



From the Editor's Desk

Dear Kinder and Friends

Kindertransport has become a subject of much research and inquiry apart from talks by Kinder. This edition has several requests for information. Please reply to them if you feel inclined to do so. Hopefully it will all be part of the resources of the story of Kindertransport. From requests received over the last few years it is also the subject of dissertations for degrees and doctorates.

Pesach is the Festival of Freedom and overcoming adversity. May the times ahead be ones of freedom from terror, fear and despair. I write these words against the background of the horrors of Brussels, Paris and Israel.

I wish you and your family - חג שמח - *Chag Sameach* - a happy and joyous Pesach

Beard.

Hello 'Kinder'

First and foremost Chag Sameach. I hope you have a wonderful Pesach our festival of freedom. Thank God winter is nearly over and we are going into longer days and warmer weather. Spring is a wonderful time when lots of flowers start blooming and generally we all feel that much happier. I am sure most of you saw 'The Pianist of Willesden Lane' a play that brought back memories to many of us. It is indeed a very good play and well presented. A few days ago I gave a breakfast talk at the Jewish Centre in Leeds there were some sixty participants who received the talk about the 'Kindertransport' very well indeed. I am aware that quite a few of us give talks. It would be interesting if the speakers could convey some of their impressions through the news letter telling us who the talk was for and the questions raised.

Don't forget, we have Dame Esther Rantzen coming to our lunch on the 11th May.

All the best and I hope you all have a wonderful Holiday

Esther Rantzen



AJR & KT AT FILM FESTIVAL

In February/March 2016, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) held a Short Film Festival for films 'inspired by the IWM's collection and the causes, course and consequences of war.' The BBC programme *Kindertransport – A Journey to Life*, produced by Maria Polachowska, was part of programme 7. Three other short films were also shown: *Drone* which was a bit scary showing the power of one man to cause destruction, *The Forgotten Army of World War in Burma* which showed West Africa's soldiers and covered several topics connected with them, and *Apocalypse Rhyme* an experimental black and white animation tackling head-on the slow ruination of our planet.

Kindertransport was included in two categories for award: The Annie Dodds Award for Best Documentary and best use of IWM Archive Material. The **result** of judges and audience voting was that *Kindertransport* came runner-up to *Soldiers in Burma*.

It was a great experience to watch the film on a large screen as opposed to a TV screen. Thanks go to Maria, the producer, and her cameraman Jon (due to working elsewhere he could not attend). They were wonderful to work with and have become good friends.

Maria, her brother Wedge, Eve Willman, Michael Newman, and I attended the showing and hoped our voting would swing the awards our way!

The KT Film Stars (EW & BK)



The Imperial War Museum

To finish on a light-hearted note: when the programme first appeared, my grandson and wife were in Rome. When they got back to their hotel room they switched on the TV and got a shock when they saw the film with me in it. (BK)

A few questions beyond the *Mah Nishtanah*

The Exodus from Egypt is mentioned many times in the Torah, our prayers and elsewhere. The Festival of Pesach is dedicated to its theme, apart from the agricultural aspect. This event is now dated generally to the 13th century BCE, though some other dates have been suggested for it. Who was the Pharaoh of the period of slavery? Rameses the Great? The Torah mentions no name; it only states that '*A new king arose over Egypt*' (Exodus 1:8) – completely anonymous.

The dating of the Pharaoh and who he was leads to further and more complex questions. From just digging and evaluating finds in general of the early past, biblical (and general) archaeology has grown into a highly sophisticated branch of human knowledge and learning. Thus with the development of Egyptology the following issue arose. The Torah speaks of the Israelites in Egypt and their departure from there, whereas Egyptian history has no traces, nor has archaeology found any. Perhaps one day it might!

Thus with the development of Egyptology (and archaeological advances elsewhere in the Middle East) how does one reconcile the Bible with archaeology, or not? Do we need archaeology to provide proof for the Bible or is the Bible to prove archaeology as being right? Or, are they two different branches with occasional help by one to the other? Or is Faith the overriding factor? Proof or no proof, the Exodus of our Torah, of our prayers and elsewhere is fundamental to our belief in God, His mercy in delivering Israel from Egypt? The final act to the Exodus was the acceptance of the *Mitzvot* (commandments) at Sinai. Israel was now a free people with its own way and direction in life. Hence we rehearse continually the miracle of the Exodus as significant of God's protection. Freedom at the hands of the Almighty.

