the General Assembly every vote counts. If you want one of your people elected you can go and ask the Malagasy to vote for you and equally they will come and ask you to vote for their candidate. The interaction between British and Malagasy is just splendid. Christianity was taken to Madagascar by the British, by the Welsh actually, and we had a great interaction with the churches, which is very important, not only from a religious point of view but it's the only countrywide network there is. If you wanted to know what was going on, if it would help if you could spend aid money, you spent it often through the churches because they knew what was

going on and were sensible people. We had English speaking missionary meetings sometimes in our house and often other people's houses every Sunday evening. The missionaries were really up against it. They were English speaking missionary meetings for British, Americans, Norwegians, anyone who spoke English. We knew what was going on there, and they did, because they often travelled from up-country. The aid programme was extremely good, we did a lot of English speaking language courses.

LC: Did you bring the teachers out from ...

DA: We brought people here to do work, but we had two British Council people there for a long time and that was the thing they wanted. We set up centres in every region. We got around and saw it all. A week before I retired the British Council asked if I would stay on to see some things through, but my retirement was so much in motion by this time we wouldn't, if they had asked three months earlier we would have done. I had been in the service a long time and I knew how it worked and I could get money because I know how to get money, I could get our budget worked out, I could influence people at home who were immensely good. Sir John Wright was Chief Clerk at the time. He actually used to read your state of the nation dispatch and comment on it and send you things, immensely supportive. We did everything they wanted apparently. Now the FCO is working on objectives and things like that, and it's wonderful, you make up your objectives, clear them with London and do them. We did 86%, you never get 100%. If you do you haven't set your objectives right. I did very well and at the end of that they gave me a CMG.

LC: Right, it isn't in my book.

DA: It was the Birthday Honours List '92 and we retired at the end of it. So that's our career. Somewhere it says in here that you are interested in what we have to do with Ministers or Secretaries of State.

HA (Helen Amy): Oh, in Madagascar you were heavily involved with Europeans ...

LC: What, was there a European Group that was set up?

DA: There was a European Union Group, they are not all represented, but there was also an EU

man, from Brussels ...

LC: No, I really meant whether the Heads of the European Missions in Madagascar however many there were, did you meet regularly as a group ...

DA: Yes, we did. Whoever was the President had the meetings. There were something like five of us there, I can't remember. We used to do this in Chile a lot too. Yes, we met in Madagascar to make sure we weren't overlapping or if we were we were conscious of it. The French were the dominant personalities, we used to give aid of about half a million pounds a year, the French used to give about 100 million dollars so that gives you some idea. The only Secretary of States I ever met were Sir Geoffrey Howe and Douglas Hurd, to a certain extent they were quite similar, but I only met Mr Hurd when we retired. Leon Brittan came to see Geoffrey Howe about an immigration thing and I was asked to be present and Sir Anthony Acland, a most brilliant PUS was there, very important people and I, being the most junior, was asked to take a minute of this meeting which was very difficult, because being the least senior you were furthest from the Secretary of State. Geoffrey Howe used to sit there with a cigarette in his mouth and mumble so you couldn't hear anything at all.

LC: And as the most junior you couldn't say; "Would you repeat that please ..."

DA: Leon Brittan would do his immigration bit. He was a jovial man, who talked in sort of parables, very interesting to see. I had an immense admiration for Howe who is, to my mind, the professional who worried away at problems and solved them. He wasn't a flamboyant man, but very fine, who was very highly regarded in the Foreign Office as I believe was Mr Hurd but I don't know about that so much because I wasn't in the Foreign Office at the time. But Douglas Hurd was a man you could talk to and when we came back from Madagascar he received us. He cared about our work. His Principal Private Secretary was Richard Gozney who we knew because he had stayed with us when he was in the Argentine. He is something very eminent now.

The only PUS I know much about is Anthony Acland, Sir Anthony Acland, who is absolutely superb. It always amused me on 'Yes, Minister', they used to show the Foreign Office PUS as suave and dignified and polished, and they got nowhere near Sir Anthony Acland who was much more suave, dignified and polished; and very clever. He was a very fine man. He had meetings

with all Heads of Departments every couple of months. They were very good. I had to support him before a Select Committee, I had to brief him and be with him and answer questions. He was very good to work with and very appreciative of your work. A finely aloof man, but I remember the Select Committee enquiry well. They were going to give us a hard time over China. We were sitting there, as you know you are at the end of a horseshoe, and the Chairman said; "Now, Sir Anthony, you're Head of Foreign Office," and he said; "I am the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office and the Head of the Diplomatic Service," and from then on we never looked back. But it was fine; having said that I served no less than thirteen PUS's and met one of them.

LC: Well, they, of course, are harder to find out about, because they are the 'eminence grise' and doesn't catch the headlines in the same way as the Foreign Secretaries do ...

