



KINDERTRANSPORT NEWSLETTER

AJR Special Interest Section

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Dear Kinder/Friends

How quickly the year has passed. I hope it was a good one for you all and that the coming year will be all you wish for. For us Kinder it was a meaningful year, the 65th anniversary of our arrival in England, marked by two special occasions. The Liverpool Street Suitcase and Statue (hopefully one day we shall see the signage affixed to it) and our Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. The latter showed me that large events are not in favour any more. (Out of 160 people attending, only about 60 were actually Kinder). But those of you who came had a great experience.

By the time you read this the film made by LWT will have been shown. As our film is one of an 8 part TV series, and all of them are scheduled to be transmitted late Friday night, they could not make any exceptions. The alternative would have been to scrap it. We are receiving a quantity of complementary copies and those of you who were present (Kinder only) can apply to our office, sending a LABEL WITH THEIR ADDRESS while we have stocks.

The Israeli Kinder are holding their annual get-together Succot (Hol Hamoed Sunday 3 October, from 11.30-4pm) in their usual venue in Netanya. Includes festive lunch (Succah on premises) all visitors most welcome. Details from Andrea at the AJR office. I am grateful that they always choose a date suitable for me to attend and feel so moved and happy to meet so many good friends. Sad to say there is sometimes a void in the ranks and this year we will all miss Bill Oakfield who did so much to keep the group together.

Hardly back from Israel, I get ready for my visit to the USA Kinder Reunion in San Fransisco. Is it nearly 2 years ago since we last met? Alfred and Sue Batzdorff have kindly invited me to come a few days earlier and travel with them to the meeting. I will have lots to tell them all, and some interesting things to report to you in my next Newsletter. Talking about Newsletters, I must put on record my thanks to our wonderful committee chaired by Hermann who is always there when needed for help and advice and also to Andrea, without whom no Newsletters would go out.

Have a good Yom Tov and a healthy year.

LETTERS

BAR/BATMITZVAH

Dear Bertha and Hermann - Gloria and I want to thank you most sincerely for having us as your guests at your Kindertransport Bar & Batmitzvah Ceremony. It was a truly memorable and moving occasion enjoyed and appreciated by all the celebrants and their families, as well as by the officiants. It is an event that we will never forget, and it was a great privilege for me to have been able to address such a gathering.

May you, and the members of the Kindertransport and their families go from strength to strength.

(Rabbi) Jeffrey & Gloria Cohen

It is our thanks which are due to you for your unforgettable speech and great help beforehand. Ed

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

Hooray, I had my Barmitzvah! Nothing strange about that, you may think; when boys and girls reach the appropriate age, they are Bar/Batmitzvah, with or without any celebration. Most have celebrations of some kind, yet some did not. In June 2004, I participated in a most unusual Bar/Batmitzvah gathering, where the youngest were in their late seventies and the oldest in the nineties. What could have been more moving than to see a mother of 99 years, Mrs Faith, join her son, Sigi, as he celebrated his Barmitzvah in the presence of a fair sized congregation in Stanmore Shul? What thoughts must have run through the minds of mother and son? Through the minds of other participants who either missed such an occasion at home or when they arrived in the UK, and who were not so fortunate as to have a parent present like me? Those who had celebrated their Barmitzvah, nevertheless felt strong pangs of emotion.

That day in June was a unique event in the history of Anglo-Jewry as 18 “boys and girls” celebrated their becoming an “adult!” Like myself, these “youngsters”, including two from America (first and a second generation from Israel), came to this country with the Kindertransport in 1938-39, leaving their families behind, in most instances never to see them again. The “mother organiser” of the Kindertransport Reunion Organisation, Bertha Leverton, herself one of the “Kinder,” was the brains behind this service, assisted in its arrangement by Hermann Hirschberger, Chairman of KT-AJR (Kindertransport) with his committee and help from Ronald Channing, Executive of AJR (Association of Jewish Refugees) and his office.

