



KINDERTRANSPORT NEWSLETTER

AJR Special Interest Section

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(NOT SHABBAT)**

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

Dear Kinder and Friends

Another year has flown by and I hope for all of us that the year just starting should bring us good health, pleasure from all our loved ones and peace for Israel, after the great sacrifice so many brought when torn from their homes they had built over 38 years. The scenes on TV were heartrending. Am I the only one who had the feeling that the TV crews were a bit disappointed that there was no bloodshed or at least injuries? To me it seemed the world was waiting to see more tragedy. Are they all satisfied now? I doubt it. Some thrive on others misfortune. Nowhere does the world want to acknowledge the tremendous contribution we Jews made in so many fields. Medicine, science, technology, art, humanity, charity and so much more. I am not only talking about Nazi Germany and Austria, Russia or Poland, but other persecutions over the centuries we also gave the world THE most important thing, the Torah. It was meant to make the nations into a civilised people. Had it been observed, sadly it was rejected and the results are devastating. NO, THE WHOLE WORLD seems to gloat. AND SAD TO SAY SOME JEWS ALSO. REMEMBER the early Hitler years, when many German Jews (first GERMAN THEN JEWS) THOUGHT, *UNS MEINT MAN NICHT*, AFTER ALL WE ARE GERMAN AND LOVE OUR FATHERLAND. THE WORLD PAYS LIP SERVICE TO THE MEMORY OF THE SHOAH, BUT WAITED TILL AFTER THE WAR WAS OVER TO ALLOW SOME PITIFUL REMNENT INTO THEIR COUNTRY. WE NEED TO PRAY AND HOPE FOR TRUE PEACE IN ISRAEL, ALL OVER THE WORLD AND MOST OF ALL, UNITY AND TOLERANCE AMOUNG OUR OWN PEOPLE.

I am looking forward to spending Yom Tov in Israel with my family including Inge and, one day, with the Israeli Kinder on Suckot and am happy to join them as usual at their yearly Reunion. They are always happy to hear about our activities and tell about theirs. On my return I am looking forward to my "big day" at the **Palace** on the 2 November. At our next KT Lunch, Hermann and I will hopefully tell many of you some of the details of this exciting day. Still on a similar subject **Clarence House**. Everyone who attended was overwhelmed by the sincerity of Prince Charles and his

Duchess as already mentioned in our previous Newsletter. We would have liked an official explanation about the lack of LUNCH, but never received one.

Forthcoming Chanukah Party

As you can see from the enclosed leaflet, our party will be held (and our grateful thanks to them) at the Holocaust Survivors Centre, Wednesday 28 December from 5.30-8.00pm, third day Chanukah. Reason for change of venue is closure of Day Centre due to Xmas season. As numbers are restricted, early booking with payment is advised and money will be refunded if cancelled on 10 days notice.

A most wonderful man, whom all looked up to with gratitude, love and respect, has died at the age of 96. Simon Wiesenthal. He struck terror into our enemies hearts. He dedicated his life to bringing Nazis to justice, we will never see his like again. Hopefully his work will be carried on.

One of our members Rabbi John Rayner has passed away. His large congregation will miss him deeply as will his Kinder friends and his family.

News arrived via Debra Oppenheimer, in whose film *Into the Arms of Strangers* she appeared, of the death, at the age of 100, Francie Grossman. She was the mother of Lore Segal, and was the last mother alive of one of us. We wish Lore and indeed all relatives of those bereaved, Long Life.

Although Peter Johnson was not actually a Kind, he had many Kinder friends attending his funeral. He himself never married, but was responsible for 42 marriages through starting a group "The Hyphen". How he managed to avoid it himself (it was known that he liked the ladies) is a mystery. Those who are happily married will think of him with fondness.

Please keep writing in (even complaints are welcome). Thank you Bernd for your Yom Tov article. To all those of you who made simchas, a hearty mazeltov and wishing you many more in the coming year. Thank you Andrea for all your help during the year, and thanks to my Kinder friends who help me to dispatch the Newsletters. Not forgetting my thanks to all those who sent me cards and phoned me on my MBE and Yom Tov greetings.

A VERY GOOD YOM TOV, ALSO FROM ANDREA.

All best wishes.

LETTERS

CLARENCE HOUSE

Dear Bertha – I was one of the lucky ones whose name was drawn for the reception at Clarence House on the 5 July 2005.

As I started on my journey to London I realised I had forgotten my handbag with my invitation which would prove that I was who I said I was.

