



Kindertransport

A special interest group of the

Association of Jewish Refugees
SERVING HOLOCAUST REFUGEES AND SURVIVORS NATIONWIDE



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

**Contact: Andrea Goodmaker at AJR,
Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore,
Middlesex HA7 4RL
Tel : 44 (0) 20 8385 3070
Fax : 44 (0) 20 8385 3080
e-mail: andrea@ajr.org.uk**

**SEPTEMBER 2011
EDITOR:
Rev. Bernd Koschland
nisraf@compuchange.co.uk
Chairman:
Erich Reich**

**Previous issues may also be viewed at:
www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport.htm**

Dear Kinder and Friends



From the Editor's Desk

As I write, it seems that the last Newsletter only just appeared. But time flies and it is almost Rosh Hashanah. This edition contains quite a variety of items from various sources as the Newsletter has spread its wings far afield. I am sure our dear Bertha would like to wish everyone well and a very happy and healthy New Year and likewise we wish you, Bertha. From me, your editor, also very good wishes for the coming year. Shanah Tovah and Chag Sameach.

Bernd.

KT STATUE IN HOOK OF HOLLAND

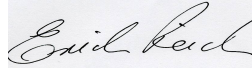
The date for the dedication of the Kindertransport Statue in Holland has now been fixed for 30th November 2011. Further details will be notified. Meanwhile if you are interested in joining the group going, please email Eve at willeveann@aol.com see page 12.

Dear Kinder

It's been an extraordinary few months. First we had a drought in the spring and now it won't stop raining. Meanwhile in conjunction with the LGCC we organised a celebration of the achievements of refugees and their off spring

during National Refugee week. At the same time we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the A.J.R. The week proved a great success with many members participating in the events and discussions.

I hope you had a restful and pleasant summer, and wish you all *Shana Tova* and *Chag Sameach*.



The Penny Whistle or Music is Prayer

The lad's best toy was his penny flute, which he always had with him and played continually. It came to Rosh Hashanah, when his father told him to leave it behind as they went to Synagogue. However, the boy smuggled it in. While fiddling with it, his father noticed the whistle and took it away. Later the lad managed to retrieve it from his father's pocket, put it to his mouth and played notes on it. The Rabbi stopped the service. Why? To declare that the boy's few tones came from the depths of his soul and penetrated to the Divine throne.

Prayer during the High Holydays takes pride of place – apart from food and clothes! There are any highpoints in the services, which hopefully raise us to a greater spiritual level. The points are enhanced through their musical rendering by the Chazzan, with or without choir, or as in some synagogues by musical accompaniment. If I have to choose three of these highpoints, I would go for the Shofar, *Untenaneh Tokef* and *Kol Nidrei*.

The sounds of the Shofar, basically as 'simple' an instrument as the penny whistle, with its three basic notes must stir within the soul of each individual feelings of trembling and awe before G-d. They should direct our thoughts heavenwards and also inwards, into our very selves to make us consider what kind of people we have been in the past year and what we would like to be in the coming year.

The rendering on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur of the moving prayer *Unetaneh Tokef* in Musaf highlights the content of the prayer. We, as individuals, pass before the Divine Judge like sheep being counted singly by the shepherd, as our fate is decided, recorded and sealed, "Who shall live and who shall die..." As the Chazzan reaches the climax of the prayer in word and song, the congregation acclaim with one voice that "Repentance, Prayer and Charity avert the evil decree."

My final choice is *Kol Nidrei*, not so much a prayer as a statement of annulment of our vows and promises. The origins of the Ashkenazi melody are lost in our past. The melody of *Kol Nidrei* penetrates into the innermost parts of our being and prepares us for the uplift of Yom Kippur. Who cannot but be moved by it? Even hearing it at other times from a disc must still do something to the listener. Max Bruch (1838-1920) was so moved by it that he composed his famous *Kol Nidrei*, in Liverpool, for 'cello and orchestra. He wrote: "As an artist I deeply felt the extraordinary beauty of this song..." (Idelsohn, Jewish Music, p. 513)

The solemnity of the High Holyday music passes on into the joyous sounds of Sukkot, of the 'musical sounds' of the *lulavim* being shaken and eventually to the 'happy-clappy' singing of Simchat Torah. May the 'musicfest' of the *Chaggim* give us uplift and strength to face whatever comes our way. I wish you and your families *Shanah Tovah* and *Chag Sameach*.