Thus we recall over and over again the Exodus with the Divine miracles, the ultimate fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. In trouble, God was with Israel. That miraculous escape – however you take and understand the 'miraculous' - engendered in later times the cry: '*My God, my God why have you forsaken me.*' God was there in Egypt; where is He now in our distress, 'now' being whatever point in time.

Yom Hashoah vehagvurah (the day of shoah and fortitude), the real Jewish Holocaust Memorial Day comes a few days after Pesach. The date links into the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt in 1943 (which began on the eve of Pesach) when the cry '*why have You forsaken me*' (*lamah azavtani*), expressed by millions, turned to heroism. To a fight which the ghetto fighters knew they could not win against the might of the Germans. Unfortunately no 'Egyptian' miracle. A few days after *Yom Hashoah* is *Yom Atzmaut*, commemorating the 'Egyptian miracle,' where the many were overcome by the few (mixing festival messages!) allowing the small UN allotted State to become the thriving *Medinat Israel* of today, despite the threats against it.

Jewish thought has three festivals of Pesach: that of the Exodus, the current form since then, the future one in Messianic times. The freedom of the Egyptian one was 'the gift of God as promised. The current one, recalls the past as a reminder that Freedom must be protected and fought for, taking freedom in whatever guise we want it. With the cup of Elijah foreshadowing his coming, we can look forward to the third Pesach, to complete freedom without the cry of *lamah azavtani*. May it soon come in our time!

Bernd Koschland



The Warsaw Ghetto in revolt

עם ישראל חי

Year 6

Some comments from pupils' letters of appreciation after a talk on Kindertransport:

The parts I loved the most when you showed us the objects that you still have.....; ...I enjoy hearing other peoples; experiences and I find that one great way of learning about a certain period of time is by listening to someone who actually lived and experienced that period. It is easy to open a book and read.....; It must have been unbearable for your parents to decide whether you should go on the Kindertransport or not.....;I particularly enjoyed hearing about the Kindertransport as I could very easily be in the same position.....; I thought the children just got on the Kindertransport and went to England (reference to parents accompanying children to the train/boat).....I enjoyed when you talked about the big boat you went on....another reason ..to thank is you brought World War Two alive.....another thing I found interesting were the pictures you brought.....; A highlight....was when *Tardis* (of Dr Who – editor) took us back in time allowing us to discover your childhood.....I enjoyed making links from what you said to what we have been learning in school.

Reviews



Vivien and Deborah Samson: *The Rabbi in the Green Jacket*, Matador 2015, PB pp 330 with illustrations

An intriguing title! Who the Rabbi was is only revealed at the end. The book is about Jewish life in Buckinghamshire from just before World War 2 and onwards, as seen through the eyes of the many individual contributors. The pages reveal the lives, or aspects of them, of individuals who lived in the County. The people are just residents but in the main are those seeking safety in the quiet countryside from bombing, general evacuees and refugees who had fled from the clutches of the Nazis. As far as the Kindertransport goes, there is an article on the Tylers Green Hostel for boys (run by the late Rabbi Eli Munk and his congregation of the Golders Green Beth Hamidrash) and housed a number of Kinder including Joe Wohlfarth, a Kind, who won a bronze medal over 75's in a recent Israel Maccabiah. A number of famous people lived in Buckinghamshire during the war. Such as King Zog of Albania, the novelist Elias Canetti who won a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1981, the painter Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, Sir Alexander Korda, the Rothschilds of Waddesdon Manor (who took in a few Kinder) and many others.

There were communities and synagogues in various places in the county, High Wycombe, Amersham, Chesham and so on. Kosher meals for children and Service personnel were available. Shortly after the war the communities folded as people moved away, Amersham remained for a while and High Wycombe also did.

Thus the book contributes much to Anglo-Jewish History through the contributions of so many individuals with their accounts of their life in Buckinghamshire. The book is a kaleidoscope of life, which makes fascinating reading. One can just dip in and read and move into another era and world.

