



KINDERTRANSPORT NEWSLETTER

AJR Special Interest Section

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

Dear Kinder/Friends

Our monthly lunches at the Day Centre, 15 Cleve Road, are quite well attended and it is so nice to meet kinder friends at regular intervals over a nice, well-cooked kosher lunch. If it were not for the parking problem, it would be even better. To get an interesting speaker is a bonus and if any of you have suggestions for this, please contact Hermann our chairman. Renee Payne who told us of her Cambridge College days, and how she got there in the first place, provoked a lively intellectual discussion. Thank you Renee.

Do you ever wonder how your Newsletters are dispatched? After Andrea deciphers my writing, corrects my spelling mistakes and returns it to me in readable format, I re-read it and remember all sorts of things I had forgotten to include (which drives her crazy). I take it to be printed with the request to get it done right away. This drives the printers crazy, (thank you Kall Quick) and I am very lucky that Judy Benton, Marion Marston and sometimes Eve Gricksman also, work hard to get them dispatched. (I also help!) Wages are 60 minutes per hour, a cup of tea and bring your own sandwiches. On behalf of all of you I say thank you to them. Most important are your contributions and we always do our best to include all of them.

We had a nice Purim Party and are now looking forward to Pesach. Remember our younger days? Cleaning, cooking, baking and getting ready to receive our children, grandchildren and friends. No-one would dream of buying ready prepared foods (NOT THAT THERE WAS MUCH TO BE HAD). Today many of us are happy to go to our children instead and marvel how well they are managing. Others book into one of the many hotels all over Europe. Whatever your choice (AND MINE IS TO BE WITH MY ISRAELI CHILDREN WHOM I ONLY SEE TWICE A YEAR), I hope you have a happy time. Don't forget to relate your own Exodus story at that time, never far away from our minds. Also try to look around for people who find themselves on their own. Sometimes they take some finding. If you are on your own don't be shy or proud to accept an invitation. You are doing your host a favour by joining in. Wishing you a Happy Pesach.

Sophie Friedlander was 100 years old on 17 January 2005. She is of interest to the Kinder in that she and her late companion Hilde Jarecki ran a hostel for Jewish refugees in Selly Oak, Birmingham. Subsequently, they started a similar hostel in Reading.

Previously, Sophie had been a much loved teacher at a Jewish school in Caputh, near Berlin.

I have known Sophie since 1940, when I was in the Birmingham hostel for approximately one year.

For several years afterwards we were out of touch with one another as I moved to Yorkshire and married.

However, I have been one of the many people whom Sophie has taught or cared for in the past and who are keeping closely in touch with her.

Tomé personally as a half-Jewish person with a non-Jewish upbringing she has contributed to my sense of Jewishness. For this I will always be grateful to her.

Sophie lives in her own home in Golders Green and, since suffering some small strokes, now has a full-time carer.

When I visited her recently, we sang *Heidenröslein* together and, rather prematurely, *Der Mai ist Gekommen!* I knew the tunes all right, but Sophie knew tunes and all the words and verses!

Ursula Dohan

BIRTHDAY

So first congratulations to Sophie Friedlander on her 100th birthday.

DIAMOND WEDDING

Congratulations to Mia and Peter Schwab on celebrating their Diamond Wedding on 5.5.2005.

OBITUARIES

All of you were very shocked to learn that Richard Grunberger, The Editor of the *AJR Journal* has died at the age of 81. He really was the AJR and it will be impossible to find his like again. His articles were unique and one marvelled not only of his mastery of the English language but his knowledge of history. The day before he died he was at his desk at the office. One of our brilliant Kinder. We shall miss you Richard.

The US Kinder also suffered a loss. Peter Masters, Author of *Striking Back*, aged 83, but active and sprightly to the last, died in Washington. He was a Commando during the war. I remember him telling Inge and me the following story some years ago in Washington at the KT Conference. He (only slightly built) was walking his dog in the woods when he was accosted by two 6ft hulking knife-wielding yobs. They never knew what hit and injured them, and reported him for assault. Inge and I were reading his book during the long flight back, truly a Hero.

Thinking back on my very early childhood and the day I started school in Munich at the age of 6, one of my co-pupils was Joseph Goldsmith. I did not know until 1988 when I gave a talk in Newcastle-upon-Tyne that he too had come on a Kindertransport. Since then we renewed our friendship and I am very sad to learn that he died a short time ago. Rest peacefully Joseph.

My deepest sympathy to all respective widows, children and many friends.

Some more sad news, this time for a very Jew-loving Christian German friend.