Bernd Koschland

Danzig Philatelist –results of a search

In the Chanukah edition of the Newsletter, Giles du Boulay asked for some information about the Kindertransport from Danzig. In the *Danzig Philatelist* (April-June 2011), which he edits, Giles gives a brief account of the origins of the Kindertransport with special reference to Danzig. It seems 142 children came on four transports, May, two in July and August. Two copies of the Danzig Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt list names of children who left.

Giles relates the story of a crumpled envelope, sent by Else Ruhm from Danzig to Hans Ruhm (brother of Karl) in London. The envelope, minus its content, turned up at an auction in South Africa. Someone who knew Karl Ruhm (now Roome) returned it to him; Karl's story is given below. It is a treasured possession, recalling his mother.

Karl, was the youngest of four children, aged 14 in 1939. His mother was a Lutheran, whilst his father was Jewish; a condition of the marriage was that the children be brought up as Lutheran. Due to his Christian 'mongrel (his word) status, he was sent to a state school, where his treatment became worse and worse. His brother had come to England in March 1939 and obtained a guarantor for £50 for his younger sibling. His father had come to England, whilst his mother had to remain in Danzig, only to die in the burning city as the Russians took it.

Karl and other children boarded a train for Holland. Their carriage was locked and labelled '*Achtung-Juden.*' As the train came into Berlin, it was noticed that a window was cracked, as the result of a fight between two boys. The youngsters were asked to pay, but as they had no money to do so, the carriage was moved into a siding, locked up without light or water. Some time later, an official came and said the money had been paid and they had 15 minutes to get on to the train again, which was 100 metres away and young and old had to drag their luggage, the older helping the younger. After the war Karl learned that the money was paid by a friend of his mother, who lived in Berlin and came to the station to say good-bye. They were locked in again without light and water into a carriage.

They reached Holland, then boarded the ferry to Harwich, from where Karl travelled to Liverpool Street Station, where he was met by his older sister and brother. After a brief stay in London he went on to Nelson near Burnley and stayed a wonderful year with foster parents. In 1940, he had to move; the Quakers found him lodgings and a job as an engineering apprentice in Manchester. In 1944 he left for London to join his brother and stand on his own feet.

(The above account (edited) of Karl Roome is published with his permission)

As set out more fully in the Danzig Philatelist article, Giles extends his thanks to all those who were kind enough to respond to his appeal in the earlier edition of the Newsletter.

HITLER'S PLANS THWARTED

“There were a lots of stones and not much bread,” words which Ludwig Uhland (the Swabian poet placed in the mouth his Kaiser Rotbart, words, which were a reality for the first Jewish settlers in Kibbutz Lavi, which had assigned to them in 1949 the rocky hills of Lower Galilee. According to Henry Stern moving stones was a chief occupation well into the 50's. Another founder, Gerti Uman, in the early days there was never enough to eat and life consisted of 'heat and sickness.'

Henry Stern, even after six decades, finds it hard to hide his Stuttgart twang in his accent. He can trace his ancestors in Germany back to 17th century. His middle-class childhood was disturbed at the end of the 1930's, when one of his teachers, wearing an SA uniform, displayed him to the class as 'specimen of the non-Aryan race.' In wise foresight, his parents sent the 14 year old on the Kindertransport to England in the summer of 1939. Henry believes that “with that decision, our parents gave birth to us a second time.” As a member of the Jewish Brigade he returned to German after the war. Given a few hours leave, he found an uncle who had stayed hidden in Fellbach, near Stuttgart. In France he found a younger brother, “who had gone through every bit of hell.” His parents were buried anonymously outside Riga with 30,000 other victims of Nazi genocide. Henry married Lily in December 1949 in Lavi, where conditions were primitive, without electricity, sanitary systems, houses, only tents, a jug of water per day and basic, simple food.