I was invited to take part in the service, to conduct the *davening* and *laining* on the day. *Davening* before a congregation is no problem for me, but this time there was a difference. As I got ready that Thursday morning, I felt slightly nervous. How would my feelings be as I went through the service? Would emotion get the better of me at some point? Part of the build up of feeling was that the service and events after it were to be filmed for a TV programme. Only the day before, I had been interviewed for the programme with my grandson, Sammy, who would represent an actual Barmitzvah boy being prepared for his event (in November in his case). The service on the day had to go smoothly – there could be no retakes. The first emotional point came when I saw the front seats, equipped with a brand new *Tallit* and *Kippah* for the celebrants. A new *Tallit* as befits a Barmitzvah boy! Rabbi Dr Jeffrey Cohen, the Rabbi of Stanmore Shul, had arranged the order of service, which included a small section of *Hallel* – praise that this occasion had been reached. What we all found moving was the calling-up of the boys, each one by name, to ascent the *Bimah* one by one and then recite in unison the Berachot before and after the reading followed by the traditional *Mi Sheberach*. With the return of the Sefer Torah to the Ark, Rev Leslie Hardman read from Jeremiah 31, a chapter of hope, restoration and Divine compassion. Prayers for the Queen and Israel were said by Rabbi Daniel Roselaar of Belmont Shul.

The whole congregation sat transfixed as Rabbi Cohen addressed the celebrants so superbly. He praised the work of Bertha Leverton as the superglue of the Kindertransport movement. He pointed out that the ceremony was *tashlumin*, making up for the missed opportunities of the men and women celebrating on this day. He admired their steadfast adherence to their faith and people

despite the trials they had undergone and referred to their optimism and the contribution that “they had made collectively and individually.”

The service concluded with a congregational recital of *Aleinu* and *Kaddish*. I know what feelings went through my mind as I led *Kaddish*, I wonder what thoughts went through the minds of the celebrants, whose parents and family were unable to be there in person, but without doubt supported them in spirit.

The ladies celebrating their Batmitzvah came down from the gallery and stood on the *Bimah* to recite a prayer, in Hebrew and English, specially composed for the occasion by Rabbi Cohen. They stood on the same spot where previously the men had been called up. By this time one could sense that tears were not far removed from the eyes of many, even though the occasion was a joyous one.

Celebrations started in full with a *kiddish* type reception, and an opportunity for meeting and talking to people. At lunch, which followed, Hermann Hirschberger welcomed everyone and thanked Rabbi Cohen and the Stanmore Shul for putting their premises at the disposal of this unique event, protected as ever by the CST. As a permanent reminder of the occasion, each celebrant was given a presentation, with the assistance of Mrs Linda Rosenblatt, Vice Chair of World Jewish Relief for the men, and Lady Jakobovits, for the women. Lady Jakobovits addressed the guests before lunch. Professor Judith Romney-Wegner gave a fascinating presentation on the Role of Women in Judaism. Music by Jack Davidoff and his Palm Court ensemble entertained us after a superb meal, arranged by Mr Simon Kalman, to round off the occasion, one never to be forgotten by anyone present.

A healthy, peaceful year for all.

Rev Bernd Koschland

All grateful thanks to you Bernd for your valuable input. You did so much more than the davening and leining and it is wonderful to know that among our Kinder there are members as learned and capable as you. Thank you so much.

*One thing that was not known. As the Boys did not open all their presents, their guests did not see the very beautiful silver Kiddush cups and plates, purchased in Israel. This was made possible because of the very generous donations received for the Bar/Batmitzvah event. Also the silver factory on learning what it was for, made a reduction. I did not even have to ‘dingsich’ (try to bargain). **Ed***

Dear Bertha and Hermann – On return to Berlin I had the double-issue of your report. Once again I was very sorry that I couldn't be with you on the occasion of your reunion. I will try to come over next time.

I also congratulate you on the most generous letter from Dr Sacks.

Peter Galliner

Dear Bertha and Hermann – Your group Bar/Batmitzvah Kinder celebrants don't realise how lucky they were to have the ceremony 60 years or more after they should have had it.

I was Barmitzvah in the Cricklewood Synagogue in the summer of 1939. A person was appointed *in loco parentis* to stand by me. Afterwards I was to accompany him to his home for a festive meal, but at the end of the service he had vanished and I returned to the *alltag* of hostel life.

In Cologne, so my sister told me after the war, my mother dressed in her finest gown on this day and received guests distressed and crying.

The lack of love, concern and compassion I was shown on this special day for me in this country has left me with bitter memories, especially when compared with the ostentation that is the current fashion for Barmitzvahs.