A lorry driver was standing not far away from where I was and he noticed that that I was upset and asked me what the problem was. I told him and he phoned my son-in-law on his mobile phone and explained what had happened. The driver was very pleasant and I could not thank him enough. I got back into my car and drove home, found my bag and set off back to my daughter in Harpenden where I arrived in time for dinner.

The next day I went to the meeting at the Day Centre and on the Tuesday morning 5 July I set off for Clarence House. When Prince Charles arrived he circulated amongst us and shook hands with everyone and talked to us as if he had known us personally. I told him that on the night he was born I was on my way to catch the boat to Germany (Kassel) to see my grandmother who had survived Theresienstadt having been there for three years. In November 1948 was her 80th birthday. He said it was very strange that I should tell him this as someone else present had just told him that her sister was his nanny when he was a baby and used to give him his daily bath! He thought it was very funny.

He was so different from the way I imagined him to be that in future I shall refer to him as Prince Charming. He gave a talk before the meeting ended and told us how proud he was to be British as the British had helped us out of Germany when the rest of the world virtually ignored the tragedy engulfing Jewry in Europe.

It really was one of the nicest meetings I have ever been to, everyone was so very friendly and I must say how deeply grateful I am to Bertha Leverton, Hermann Hirschberger and WJR for all their hard work in this connection.

On my journey home, I got as far as the M6 but found the road signs very confusing and was completely lost. A gentleman was standing by a car so I went up to ask him the right road to Sutton Coldfield. When he turned round I could not believe my eyes, it was the same man who had lent me his mobile phone at Watford Gap. Neither of us could get over the coincidence. I told him I was lost and he said not to worry, his son would drive in front of me until we got to the right road, and this they did. I was so lucky to meet such a pleasant person, not only once, but **twice!**

*Henny Rednall
Birmingham*

Dear Bertha – Having just read Newsletter, July/August 2005 I would like to write about a group of boys and girls never mentioned in any report dealing with the Kindertransport.

Officially the upper age limit for the transport was 16 but I, like many others, was almost 18 years old well above the limit when we arrived in London as part of the Kindertransport.

I was the eldest of 12 boys from the Anlernwerkstatt the Jewish technical school in Frankfurt to come to London.

After the disaster of the Kristallnacht our dedicated head Mr Bernhard Beling, a Christian, got in touch with the German Jewish Aid Committee at Bloomsbury House to help us, in most cases penniless, to leave Germany.

As minors we needed an agreement from our parents that they were prepared to let us leave the country.

My mother agreed to let me leave Frankfurt as member of the Kindertransport. She told me not to worry, her brother, sisters and the rest of the family would look after her.

We left Frankfurt on the 3 May 1939 as part of a large Kindertransport, destination London.

A total of 34 students were rescued before the 3 September 1939 all members of the Kindertransport and all over 16.

It was the first time that we had left Germany, supported by a limited knowledge of school English.

First stop of the journey was Amsterdam, where we were welcomed at a big reception organised by the local Jewish community, then via Hook of Holland by boat to Harwich, eventually arriving on the 4 May 1939 in the afternoon at Liverpool Street Station.

All the children were met by their sponsors but our group was two hours later still waiting without supervision for someone to meet us. After a phone call to Bloomsbury House we were told that they were very sorry they got their date mixed up, but would soon meet us and take the group to a very nice hotel.

One hour later we walked to our hotel, the Jews' Temporary Shelter in Mansell Street. So almost 4 hours late we arrived at the shelter to be told you are too late it's full. We shall take you to a nice hotel around the corner. We were taken to the Rowton House, a doss house in Mile End Road.

This was our introduction to London. But in the end they did find us a very nice hostel as a temporary accommodation.

I would just like to show how difficult it was for some youth to settle in a new country without real support.

There must have been others with similar experiences, thankful to be in England and thankful to be safe.

As far as I have discovered only one other ex-member of the Anlernwerkstatt of 34 saved is still alive today.

*Julius Fletcher
Edgware, Middx*

Dear Bertha – further to my letter above, it may be useful to know that my original name was Julius Fleischer, sadly the last male member of a Jewish family with a family tree dating back to 1690 living mainly in southern Germany (Pforzheim, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Schwetzingen, Bruchsal and Frankfurt).

As for my phone call regarding a photograph found by me on the Jubilee line carriage floor after two members left me to change for the Northern line to Edgware.

The passport photo is of a 6-7 year old boy with Foto-atelier, Ralph Kleinhempel, Hamburg, on the back of the photograph.

*Julius Fletcher
Edgware, Middx*

Dear Andrea - Sorry to reply so late but I was gone for two months at the seaside where I didn't have access to the Internet. Thank you anyway for your kind help, but I am done with my thesis since June.