Gerti Ulman arrived in England on a transport from Vienna three weeks after her 11th birthday. “My childhood was then cruelly cut off,” she recalls, “I came from a loving family. After leaving Vienna, I wasn't kissed or hugged anymore.” In 1946 she was able to find her mother; her father and three brothers did not survive. Gerti is the archetype Jewish grandmother, radiating unending love and care. Lovingly she shows visitors her home caressing the blossoming olive branches and says, “I have never had any desire to go on holiday; here I have everything. She has 3 daughters and 12 grandchildren.

Today Lavi has various activities: farming, poultry (turkeys), making synagogue furniture (perhaps dear reader, you sit in some of it. *Editor*) and a 4* hotel. Kibbutz life is based on the Bible and Jewish tradition, as it was right from the beginning.

The fact that Henry is living in Israel, with children, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren is to him the best proof “that Hitler's plans were thwarted.” He dreams of setting up a museum of the Kindertransport in the

old corn, for “the old German speaking generation is gradually dying out.” Whereas the original founders of the Kibbutz came from England via Germany, today the membership is from some 24 different countries.

*Ruth Vered,
Israel*

My own parents might well be among those 30 000. (*Editor*)

Dr Vera K Fast, Children's Exodus, a history of the Kindertransport, IB Tauris 2011, ISBN 978 1 84885 537

Children's Exodus

Dr Vera Fast, a retired archivist of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, has written a superb, readable history of the Kindertransport, as well as the arrival post-war youngsters from the camps as well as hidden children. It is an essential read for Kinder, as well as the general public, to gain a fuller understanding of the Kindertransport. The book is well researched, with ample source references (41 pages), a large up-to-date bibliography and an ample index. Where individuals have been interviewed, including *our* Bertha, the author has used as few words as possible and thus avoided the common pitfall of lengthy personal stories.

Vividly recalled is the trauma of parents sending children away, of children considering themselves sent away as a form of rejection, tensions in various forms, between authorities, the rejection of faith and religious practice, of observing orthodoxy. An interesting example of this was the very orthodox post-war group put up by the Jews' Temporary Shelter and rejecting its food as not being kosher. Religious problems were aggravated by Kinder arriving and being put in non-Jewish homes, of being evacuated to such homes. This raised the issue of Anglo-Jewry not fully opening its doors to the new arrivals from Nazi Europe, though in the Epilogue to the book, the author points out the problems Anglo-Jewry had in 1938-9 and especially in the years immediately after the war. The issue of conversion by Kinder is also dealt with, whether the influence was that of foster homes or in case of hidden children being used to Christianity, or simply the rejection of Judaism, because G-d had permitted the *Shoah* to happen.

The opening chapter is an excellent, concise summary of the events in Germany and the situation of Jews there, as well as in Austria and Czechoslovakia. This leads to the Kindertransport beginning and ending at the outbreak of war. A group of children on a train in Czechoslovakia were waiting to leave when the war broke out; they did not survive. According to the author, the term Kindertransport (Kindertransporte) originated with the German rail authorities (page 21).

Vividly described are the issues faced by kinder arriving in a land foreign to them, of being settled in 'camps', e.g. Dovercourt, or in hostels, rather than with families. Lord Gorell, appointed as legal guardian for Kinder, queried the use of hostels, as it deprived children of family life. There was no other way to accommodate children where there were no foster homes. For the period of evacuation and later, various methods were used to allow children to keep their Jewish identity, e.g. the Chief Rabbis' Emergency Religious Council. In

this context, Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld is mentioned for his sterling work, before, during and after the war.

The last two chapters deal with the issues of *Mischlinge* and the post-war arrival of youngsters from the camps and elsewhere from the Continent. Dr. Fast raises two important points, among others in the Epilogue, the the definition of 'survivor' also applies to Kinder and secondly the refusal of the USA and Canada opening their gates to Kinder, though some 200 were admitted eventually. (see KT Newsletter December 2010, *Editor*)

I need to mention only two corrections: The Jews' Temporary Shelter was not a project of the Board of Guardians, but an independent body founded in 1884 (p.21) and on p. 104 it is Rabbi M (not H) Swift.

In summary I can only again recommend this book as must to read.

Bernd Koschland



1806373

While reading the current edition of Jewish Historical Studies, I came across this interesting piece.