Ernest G Kolman

*Lets have some more Barmitzvah or Wedding reminiscences of those days. **Ed***

Dear Mrs Leverton and Mr Hermann Hirschberger - Thank you so much for inviting me to the Bar/Batmitzvah celebration on the 3 June 2004. It was a delight for my husband and I to be able to join you for lunch and the afternoon concert, and it was a real pleasure to meet everyone present and particularly Hermann Hirschberger again.

*The Worshipful The Mayor
Councillor Mrs Lurline Champagne*

THANKS

Dear Ruth Heinemann – Thank you so much for your very kind words addressed to me and the Committee. We all appreciated the great effort you made to come all the way from the USA to be a participant in the Batmitzvah ceremony. We are so glad that you appreciated all the effort that went into the day and hope you found yourself on one of the many photographs published in the last Newsletter. I hope to see you in San Francisco at the forthcoming Kinderlink meeting. Have a Happy and Healthy year.

Love Bertha

BERND APOTECKER

Dear Andrea - I wanted to give you an update on the Bernd Apotecker research.

The Yahrzeit plaque is now in place at Heathlands and on Sunday, 22nd August at 11.30am there was a dedication ceremony and l'chaim. Robert Bergman (one of the Kinder in Manchester) recited the Kaddish.

I collected considerably more than we needed, so the balance will be sent to Yad Vashem in the name of Bernd and his family. In this way any surviving family members who are still searching will have an opportunity to trace the fate of their loved ones.

*Lorna Kay
Chairman - Manchester Branch
& Regional Group Co-ordinator
Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain*

As you can see from the above letter we made a mistake writing the name as Theo. It was of course Bernd. Our grateful thanks to Lorna for performing this Mitzvah. We have alerted the Chief Rabbi's office of the fact that a Jewish child is buried in a Christian cemetery and that a Jewish lady in Oswestry would like to put a headstone on his grave there. We were told to leave this matter for them to sort out, because of the Halachic issues. Ed

Dear Bertha - I will, as requested, give you a few details as I remember them regarding Bernd. I was very friendly with his brother Nicu (not sister) as we lived opposite each other in the Heyl Strasse in Berlin.

I am not sure about the mother but their father came from Romania, and both boys were born in Germany.

I knew that Bernd went to England but never knew his address so was unable to contact him after my arrival here on the 22 August 1939.

The father went at some time before the war to Paris but was not heard of again.

I have a letter written by Nicu on the 20 February 1940, in which he tells me that his father is OK, but they have not heard from Bernd for a long time (please note the date).

Finally I heard from my mother who was still in Berlin that Nicu and his mother were lured into a trap by being asked to meet someone at a Berlin Station, but were never heard of again.

Frank G Marshall

LIVERPOOL STREET STATUE

Dear Bertha – Being in touch with World Jewish Relief, I am well aware of the difficulties encountered with the placing of the Suitcase and Statue at its present position. It has created a lot

of controversy, but with the goodwill of the various committees involved, it will eventually be resolved. We sincerely hope to most people's satisfaction.

My Ski Sponsorship appeal for my 80th birthday raised £12,000 for my three designated charities. To help with the placing of better signage and explanations about the project, I have asked World Jewish Relief to ring fence my contribution of £3,000 towards this project. The cost of any monies for the solution should now be covered. Hopefully.

Henry M Wuga MBE

Dear Bertha – I was amazed to read in your Newsletter that nothing has been done about labelling this memorial.

On the day of the unveiling ceremony last September I wrote to Professor Jack Lehman at the British Museum stating my opinion that an explanatory plaque should be placed on the Suitcase. I received no reply. Several weeks later I wrote again. This time, on 24 November 2003 he thanked me for bringing this matter to his attention and said that he “will ask his Design Team to investigate creating a plaque for this display.” Perhaps you and I should volunteer for the job and state our fee!

I agree about the word Jewish, though not all the children were Jewish, but I also feel that the German words *Für Das Kind* should not be used, as many people will not understand this. Keep it simple and in English.

Bronia Snow

GENEALOGY

The recent 24th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy was held in Jerusalem this summer, attended by at least 700 people from 18 different countries. Many fascinating subjects were discussed, dealing with researching one's roots, finding out more about family past and geographical location, history, the origin of names, and other relevant topics.

Many Special Interest Groups (SIGs) met and new ones were formed.

There are major genealogical societies in Britain, America and Israel, and the interest has been growing enormously in the past few years. Since at least one third of the Kinder originated from Vienna and surroundings, it was decided to form a group of those interested in the above topics. (At the conference there were few Viennese genealogists). The organiser of this new group can be contacted at: Michael Restatcher, PO Box 3343, Bat Yam 59132, Israel, or e-mail: opit@netvision.net.il. You never know what or whom you will discover...