I sent an email to thank the people who helped me, Bertha might not have known it since she doesn't have the internet.

Actually, everything went perfect for my work, I got the highest mark and the jury really appreciated the theme and the way it was handled thanks to all of you who kindly helped me throughout my research. Well, please say hi to Bertha for me and let her know about that. Thank you very much.
Best wishes.

Claire Sonnet
France

Dear Bertha - I would like to thank all the people who wrote letters or notes about their recollections of the Dutch women who came to meet the Kindertransport trains. The collection is now safely archived in Amsterdam at the NIOD . "The NIOD is the leading Dutch institute in the research on the topic of the Netherlands and its people during the first decades of the twentieth century."

After I sent the collection to NIOD, Mr. Tenede wrote, in part, in his letter of thanks "These letters are a valuable addition to our collection. It is seldom that the NIOD receives so much material, from different people, who all write about a shared experience. The letter may not alter the general image we have of the Kindertransport, but they tell us a lot about how the children felt and thought about this experience. This is crucial information for anyone who wants to understand the 'Kindertransport' - --- "Thanks to your endeavour our knowledge of the 'Kindertransport has increased and we now have a permanent record that acknowledges how much the Dutch women who came to meet the Kindertransport trains were appreciated."

I would like to give special thanks to Andrea and Bertha for their role in my obtaining letters from "Kinder" in the UK.

Marion Walter
USA

Dear Bertha – I was interested in the article on the Feuchtwanger family in the latest Kindertransport Newsletter. They lived in Amersham during the Second World War and we were quite friendly with them. One of the daughters married Mr Slutzkin in Manchester and emigrated to Israel. I have lost contact with them but perhaps one of you could send a copy of this note to them in Israel if you can trace them. Apart from their brilliance, they were exceptionally nice people. As you know I am on the Board of the Claims Conference and I am glad that you are supporting this initiative for a new name for Mr Norbert Wolheim.

I must congratulate you, Bertha, for your continuing dynamism and enthusiasm which permeates your Newsletters. It is a long time since we started the first Kindertransport Reunion in Harrow. I am so pleased at the recognition of your work by so many people worldwide.

Clemens Nathan

Dear Bertha – I am always very happy to receive the Kindertransport Newsletter and enjoy very much reading it. I think that you are doing a wonderful job and may the almighty bless you with many happy and healthy years to carry on with your good work.

I was one of the privileged kinder to receive an invitation to Clarence House, I found the visit very interesting and I must say both Prince Charles and the Duchess displayed great sympathy on hearing our various stories.

I was very interested to read *The short story of the Kindertransport*, but was rather disappointed that there was no mention of Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld who did so much to bring to this country myself plus many, many other kinder from all parts of

Europe, especially from Vienna. I came to England in December 1938 with one of Dr Schonfeld's transports via Harwich and landed up at Manchester's London Road Station where a very kind English Jewish lady picked me up and took me to her house. She had five daughters, no husband and in spite of this gave me a home for three and a half years. Life wasn't easy, she spoke no German or Yiddish and I spoke no English, but we managed and it didn't take me very long to master the English language to a point where I forgot my German. She and her daughters were very good and kind to me – I am still in touch with two daughters that are still alive. Much water has flowed under the bridge since then and I am very grateful to the Almighty and to Dr Schonfeld for my survival. I married a holocaust survivor and we were blessed with three wonderful children, a bunch of grandchildren and an even bigger bunch of great grandchildren all following our frum orthodox way of life. Looking forward to your next Newsletter and a very Happy and Healthy New Year to you and all the Kinder.

Thea Rudzinski

FOR HENNY REDNALL

It is a bit early but we'd like to convey all our very best wishes on her special day.

80 candles dear Henny you'll light 21 November may your future be bright. Mazeltov, love Bertha and Kinder friends.

BOOK REVIEWS

KERRY'S CHILDREN

by ELLEN DAVIES

available from Polysorb Ltd

Wentworth, Latchmore Bank

Little Hallingbury, Bishop's Stortford

Herts CM22 7PH @ £6.50.

As I have known Ellen for so many years I just felt I must review her book myself. In Germany she was known to her family as Kerry and to deprive a 10 year old just literally torn from her family, was the first act of cruelty by her adoptive "NEW" mother. "Father" was kinder, but dared not show any compassion to his "new" daughter in front of his wife (both Jewish). They never had children and wanted to raise one to be looked after in their old age. So many other acts of cruelty followed like taking her to have her long plats cut off, not allowing her to cry. Not even, when some years later the dreadful news arrived via the Red Cross of the murder of her beloved "Children" and mother. Her father, who she said was only good at begetting children was the only one to make it to Australia, never bothering even to answer her many letters.