1890373 Flight Sergeant Henry Eric Wells (originally Heinz Erich Feldstein) was born in Vienna, in 1923. His father was Polish and as a result of the Polish action of removing nationality, Henry became stateless and was expelled from Technical school. His parents, who had declared themselves as 'without Faith,' got their son on a transport organised by the Quakers. With 'J' on his passport he was not interned and in 1943 joined the RAFVR. In September 1944 he was posted to Squadron 101 and completed 30 tours by February 1945, flying in Lancaster bombers. He then went on duties in Germany and after training was transferred to the RAF Intelligence Service. Part of his duties was the apprehension and interrogation of suspected war criminals; one of them was a guard from Dachau who was eventually hanged for war crimes.

He had not heard anything from his family and so went to Vienna with help of the US Air Force. Equipped with a truck, provided by RAF Vienna, he went to the street where he had lived. His house no longer existed, but he was recognised by the wife of the family's former landlord who was searching the rubble for anything belonging to her. She recognised him and told him that his parents were safe and living not far away. There was a joyful reunion and his father was able to set up business (possibly black market) with the truckload of rations that the RAF Vienna had provided for Henry.

He married in April 1945. His English wife was unhappy that he stayed in Germany, despite an offer of an important military job, and he returned to England and applied for discharge. After working on a farm, they immigrated to Canada, where he now lives. In Canada he met two former colleagues from 101 Squadron, one a navigator and the other was mid-upper gunner on the same aircraft while on a mission over Stuttgart.

The above is based on an article in Jewish Historical Studies by Martin Sugarman, Volume 43 pages 220-222, with the permission of the Jewish Historical Society of England.



Harwich Kindertransport Memorial

A memorial remembering Harwich's role in The Kindertransport was unveiled on the seafront March 2011, in the presence of the Mayor, Cllr Stephanie Tyler, the High Steward Chris Strachan and the town Archivist Ray Plummer. More than 60 people attended the event to commemorate the Jewish children who passed through the town from 1938.

John Gottesman, from Colchester Synagogue, and Eric Dobson of Harwich who befriended the children as they passed through the town unveiled the memorial.

Cllr Gerry Calver, who funded and partly organised the memorial, said: "He never expected that sort of response. There were so many people from the Jewish community there and it made all the more special." He thanked so many people who made it happen. He added, now Harwich's participation will be remembered."

(The above is based on an article of the *Harwich and Maningtree Standard*, 11.3.11)

The plaque reads:

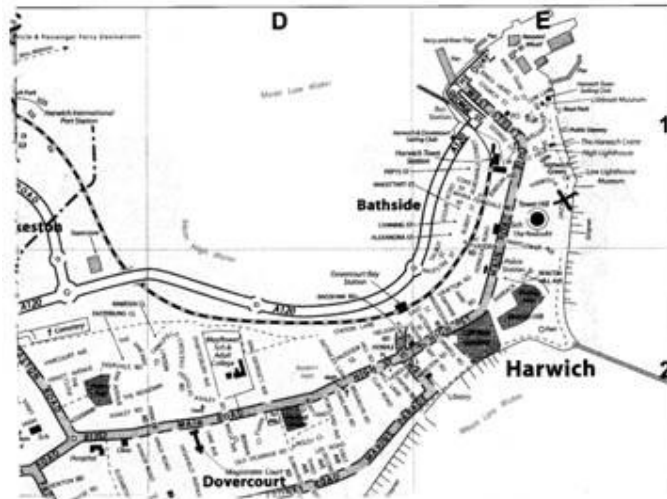
THE KINDERTRANSPORT

At 5.30 AM on 2 December 1938 the SS Prague docked at Parkeston Quay. On board were 196 children, the first arrivals of what would become known as the 'Kindertransport.'

Over the next 9 months some 10,000 children arrived in the UK crossing the North Sea to escape Nazi persecution throughout Europe. The majority of the children were Jewish and most entered this country through the port of Harwich. The ships carrying the children sailed past this point.