IRENE CORBACH, Cologne. Seldom have we kinder known someone like her. She and her late husband Dieter, spent many years compiling a huge book about the Jews of Cologne. It was she who battled the city to honour the late head of the Javne School, Dr Klibansky, by renaming a square in the town, Klibansky Place and erecting there an octagonal fountain topped by a rampant lion of Juda, holding the tablet of commandments. Engraved around the sides of the fountain are the names of the Jewish children who perished. She headed the Council of Christian and Jews in Cologne and further a field, was a welcome visitor to the synagogue, organised countless exhibitions, talks and school visits. Her house was ever open to visitors, including myself, and if she had one fault it was neglecting herself to help others. She can truly be described a righteous gentile. All those of us who knew you will mourn your passing and wish long life to your children and grandchildren and hope they will follow your example.

LETTERS

Dear Bertha – Thank you for the Feb/March issue of the KT Newsletter. One of the best. I particularly appreciated Prof LB Brent’s workshop notes. After 6 years they still read fresh and remain relevant. To be borne in mind in our dealings with each other – and even in planning our joint activities?

I do hope you have more treasures like these notes up your sleeve for future issues. Otherwise could you not invite the eminent amongst us to contribute the occasional ‘think piece’?

Francis Deutsch

Dear Bertha – Reverting to your recent visit to York, I was not at all surprised that you had found a “small community of Jewish people who had formed a Council of Christians and Jews” because a) York has the second-largest Quaker Community (headed by the Rowntrees) in Britain: not only were the Quakers foremost in prevailing hospitality for Kinder (and eventually for Eltern too) but the city’s entire community joined in to an extraordinary degree. b) Not only the Quakers but the great and highly influential Archbishop of York (subsequently translated to Canterbury) revered by all who had the privilege of knowing him, set a shining example.

My sister (4 years older than I) and I arrived at Dovercourt Bay camp nr Harwich on 12.12.38. After approximately one week, some 30 of us were transferred to Bath, where we were parcelled out and distributed to a number of families which included several Jewish families. My sister and I were assigned to a certain Mrs Tanner, who was nutty as a fruitcake and lived in a 26-room house called “the Cottage” with no electric light, no heating, no domestic staff (other than a few gardeners who were responsible for the enormous garden at the front of the house).

When, on our second day, my sister tried to make some coffee, she found a dead mouse in the coffee-grinder; the only other food in the house was a supply of tins of Heinz Baked beans (a great treat) and some home-grown artichokes: in fact we were rather hungry and I had my eye on some large tins of Australian apricot jam, which Woolworth’s was selling at 6½d per tin. There was a collection of rather handsome suits of medieval armour, positioned on the landings of the staircase leading to the upper floors, but when (on Xmas eve) I ran past one of these, the vibration caused his visor to snap shut, and the lance he held in his right hand fell clean across my upward path so that I was convinced he was chasing after me: I ran out of the house, screaming blue murder, and found refuge in the home of one of our Kinder colleagues. In the morning, we phoned Mr Blodek, one of the

“wardens” at Dovercourt Bay and told him we could not possibly stay with Mrs Tanner and would very much like to come back to Dovercourt, until they found another home for us. Mr Blodek was sympathetic and kindly arranged for us to be repatriated to Dovercourt. We learned that Mrs Tanner had been removed to a home for the mentally ill.

But the “Cottage” did have its compensations in that Mrs Tanner owned 3 Bechsteins, one in the hall on the ground floor, a second in the lounge on the first floor, and a third in her bedroom on the second floor. She was an accomplished pianist and would start (usually with some Chopin or Liszt) on Bechstein 1; then, suddenly, she would stop and, accompanied by a manic giggle rising in tone concomitant with her increasing lunacy, she would run upstairs to Bechstein 2 and continue at the precise point where she had interrupted Bechstein 1; and after a few more minutes she would ascend to Bechstein 3 for the grand finale of her performance. Thus we could hardly complain of lack of high-class entertainment.

Admittedly, verbal communication with Mrs Tanner was limited to some brief exchanges with my sister who was fluent in English before we arrived in this country.

The “Committee” took pity on us and received us back into the womb of Dovercourt Bay where I became familiar with the world’s best-ever fish’n chips (on which I became the world’s self-appointed foremost authority); we were allowed to phone our parents in Vienna which by the grace of G-d, met the first of our York Saints: David Hughes; he was in his first year reading Geography at Cambridge and was spending his first Xmas vacations working for the “Committee” at Dovercourt, in charge of the camp’s Post Office. He spoke (and at age 88 still speaks German fluently, having spent the summer of ’38 cycling all over Germany and was an extraordinarily kind and generous host, who befriended us and assumed a measure of personal responsibility for the glitch in Bath. A few days after we had been re-installed at Dovercourt, he phoned his parents in York and asked whether they would like to set an example by hosting a pair of “his kids” with whom he had become friendly and who he thought would fit in well. They kindly agreed.

