



September 2016

AJR plaque to honour Frank Schon

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) is delighted to announce that it unveiled a special commemorative plaque in honour of the industrialist Lord (Frank) Schon on Thursday 29 September at the house in Whitehaven, Cumbria where he and his family lived.

Frank Schon was born in Vienna on 18 May 1912 and fled to the UK in March 1939 immediately following the Nazi occupation of Prague where he was working for a German-focussed Central European chemical company.

Having been bombed out of London in 1940, he relocated to Whitehaven where together with Fred Marzillier he founded Marchon Products Ltd (coined by joining their surnames), a company making synthetic detergent raw materials. At its height, it employed more than two thousand people. Three years later he also founded Solway Chemicals Ltd and is credited for having brought employment to the depressed Cumbria area.

He remained as Chairman and Managing Director of Marchon and of Solway until 1967 when he was appointed Chairman of the National Research Development Corporation, a platform he used to argue for greater investment in British manufacturing. He also used the position to improve working conditions for industrial workers and fervently believed that the Common Market would bring greater opportunities for Britain.

Frank Schon was Knighted in 1966 and made a Life Peer in 1976. Concluding his maiden speech to the House of Lords upon his appointment he noted, "The debt that I owe to the kindness and humanity of the British people cannot be discharged."

Founded in July 1941, the AJR represents and supports Jewish victims of Nazi oppression who rebuilt their lives in Britain. Alongside our social and welfare services we are committed to perpetuating the legacy of the refugees and are prominent supporters of several leading institutions engaged in Holocaust memorialisation in the UK.

AJR Trustee Frank Harding, said: "It is with great pride and pleasure that we commemorate the life of Frank Schon, whose pioneering and visionary work not only greatly advanced the development of industrial chemicals but through whose endeavours created significant employment in Cumberland.

Having arrived in this country with limited means, and having been interned as an enemy alien, Frank Schon's skills and determination enabled him to make an enormous contribution to his adopted country.

I am delighted that his daughters, Yvonne and Susie, who lived in the house in Whitehaven where this plaque is now situated, were able to be at this unveiling and am grateful to the present house owners, Mr and Mrs Coats, for their agreement to mount this dedication.

Through our plaque scheme we are honouring prominent Jewish émigrés from Nazism who made a significant contribution to their adopted homeland. The plaque honouring Lord Schon follows the dedication we mounted at Glyndebourne in August to the impresario Sir Rudolf Bing, and previous plaques to memorialise the biochemist and Nobel Prize winner Sir Hans Krebs, to Sir Ludwig Guttman, who founded the Paralympics, and to the theologian, teacher and rabbi, Dr Leo Baeck. We have also installed a plaque in memory of the Cosmo restaurant in Swiss Cottage, in London, a famous meeting place for the refugees.

We believe that these commemorative plaques will help form a tangible link between the illustrious earlier residents and the local community as well as fascinating residents and visitors. As well as being instructive and informative, they bring the past into the present, and they perpetuate the memory of the person being honoured."

For further press information please contact Michael Newman:

Tel: 020 8385 3074

Email: mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Website: www.ajr.org.uk

Notes on the AJR for Editors:

The AJR is the leading national charitable organisation exclusively delivering social, welfare and volunteer services to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression living in Great Britain.

The AJR supports Holocaust education and research projects and initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust.

The AJR has produced the ground-breaking audio-visual testimony archive, *Refugee Voices*. This collection of 150 filmed interviews creates a legacy of the experiences of the refugees and will advance and enhance Holocaust research for future generations. *Refugee Voices* enables Holocaust researchers and scholars to watch up to 450 hours of film and read fully edited and transcribed accounts. For the first time, researchers will also be assisted by time-codes that, together with a summary sheet and key words section, direct users to specific sections of the films. Details are at www.refugeevoices.co.uk

AJR Chief Executive, Michael Newman, is a member of the UK delegation to the [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#), which brings together governments and non-governmental

organisations to raise awareness of the Holocaust and places political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research