Those with homes to go to went straight off the boat by train to Liverpool Street Station in London. The local community cared for those who had nowhere to go. Many were temporarily housed in tiny chalets at the local Warners holiday camp. Other children were accommodated at the Salvation Army hostel and some were taken in by local families. The oldest were 16 years. A few were babies carried by other children. None were accompanied by their parents.

The Plaque is situated on the seawall opposite Harbour Crescent, from where the ships bringing the children would have been visible prior to berthing. (It is marked with X).



Finally, I would like to thank Roy Plummer for all his help.

Bernd Koschland

MY FATHER

I search my childhood continually for my father as I searched the town for him on the day our synagogue burned all my finds are worthless because I cannot know whether life or make believe put these fragments in my mind.

I can see home only through death, but when he was living he must have been like my sons, once young and with hope confident of his future and adventurer not a victim he was proud and respected when I was a child on his lap.

Of six million Jews every man has the face of my father I pity mankind because I feel pity for him he survives in whatever on earth cries out for mercy but the loss of his personal life is his and mine.

Karen Gershon, *Selected Poems*

(The poem is so written on the plaque)

A Traveller's Tale

One wonders how many Kindertransportees recall the relief when the train taking them to the Hook van Holland stopped at the Dutch border station of Venlo. Probably most were too traumatised.

In those days, the train stopped at Venlo for an hour or more as the train crew and the engine had to be changed and the accompanying SS guards were also forced to leave the train.

By sheer chance it emerged that a couple of Dutch ladies were at the station one morning and questioned the volunteer staff; they explained who those children were. Next day when another train arrived, a group of Dutch ladies had set up tables loaded with food and drinks; the children were invited to come and eat. This went on every day for as long as the Kindertransports ran. After a couple of weeks the Dutch Reformed Church took charge. The cost was met by donations from the burghers of Venlo.

This did not go unnoticed by the SS guards, who allegedly made detailed notes of the service provided. When Germany invaded Holland in May 1940, the Gestapo carried out a series of investigations, trying to establish who was responsible for offering succour to the Jews.

Although I did not come via Venlo, I once spent a night in that city whilst in transit. Sitting in a cafe in the main square, I got into conversation with a group of elderly local citizens. When they realised who I was, I was told the full extent of the story.

In May 1945 when the German forces withdrew, they looted almost all the cattle and food, causing the city of Venlo and the Province of Limburg very considerable hardship. The local population never forgot. For decades they refused to speak German to cross-border visitors and shoppers who came to do their shopping on a Saturday afternoon.

Herbert Haberberg

A postscript:

Marion Walter from the USA (originally from Berlin), in an email, also suggests another crossing point into Holland was near Oldenzaal, central Holland, whereas Velno is in the south.

Marion was so impressed by the KT plaque in the House of Commons that she wanted to have a plaque at the station where children crossed into Holland. Her suggestion was not accepted by KT of America because of an objection by a member. At the 60th anniversary of KT she met up with many Kinder who had crossed into Holland and who were treated so kindly by the Dutch ladies. She collected many letters from Kinder describing their journey. These letters are now archived in Amsterdam at the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) under acquisition #1610.

Freedom in Australia

In a book by his daughter-in-law, Sue, Leslie Ernest Everett (formerly Lutz Eichbaum) recalls his life. He was born in 1923 and remembers his early carefree life until the advent of Nazism and especially Kristallnacht. During that night his home was smashed up. In July 1939, his parents took him to the station with a ticket to London and so he became one of the Kinder on a Kindertransport. As with many of us, his last view of his parents was on the platform.

In July 1940 he boarded the *Dunera* with prisoners-of-war and refugees classified as 'enemy aliens.' They were treated with indistinguishable contempt. Below decks, the hold became a cauldron of misery and despair. The air was putrid with sewage and vomit; food was maggot-ridden. They slept anywhere. They clung to optimism by establishing a choir, making chess pieces from stale bread. Teachers among them gave a variety of lessons.

In Australia he was sent to an internment camp in New South Wales. After being freed he eventually married and settled in Australia. Now he is in a wheelchair in a nursing home, where his sons, Adrian and Stephen, and Sue his daughter-in-law fuss over him.

The above is based on the review of *Not Welcome* by Sue Everett, published in Melbourne and quoted in the *Nuremberg/Fuerth Newsletter* September 2010.