My sister and I were the first “Kinder” in York. With Mary Hughes in charge of the Hospitality Committee, it wasn’t long before our circle of fellow-refugees expanded: the generosity and kindness of the City knew no bounds: we had unlimited access to the cinemas and theatres and to the public transport system, gratis.

On Sunday afternoons, Archbishop Temple invited all the refugees to scrumptious strawberry teas at his palatial residence – Bishopthorpe Palace. The legendary Headmaster of York’s top Quaker (Public) school – “Bootham” made a full-scale boarding scholarship (which I did not in fact take up until 3 years later) available to me. The Hughes family lived comfortably but modestly they were well educated, cultured, well-travelled, with a fine sense of humour; they had spent 2 years in the USA, where John Hughes had served as President of Swarthmore College, Pa. He himself had been one of Dr Temple’s classmates at Oxford. Mary Hughes’ mother “Grannie” Stuart lived in some style at nearby Harrogate, wore a toque a la Queen Mary and when we came for Sunday pm tea, lined up her entire crew of servants (I think there were between 4 and 7 of them) at the front door, to be “introduced” (although we had met them umpteen times before) and to greet us.

In addition to David, the Hughes children consisted of Barbie (who radiated light and goodness everywhere), and had a lovely speaking and signing voice: she was a high-ranking nurse in Birmingham, and Michael (“Mick”) an engineer in Leeds. When we had a family reunion in York on 3.9.2000, without parents and without Barbie who had died some years earlier, we had not seen each other for nearly 50 years, but were no less “en famille” than we had been, nay even more so inasmuch as David, Mick and I were accompanied by our respective children.

Thanks to Dr Temple’s influence my mother got a visa which enabled her to leave Vienna to join us in York in July 1939; she subsequently emigrated, with my sister, to the USA and died there in 1976. My father had obtained a visa to join us in the UK on 3.9.39, but all

attempts to advance its validity by a few days failed: he was arrested in Vienna”on the grounds of” having preserved his entire collection of Karl Kraus’ “Die Fackel” and perished in Minsk in 1941.

John Hughes died in 1944; Dr Temple (now “Cantuar”) could not attend in person but sent one of his chaplains to attend the funeral. I said a few words at the end and he came up to greet me.

Keenly aware as I am of this country’s many “defects”, nobody but nobody of my background and generation ever enjoyed greater kindness and generosity than I...nowhere, no-time; in my case nearly all of it at the hands of the Quaker Community in York. There are many aspects of “The Society of Friends” which appeal(ed) to Jewish refugees and quite a few “converted”. As a result, many Quakers (instead of claiming that “some of my best friends are Jews” came to recognise that “many of my best Jews are Friends”. The Council of Christians and Jews you encountered in York was a product of this partial assimilation. I say “partial”, because as a great cleric for whom I had the highest respect and had consulted at a time when I too was thinking of “converting” said to me (using Quaker language): “Thou shalt not do this because thee and I know it would be dishonest. Thou canst not select those aspects of Quakerism which appeal, to thee, and dispose of the rest. Quakerism is a Christian sect and unless thou comest to recognise and accept the divinity of Jesus Christ, (which I know thou dost not, your conversion would be a sham.” And of course he was right.

Harry Baum

KINDERTRANSPORT REUNION

Letter from an American Newspaper

Dear Sir – In 1989 my husband and I attended the Kindertransport Reunion in London and we were extremely disappointed at not seeing a larger representation of the *frum* community

The organisers of this Reunion had gone out of their way to arrange this meeting during the weekdays to avoid Shabbas problems. Also, all meals were catered with the Kedassia hechsher.

The 60th Reunion of the Kindertransport took place which we attended. It would be a Kiddush Hashem to show that our survival was not dependent on assimilation, but rather on following the true Torah way of life. But in order to do this we need to be part of future Reunions and meetings and show ourselves. We need to be there.

(Mrs) Rosie Baum



TO MAKE YOU SMILE

The following story, contributed by member Judy Benton, is, she claims, completely true.