The book concludes with reports from the local papers of the period, a useful glossary, sources, websites and books for further reading.

The authors undertook great research, especially in contacting individuals. Thus the book is an important contribution to the Anglo-Jewish story of a period through which many of us lived and at the same time pictures of our individual lives. It is great to have been involved in writing a contribution. Thank you Vivien and Deborah for this wonderful book.

Ah! I did not forget the Rabbi as promised; I can reveal him because, if like me, you would doubtlessly cheat and read the piece about him. It was a chaplain, Revd 'Sonnie' Bloch, who rode a motor cycle wearing a green jacket.

Bernd Koschland (*a war-time resident of the Tylers Green hostel, Buckinghamshire. with fond memories of the area*)

The Pianist of Willesden Lane

It was a soul-stirring experience to be part of a packed theatre audience completely transfixed for 90 minutes which passed too quickly! The stage was almost empty but for one person and a piano and screens at the back. The introductory song stilled the audience, after which a solitary figure appeared on the stage. For the whole time she alone spoke, her words interspaced with piano music and screens coming to life as the soliloquy demanded. What a captivating performance, the like of which I. and no doubt many others, had never been part of before. That lone figure was Mona Golabek, a renowned concert pianist, daughter of Lisa Golabek (née Jura). The story is that of Lisa, based on Mona's (with Lee Cohen) biography of her mother *The Children of Willesden Lane - beyond the Kindertransport, memoir of music, love and survival*

We were taken back to Vienna and life there before and after the Anschluss. Then came the 1938 pogrom (Kristallnacht). How we felt with 'Lisa' when her adored music teacher had to tell her that he could no longer teach her as she was Jewish; it was forbidden to teach Jews. His voice came from the 'gods' as voices did several times. The screens too displayed the horrendous events of Kristallnacht. Father came home from a gambling session with a crumpled piece of paper: Lisa's permit to join a transport. The emotional sadness of leaving home came through with the hope expressed by her mother that music should always be part of her life.

And so to England via the Hook, Harwich and Liverpool Street Station, It doubtless brought tears to many eyes as Lisa stood there waiting, waiting for her cousins, who, she had been told, would take her in. The cousin came but explained he could not take her because he and his wife had no room in their new flat. She was alone now but help came through the Refugee Agency at Bloomsbury House

who found her a place in the country with a wealthy English family where she worked as a maid. Yes, many Kinder suffered the same – being a maid. She left after a few months and again via Bloomsbury House found another home, originally only temporary, in the hostel at 243 Willesden Lane run by Mrs Cohen. She stayed through bomb damage and restoration of the building. Lisa believed that each piece of music tells a story, a good example of which, to my mind, were a few bars sounding like the stitching of a her sewing machine sewing part of a uniform; I cannot recall which music it was. Lisa worked in a clothing factory. Finally she won a scholarship to the Royal London Academy of Music.

Mona's piano playing and the movement of her hands as they flew so majestically over the keys were magical. Beethoven. Bach, Chopin Rachmaninoff, Gershwin and Maschwitz all featured. Two pieces however had a special place: Grieg's Piano Concerto and Debussy's Clair de Lune. Lisa's mother had impressed on her daughter that these two works must always be with her (*according to the book* - editor). They did not just impress her but also the audience, as did all the other music at the hands of Mona. She playfully told us that it was not a mechanical piano, but it was she who played! Joys of pre-Anschluss Vienna, the sadness and tragedies, all came through loud and clear as did the new life that Lisa led as a girl in the hostel of Willesden Lane. It was an emotional evening not to be forgotten.

BK



JUBILEE HOUSE, MERRION AVENUE, STANMORE, MIDDLESEX HA7 4RL
Telephone: 020 8385 3070 Fax: 020 8385 3080 Email: kt@ajr.org.uk www.ajr.org.uk

KINDERTRANSPORT EVENT

FRIDAY 1st JULY 2016

Sadly we have had to cancel our planned 5 day trip to Europe following in the footsteps of Kinder from 77 years ago, taking in the opportunity to view Kindertransport statues and places of cultural interest.