Inge Sadan

Dear Bertha - I have recently had quite an exciting time, which I would love to share with all your readers.

I decided to spend last Pesach in California. I felt that after the recent death of my dear wife Elfrida, I wanted to be with my family and we had two wonderful Sederim together with my two nieces the daughters of my late sister, their husbands and their four children and friends. I thoroughly enjoyed my two weeks stay with them.

After that I took a flight to New York and stayed with Norbert Ripp and his wife Evelyn. Norbert is one of the Kinder and we hadn't seen each other for 60 years. He was on the same boat the Bodegraven, with my brother Oscar and myself and 60 other children, fleeing from the German advancing army, in 1940, as they entered Amsterdam. In 1944, while we lived in a hostel in Manchester, Norbert received word, that his parents were alive in America. So he joined them. He went to college and university and became a dentist and now lives in New Jersey. Two years ago I managed to get his address from an other Kind and we have kept in touch by E-mail ever since.

When I told him that I intended to visit my nieces, he asked me to come and visit him.

Landing at JFK Airport, I hoped that we would recognise each other. True enough, he said to me "Are you Hans?" and I said "Are you Norbert?" I would have recognised him anywhere.

We then drove to N.J. to his beautiful home where I met his most charming wife Evelyn, for the first time. They made me so very welcome. Their home was my home for a whole week. Norbert was determined to show me all the wonderful sights. To see a show on Broadway and to stand in all the hassle and bustle in Times Square and to travel by bus among the Skyscrapers in Manhattan was just an awe inspiring experience.

On Shabbat we went to their Synagogue. On that day the congregation was large. The next day Sunday, was Yom Hashoah and we drove for about an hour and a half to an other town to attend a service. There were many Holocaust survivors in the congregation. They all stood on the Bimah and held hands, during the solemn moment while the 6 candles were lit. Evelyn had been chosen to be the guest speaker for that occasion. She was born in Poland in a small Stetl called Lachwa. (now Bela Russ) When the Germans came to cleanse the Stetl of all the Jews, Evelyn and her mother, her father and her 2 sisters together with all the other Jewish population tried to escape into the nearby forest. The Germans started shooting and Evelyn never saw her mother and her elder sister again. Evelyn, her father and her younger sister lived in the forest and the swamps for the next two years. Constantly watching out for Germans soldiers who were patrolling the forest on motorbikes in the summer and on skis in the Winter. Often going hungry for days without food, they were eventually liberated by the Russians and finally made their way to the U.S. from a Displaced Persons camp. Evelyn wrote a book about her ordeals during the war years and it was published and came out during my stay with them. I feel very honoured to have a signed copy of this document of a father and his two young daughters who despite their terrible lives in a wild and unfriendly forest, survived. So after having spent seven days with them. It was time for my flight home to England. I can only say that it was a privilege to have lived with two such wonderful people.

Hans Levy

KT NEWSLETTER JULY/AUGUST 2004

Dear Mrs Leverton – You mentioned in the above Newsletter Ruth Heinemann from USA and Lore Heinemann who celebrated with her husband their 50th Wedding anniversary. I just wondered whether these two ladies are related to Mrs Selma Heinemann, who used to live in Manor House Crescent, Brondesbury in NW London. This lady belonged to the B'nai Brith and visited our hostel at 175 Willesden Lane, London NW6. Sometimes we were invited for tea in the morning to her house.

I have another query. You mentioned Mr Richard Fairfax of Bradford and that he recently died there, also that he was born in Breslau in 1924. I just wonder whether he anglicised his name. I might mention that I was also born in 1921.

I would be very glad if you could shed some light on these two queries.

*(Mrs) Eva Grenfell
formerly Eva Loewr*

CONGRATULATIONS

Dear Bertha – Many thanks for the last 3 Newsletters. Of course I will always be interested in the "Kinder" and what happened to them.

First, I had my 90th birthday on 29 January 2004. I enclose a photo. I still keep in touch with two boys who were in Barham House. Heinz Hichberger lives in London. He **never** forgets my birthday and wedding anniversary – 56 years in the month of August. Also there is Alfred Aronowisz in USA who recently had his 80th birthday.

Those two men really deserve my special thanks for caring.