I made a mistake

One sunny afternoon, it was baking hot. I left my apartment armed with a heavy load of washing in my basket, intending to have the rare opportunity to return a few hours later with the fresh smell of snow white laundry. To my dismay all the provided washing lines outside were completely full. Obviously all the neighbours who shared these lines (provided by Management) had the same idea. As I checked a few bone-dry items, I folded and neatly repacked them into a smaller size in order to make a little room for my dripping washing. After all, I needed a little space too! All of a sudden, I hear an ugly shrieking voice coming from the top floor window. “Hey you, leave my washing alone!” In no uncertain terms she told me where to go. I asked her if she had heard of the word ‘neighbourliness’? “Your washing is dry, the lines are for all of us”, I said. “I don’t give a monkey’s” she replied. I said, “what do you want me to do

with my wet washing?" Her answer was, "I don't care, it is not my problem." With this last remark she banged the window shut. I was furious and kept folding and re-arranging until all my washing was on the line. Then, back up in my apartment, I sat down, still fuming that I had let this woman scream at me like that. So I wrote a very insulting note to her, called her all kinds of names and accused her of behaving 'like an East Ender.' I told her that with her attitude she would never make friends and finished off by saying that "I don't let people like you dance on my head." Then I ran down the stairs and tucked my letter into a pair of knickers.

An hour later, I took my garden chair and sat in the garden. This woman also sat in the garden a few feet away from me, together with her carer. The washing was all gone. She did not utter a word. Victory! That's told her! I was so happy not to let people push me around. I knew I did the right thing. She is obviously very scared of me. Someone had to tell her once and for all that this behaviour is not acceptable. All of a sudden my downstairs, sweet, shy little neighbour comes flying out of her kitchen. Her face is red and distorted – she is near to tears.

"Oh, Ruthie, do come and sit down, I have to tell you something which happened to me today..." "No, Judy I have to tell you first what happened to me. I just took my little bit of washing in, and when I folded it all up, I found a very rude note in my knickers. 'Well', my husband said, 'this must be a very disturbed woman, she can't even spell properly.'" She told me that he had gone straight to the office with my letter and "he will see to it, she will get evicted! One can't even hang out washing without being insulted."

This Ruthie grew up in the East End and comes from a very *balbatische* family. Well, I am nodding in all the right places. I hear myself saying, "what is the world coming to? Yes, it is shocking. Who does she think she is? I never heard of such a thing".

Now the husband is back from the office. He left the letter with management. They are studying the erratic handwriting. They think it is a foreign handwriting and they assured him they are going to deal with it: "she won't get away with it." Apparently, "they are waiting for her to come to the office to make her complaint." Both saw that my face was very pale and thought I was very sympathetic and suffered with them. They invited me in for a cup of tea and told me, "don't worry, they will catch her." Now Ruthie said, "Tell us your news, Judy." I said, "I am so stunned at your news I completely forgot what I wanted to tell you."

A week later my daughter and son-in-law were invited out, with some other people they didn't know, for tea. A young man started to relate this story of his poor mom, Ruthie, 'who would not hurt a fly' and of how she found the most revolting insulting letter when she folded her knickers after taking in her washing. She had not slept for a week, she had lost her appetite, in fact it got so bad that he took her to the doctor. The doctor gave her a few sedatives and told her to 'get over it, there are many mad people walking about in this world.'

Now I feel so guilty as I can't tell her that I made her so unwell by my mistaken identity of her piece of washing. Now I am off to the doctor asking for a strong sleeping pill!



Review

INTERRUPTED JOURNEYS
Young refugees from Hitler's Reich
ALAN GILL
Simon & Schuster (Australia) 2004
ISBN 0 7318 1229 8

This book is one of a large number of its kind. This is as it should be, since it is essential that the subject should be fully and even excessively documented while many of the eye-witnesses are still alive. Its existence is fully justified by a different point of view since it is centred in Australia.

It tells the story of immigration to Australia by young refugees from Hitler's persecutions. The text is well fleshed out with quotations from many of the subjects themselves, in their own words. In this respect it bears a strong structural resemblance to many other accounts with which we have become familiar.

The book concerns emigration or exile to Australia, and will therefore be of particular interest to the new generation of Jews there who are investigating their roots. It also contains the more rarely recounted stories of the non-Jewish children who shared the adventure with the Jewish majority. The children of the Vienna boys' choir, who had the misfortune to be on the Australian leg of a world tour when war broke out, were among these. This part of the story probably renders the book even more interesting as a reference source. An important aspect of its treatment is a fairly detailed exposition at various points of the effect of attitudes and legislation in the host country. The book is well laid out and easy to read, and forms an important addition to our pool of documentation on the experience of refugee children at the time.

M Hutterer & F Beck

A further review by Ruth Barnett will be in a forthcoming issue of *AJR Journal*.

SEARCH

I am planning an exhibition on the topic 'Memory - the Forgotten Jews of Shanghai', which is due to take place at the Ardean Gallery, Cork Street, London on 25-30 July. I would like to interview Jewish people who lived in Shanghai during the war or have any knowledge of wartime Jewish life there. Please email bonny228@hotmail.com