However please join us for a day trip to Harwich

And then to be part of the commemorative train journey to Liverpool Street Station and events in Harwich as shown in the box below.

AJR will arrange transport from London to Harwich

Please register your interest by calling Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email susan@ajr.org.uk

Memorial for “Kindertransport“- children in Frankfurt/Main

The association “Jüdisches Leben in Frankfurt e.V.” (Jewish life in Frankfurt: www.juedisches-leben-frankfurt.de) accompanies former Jewish citizens of Frankfurt and their offspring (second generation) during their stay in Frankfurt (being invited by the City of Frankfurt):

Investigating their family history and supporting research, producing documentations and publications and encouraging them to meet students at schools.

During the last decades we were able to interview a lot of witnesses, among them about fifty “Kindertransport“-children. To commemorate their destiny and the lives of their families **we suggest to establish a memorial for them in Frankfurt**, preferably close to Frankfurt Central Station. Another aspect is to honour the organizations which supported the children and organized their survival, mainly in Britain.

We already have done a lot of research but to round it up we would like to find at least some of the *passenger lists* of the “Kindertransport” leaving from Frankfurt Central Station 1938/1939.

We would be very grateful for any help concerning the lists but we also would like to invite you getting into contact with us individually.

Thank you very much

Till Lieberz-Gross

Till.lieberz-gross@unitybox.de

German Kinder: Your language and identity – request for participants

This study seeks to understand the language habits of Kindertransport refugees from pre-WW2 Germany. Your participation will help in understanding the effect of immigration from persecution on the language identity of Kinder, including on maintenance (or loss) of home language(s). Your participation will involve an interview, in person, at a location of your choice. The interview will last about an hour.

You may be asked questions about:

- Speaking German after leaving Germany
- Learning English
- Using Yiddish or German words when speaking English
- Feelings about German and Germany, and English and England, now

I appreciate that it may be difficult to talk about some of your past experiences. You are free to pause or stop the interview, and you may also withdraw from the study at any time.

Participant requirements:

- Be living in London or within 1 hour of London (for me to meet you)
- Have come to the UK on a Kindertransport from Germany
- Have come to the UK without relatives

- Have spoken German as a mother-tongue (if you also spoke Yiddish, for example, that is fine)
- Be available for interview in May
- Agree to have your interview audio recorded (note: interview transcripts will be anonymised)

About the researcher

My name is Naomi Bloomer. I am the granddaughter of two Kinder. I am taking a Masters' degree in Applied Linguistics at University College London and this research is being undertaken as part of my dissertation.

Contact

If you would be willing to participate in this study, please contact me by **Monday 2nd May (after Passover)**. Interviews will take place in May.

If you would like to participate or to find out more about this study, you can email me at Naomi.bloomer.09@ucl.ac.uk or call 020 8352 2647.



Dear Bernd

I wanted to advise you of another commemorative journey which I am planning for Sunday 15 May 2016 (or thereabouts) which has been requested by Rabbi Harry Jacobi, one of the children aboard the May 1940 voyage of the *Bodegraven*.

Details of the proposed commemorative journey are here: <http://www.papyrus-rail.com/kt77bodegraven2016.html>

and authenticated (by a Dutch shipping journal) details of the Bodegraven's journey are here: <http://www.papyrus-rail.com/kt77bodegraven.html>

A Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for the Kindertransports and Childrens Carnival with over 1000 local school children will take place and an appropriate theme. Vintage buses to the KT memorial on Harbour Crescent and the site of Dovercourt holiday camp.

Trains from London and the North of England (probably Leeds), including "The Harwich Pullman" comprising steam locomotive Tornado hauling the Belmond British Pullman, the only train still certificated for the main line which includes carriages that were actually in service in 1938/39 at the time of the Kindertransporte.

See: http://www.a1steam.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1243%3Athe-harwich-pullman&catid=1%3Alatest-news&Itemid=123 This will be open to ALL Kinder and not just the Czech Kinder.

As well as the Pullman there will be another special VIP train from London Liverpool Street conveying Kinder, their family, VIPs, school groups and guests and the proposal is that Kinder themselves will get a 100% discount, ie. free, though we may have to limit the numbers.