With best wishes for the New Year.

Sylvia Soloduhin



I am sure everyone seeing this photo will wonder if Sylvia did not make a mistake in her birthday date. I never saw such a young looking 90 year old. Congratulations and much love Bertha.

Several years ago Sylvia sent me an album of lots of small photos of her charges in Barham House with names attached, which are now in our archives in the Wiener Library.

BOOK LAUNCH

Ellen Davis had a book launch on Thursday 19 August in Waterstone's, Swansea for her book entitled *Kerry's Children*.

CONGRATULATIONS

Steve Rothberg has just become a Professor at Loughborough University in Mechanical Engineering.

CONDOLENCES to the family on the loss of Paula Herstritt (formerly Melinger).

SEARCH NOTICES

The Institute of Contemporary History in Hamburg is looking for photographs for a book about the Kindertransporte. This will be published in 2005. The author, Christiane Berth would be very grateful for any photographs connected with the Kindertransporte; either

from departure, journey or arrival. Photographs can be sent to the address below. We will make a copy and return them immediately. We are also gladly available to answer any questions about the Institute, its work and this publication. Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg, Wissenschaftliche Einrichtung an der Universität Hamburg, "Werkstatt der Erinnerung" Schulterblatt 36, D-20357 Hamburg, Germany.

Susanne Rieger writes to say her search in the July/August issue has proved successful via Peter Sinclair.

Nora Springer is being sought by Judith Veit Simon. Judith was friends with Nora's older sister, Inga (now deceased). Nora Springer may remember Judith by her maiden name (as above) or by her first married name which was Judith Weill. Her name now is Judith Klein. e-mail: tmklein@mindspring.com.

Seeking Norman Godfrey. Northampton Town & County School in 1940.
andrea@ajr.org.uk

My name is Wulf Steinvorth. A colleague of mine, living in Hamburg, tries to trace his former neighbour and schoolfriend. The boys name is Klaus Zanker. He was born around 1933 (+/- 2 years) in Hamburg. Most likely in 1939, just prior to the start of WW2, he was sent to England by his parents. They intended to follow but did not make it; they were deported to Theresienstadt and later killed in Auschwitz.

Your address I got from Peter of BBC History; I had seen the "Kindertransport" feature and contacted him.

I have tried the Family Record Centre but without success. It would be great if you could help me with further information, useful addresses or any other details to follow up. E-mail gmb14@dial.pipex.com Wulf Steinvorth.

I would like to gather the parents' description about the process which led to their decision to send their children on Kindertransport. Of course there is a lot of material written by the Kinder themselves about the time of their departure and parents' feelings can be detected in letters contained, say, in *I came alone*. But so far I have found little material which throws any light on the actual process in which parents considered various alternatives and finally chose Kindertransport as the best way for saving their children. Please reply to AJR office. Kisuki Kibata.

Kisuki Kibata (Japan) became interested in the Kindertransport story several years ago, attending with her husband the 60th Anniversary Reunion. She organised performances of the play Kindertransport, by Diane Samuels, attended by Japan's royal family. Ed

BUNCE COURT SCHOOL AND LANDSCHULHEIM HERRLINGEN 1926-1948

This summer the City of Ulm is celebrating 1250 years since its foundation. It is also commemorating the 125 years since the birth of Albert Einstein and Anna Essinger – the principal of the above schools – in the City. In 1990 two schools in Ulm were named the Anna-Essinger-Gymnasium and Anna-Essinger-Realschule respectively. The commemorations for Anna Essinger, organised by the City with the participation of the two

schools, will take place over the 14 to 18 September 2004. All are welcome to attend !!! For further information contact Andrea at the AJR office

GOLDEN WEDDING MEMORIES

War and school, and hostel life,
Most of us did well to survive.
Working hard, though not too willing,
Tried to make an honest shilling.

At Baker Street the club did meet,
On Sunday mornings on our feet asleep,
Hoped to make it for a ramble,
Ended up in lots of brambles.
Quickly hurry, what's to do,
Nowhere could we find a loo.

Cecil, Uli, Lili, friends so true,
Joyful trips we used to do.
Oft you are in our mind,
May God bless you and be kind.

Family and friends are here today,
Helpful, faithful, all the way.

Most of us are strong but grey,
Hoping for another day.
Shalom and good health to you,
May your wishes all come true.

Lore Heinemann, née Benjamin