Bernd Koschland

OBITUARY

Arieh Handler

May this year saw the death in Israel of the last surviving member of the audience present at the declaration of Israel's independence by Ben Gurion in 1948. Arieh Handler came to the UK in 1937, and apart from his business involvement, was very active in Zionism and Youth work, especially as a founder of the Bnei Akiva religious Zionist youth movement in England. In 1938-39, he was most concerned with the future of Germany's Jewish children

and so became very involved in the work of the general Kindertransport. He travelled to Germany, his former homeland, several times in to assist with the rescue of children, despite the personal danger to himself. During the war he continued working with the Children's Refugee Committee and other areas involving Jewish children. He expressed his fears for children in non-Jewish homes that they might be lost to Judaism. Before he left to settle in Israel, I spoke to him several times in connection with the hostel I was in and the general background of his involvement in the lives of us Kinder, as I was writing a paper on my own hostel (Tylers Green). He was also active in many other areas of communal activity and was a voice to be listened to.

Bernd Koschland

Diamond Wedding

Congratulations to Marion and Manfred Durst on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding on 28 June 2011.



Corrections

Apologies! I reported in the Pesach edition on the KTA conference held last October. The number of attendees should have read 125. *Bernd*

There was a mistake in Bertha's telephone number in Israel, it should read 00972 97928150.

SEARCHES



Where are you?

I am looking for Hinder (very young) who like me were looked after in a home in the London area organised by Mr Harry Jacobs.

Paul Alexander paulalex@netvision.net.il

Where are you? Found at last!

Chava Blitzer writes: Bertha suggested to her to put an announcement in the Newsletter; she did in 2006. Chava was searching for her cousin Dina Wasserman (born April 1938), who had been given for adoption by her mother to an English couple travelling to Berlin in May 1939. After a lifetime of searching, I found her. Her son, Charles, was searching for his family (me, my mother, etc) and googled Dina's name and found the search notice of 2006. He emailed me in earlier this year, thrilled to have his mother's

origins, and me her cousin. Unfortunately Dina had died in 1993, but Charles has details of his family. Chava Blitzer tovalightning@aol.com

A MESSAGE FROM HALLANDALE, FLORIDA, USA

One of our Kind Mr Fred Naftalie would like to be in touch with any other members living nearby, his telephone number is:- 954 454 3699.

Invitation to the Emmaboulevard in Hoek van Holland November 30th 2011

You are cordially invited to the festive unveiling of the sculpture "Channel Crossing to Life". The event will take place on November 30th 2011 at 15:00 hours at the Queen Emmaboulevard in Hoek van Holland. Please confirm your participation to lisa.bechner@berlin.de (previously Schaefer) and also please send me the reminiscences of your transit through the Hoek van Holland, as I wish to document your memories and impressions. I am one of the working group active in preparing the unveiling, in collaboration with Sir. Erich Reich and the sculptor Frank Meisler. Initiative Berliner Kinderdenkmal .

From many towns, communities and countries children parted from their parents in the years 1938-39 entered railway carriages and joined the Kindertransports that led to England. For most of the 10,000 children the most important transit point on this long journey to life was the ferry from the Hoek van Holland. This journey to the shore of the Atlantic and to England was mainly organized by Dutch volunteer committees. One of these volunteers was the courageous "Tante Truus" or Gertruida Wijmmuller-Meijer from Amsterdam who was tireless in her effort to rescue children from Nazi Germany. She negotiated with Eichmann in Vienna, bribed German railway officials and plied the Gestapo with alcohol to obtain permits for the Kindertransports. At the last minute she remonstrated with the captain of the *SS Brodegraven* bound for England for the passage of 80 children on May 14th 1940 while the German Air force was already bombing Rotterdam to destruction. She is one of the Righteous of Yad Vashem. It has been the particular wish of the Lord Mayor of Rotterdam Mr. Ahmed Aboutaleb to dedicate a monument to the children of the Kindertransport and to those who aided them.

We have requested the German Government for financial support for your journey.

Lisa Bechner and Sir Erich Reich

Views expressed in the Kindertransport Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Kindertransport Special Interest Group or of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.