DA: I thought it was a pity Acland went to Washington because I think he should have had a longer tour as PUS and done better and then John Fretwell would have gone to Washington, which he deserved, but that's another story. Generally the PUS's are very exceptional people. The Foreign Office depends upon having a good PUS and a good Chief Clerk and if you've got that you stand a chance of doing well. We haven't always had good Chief Clerks, even in the last ten years. We have now.

LC: Helen, do you want to add anything, this is the usual sort of question, whether the role of wives or the way that wives are used or abused has changed over the time you have served?

HA: Yes, I think I tend to be very old-fashioned in my outlook and fairly content, was content, with being a traditional type, I never felt the need to work overseas which would have been an extra pressure, I think it must be difficult to get very hot under the collar when you can't get a job and that has never bothered me, but then we started early enough ... When we married I had to resign, I was a B5 and I could have come back as a temporary B6 and at that stage we were still working Saturday mornings, it was a different world wasn't it? And I didn't, I haven't worked full time since I married.

DA: It is a different state of affairs now and we are old fashioned; we're old. I think it must be immensely difficult to work as a diplomat now, to work without the backup of a wife, I don't mean to do the washing up or to entertain only, but to help out in every possible thing. When we did commercial touring, or indeed touring in France, we both went because then you didn't need

a chauffeur and you could have somebody else driving while you did your notes for the next meeting and I think the Foreign Office gets it very cheap, they don't pay anything.

We had a wonderful life, we met an immense amount of people, we think we have done a lot of good, essentially we weren't trying to do good, we were trying to what we were there to do professionally and if London wanted something to happen that is what we did.

I did a hundred and fifty commercial visits, I tramped the streets doing commercial work, that's one of the things they talk about, they always said, for years and years; "Oh senior officers do commercial work." Well, not quite, not as much as they say but they should and they do a great deal more than ever they did.

LC: Well, there was this emphasis, the Lampton report ...

DA: Well, yes, that's a long time ago, we are talking about thirty years ago now. It didn't take off from there but it has taken off ...

LC: Ewen Fergusson used to do that ...

DA: Ewen Fergusson became Ambassador in Paris, had been Consul General in New York, I think, doing commercial work, he was good, he did commercial work and he cared, but some people didn't. I think that has changed. I'm not sure that the top senior management attitudes of the Foreign Office change because it wants to reproduce itself, it wants to become this rather elegant figure, above everything. There is a danger in that. We have gone in for management much more than we ever did and it's true. I wrote in my valedictory dispatch what we really need is not management but leadership. We have not always had leadership in the Foreign Office. I think we may be getting it now, it is coming and obviously there were an awful lot of people who were not leading, they were managing. That's not how you run an organisation like the Foreign Office.

There is one health angle. Health is an important thing in the Foreign Office and I think it is often forgotten that if you worked for, say, three years in Nigeria how low you are when you come back and how your performance might not be as good, people should allow for that. Let it be said the health in the Foreign Office is extremely well looked after. When this man fell on his

knife in Madagascar, I was told, I rang up the Foreign Office on a Saturday afternoon saying I want to medivac this man to La Reunion, within half an hour they came back and said; "Fine, it doesn't matter what it costs, get a 'plane." He was very ill.

Helen was suffering from End-stage renal failure, as a matter of fact, so we thought that was making her ill. All her hair fell out. She was very ill and it transpired that this was all from the effects of taking anti-malarial pills and that it is a known side effect. The way we found out was our daughter had bothered to read something in the directions of the tablets. The combined might of the University College Hospital and everybody else didn't get hold of the fact that it was because one of the malarial things we were both taking had changed what they call the carrier, that's the bit around the actual pill, may affect people in this way. Health is desperately important. One complains, and it is complained about the Foreign Office doesn't pay very well and so on, but conditions of service in leave, health and being looked after, first class.

HA: When my father was ill they flew me home from Chile at public expense. He wasn't exactly dying but he wasn't far off and I was the only relative. Robin, our son was with him but we were trying to protect our son from being set on too much and Thea Elliot, who was the family welfare officer at the time, was very, very supportive, because the fare from Chile was just beyond belief, so she arranged for me to come home. They flew me home again when he was ill, from Madagascar.

DA: All that sort of conditions of service and leave and everything else was absolutely first class ...

HA: And one of the things about getting the Bordeaux job, we said I was likely to be ill, we might have to leave early in fact, that I might have collapsed before we retired instead of a year or two after. We had known about this for years and told the office at the very beginning that it might be a problem at some stage.

DA: We knew about it in Moscow, that was something that added a slight pressure. Just before I got TB Helen found out that the condition her mother was dying of was one she had inherited from her mother. As I said, the medical people, Alan Burner and his group, were superb and that is something which I have total admiration for.