You can link to www.papyrus-rail.com/kt77 which is a section of the website I will be maintaining specifically for access by Kinder and their families/descendants.

Peter (Hedderly)

- Articles on the SS Bodegraven have appeared in KT Newsletters in 2013

Dear Mr Koschland

My name is Jason Hensley, and I teach a Holocaust studies class at the Christadelphian Heritage School in Los Angeles. In relation to the class, I'm hoping to put together a book on Christadelphians and their involvement in the Kindertransport. If you stayed with Christadelphians or in a Christadelphian Hostel (Elpis Lodge, Little Thorn) during the 1930s and 1940s, or have any sources of information that you would like to share, please contact me at jhensley@heritageschoolcalifornia.com or +1 (805) 304-7860.

Dear Editor

We, Uli Jürgens (Director) and Volkmar Geiblinger (Producer) from Vienna, are doing a TV-documentary about "Kindertransport" in WWII. The memories of the people who survived are at the centre of attention in this film. Some of the protagonists are Hans Kohlseisen, Ilse Melamid, Hans Menasse, Ari Rath and Robert Rosner. We also would like to talk to former Kinderwho remained in Great Britain.

Some of the questions we would like to ask:

- What images have been carved in your memories?
- How did you cope with the loss of your home and family, with loneliness and alienation?
- Why did a lot of the children not return? Which survival strategies did you develop to cope with the trauma of your childhood?

If you want to tell us your story (the filming will take place in June/July 2016) and share your memories, please feel free to contact us:

ulrike.juergens@chello.at, volkmar@trilight.eu

Sincerely Yours

Uli Jürgens,Volkmar Geiblinger

Transports

Throughout my childhood, my mother's Kindertransport story was known to me - not discussed, but yet defining. I would cite it if I wanted to impress, and try to feel sad. It was only when I attended a Kindertransport reunion, and later during a trip to Dusseldorf on my mother's eightieth birthday, that I came close to glimpsing the reality of her and my grandparents' tragedy. I had children of my own. My mother, Liesl Munden, nee Heilbronner, was on the last train out of Dusseldorf in August 1939. Seventy-four years later her granddaughter - my daughter, Anna - turned fifteen, the same age Liesl was when she left. Liesl was losing memories, and Anna had a thirst for performance. My wife and I are both theatre designers and Jude had the idea to commission a good friend and playwright Jon Welch to write a piece inspired by Liesl's story and cast our princess in it! Jon was enthusiastic and suggested we create a company and produce the play So was born 'Transports' and Pipeline theatre.

What Jon wrote was in no way biographical. He used certain character traits and recognised the damage done, telling two parallel stories of a naive fifteen-year-old arriving in a strange world in 1939, and, thirty-four years later, that same woman attempting to foster a truculent, damaged fifteen-year-old girl. Two actors took multiple roles, the changes becoming an integral part of the drama. The set felt like a purgative for me - two monolithic railway tracks omnipresent in a fussy, claustrophobic, domestic world. We did some shows in Cornwall and had a week's run in London. Response to the show was incredible. I have been involved in scores of shows but had never seen audiences so involved and moved, fictional characters rendered real, cared about, concerned for. It was a frustratingly short run, as we had neither the resources nor the experience to take it further.

We moved on and produced two more shows, one about the online sex trade ('Streaming'), and one about robots and Alzheimer's ('Spillikin'), this latter being the second time my mother had been our muse (didn't see that coming!). These were Arts Council funded, had successful longer runs and are gaining us a reputation for compelling stories, beautifully told, So now happily we are re-touring 'Transports'. Anna is now studying drama so we have a new "Dinah" (Hannah Stephens), and Juliet Welch revisits her astonishing portrayal of "Lotte".

Its themes of abandonment, and the effects of the flight from horror on strangers in a strange land, ring louder today than they did three years ago, and on a show night, if I'm not too busy, I catch another glimpse of my grandparents.

'Transports' is on at the Pleasance theatre in North London from Feb 28th for two weeks, and touring nationally both before and after. Details at www.pipelinetheatre.com

Alan Munden

A shot from the play



Blumenfeld Cafe