Why "Her" children, because it was she who brought up, from her earliest years, the babies which arrived at yearly intervals, leaving her mother weak and ill. When the Nazis threw them out of their little house in 1934/5 they lived for a while in a hovel allocated to them. Then thrown out again, Kerry and five very young children were sent to the Jewish orphanage while mother, pregnant again lived, or rather existed, in

one room miles away. Father was in Dachau when the Commandant took a liking to his good Germanic looks, and even let him home to visit his family. Kerry devoted herself to her siblings until one day she was just taken, unable to even say goodbye, to the station, living in a village, she had never seen a train or boat, and put on a Kindertransport to England, and given to this most unfeeling woman, to whom she became a slave. The maid and girls in the factory where she worked were her only friends.

Longing for children herself she married (most unsuitably twice) but at least had two wonderful children who are a great comfort to her now.

I don't think that I have ever read a book of only 165 pages filled with so much pathos and sadness (apart from actual holocaust books). Read it for yourself. Any small inaccuracies like dates or calling a SHOCHET, a SHORET, I put down to the memory of a 10 year old child.

Bertha Leverton

Manifold No 49, Spring 2005

PRAGUE WINTER

GERDA MAYER

Hearing Eye, London 2005 54 pp. illustr

£8.95, ISBN 1870841 12 3

Diary-style reminiscences of 1938/39, and the poet's departure from Prague in the final Kindertransport (see Emigration Game (Manifold 43). Beautifully and un sentimentally handled... A really lovely little book.

This book was reviewed in the *AJR Journal*, which all of us receive. The details above are for those who missed it. GOOD LUCK with the sales Gerda.

THE WAY OF FATE

by George Shefi

available through the internet

by Amazon Books, USA

or Biblio Books Florida, USA \$16.50.

"When one compares the life of the average 7-year old little boy today and that of George Shefi at that age, the mind truly boggles. There is George, at a Berlin railway station, at the end of July 1939, embarking on a bewildering journey to England via the Kindertransports, amidst a crowd of 300 other young children. As the train puffs out of the station, he sees his mother running alongside, trying to catch a last glimpse of him; she doesn't manage it: he is too small amongst all the others crowding around the window. And that is the last time he ever sees her.

George is a mischievous boy, always with a grin and ready for adventure, looking for the bright side of life.

A few weeks after arrival at an aunt's in London, he is evacuated to a rectory in the village of Barnack, in North Cambridgeshire, to while away some of the war. He even has his Bar Mitzvah, arranged by a conscientious Jewish teacher for a rather unenthusiastic George.

The next chapter in his life finds him in America, still during the war, with his uncle's family (his mother's brother), happily ensconced in high school. His

ocean crossing had been made in a crowded troop ship, which afforded him further adventures and business deals with the soldiers for his cigarette quota!

After a few years in the States his uncle decided to immigrate to Israel, taking young George with him; that was in 1949, on the understanding that if things didn't work out, uncle would provide the fare back to the US. George joined a kibbutz, then the Israeli Navy (looking very dashing in his brilliant-white uniform) and he took part in naval rescue operations after a particularly severe earthquake hit the Ionian Islands. Shortly afterwards he met his wife Yael, who was serving in the Signal Corps, and they set up home in Jerusalem, producing three lovely daughters, two of whom in turn produced 6 lovely grandchildren. George studied engineering, whilst there is hardly anyone in Jerusalem who has not been taught mathematics by Yael during her long career

The next earth-shaking event occurred when George met his father for the first time, in 1965. They had not heard from or of each other since George was 1 year old. But since that is an amazing story, I can only recommend that the reader of this short review gets the book for himself.

Written in a light-hearted, humorous style, George begins with a detailed account of his forebears, and continues describing his varied life. However, in the last chapter, when he finally manages to have a memorial stone erected in the Jewish cemetery of Berlin in the names of his beloved Mother, Grandfather and Aunts, who had perished, one can empathise with the pain that is part of the lives of all Holocaust survivors. One can also feel his love for his wife and family, as well as their numerous friends, and his ever-present enthusiasm for adventure and travel.

This book, of 229 pages, is made even more interesting by the inclusion of many photos, documents and letters. One can only admire the courage which propelled George forward to achieve a normal and contented life, always with that mischievous smile and sense of fun, yet doing what he felt was right.

A book well worth reading - not once, but often!

Inge Sadan

P.S. I read the book and concur with everything Inge writes. *Bertha Leverton*

Yad Vashem - reminder

As was announced in the AJR Journal in September, the AJR is co-operating with Yad Vashem to gather the names of all victims of the Holocaust. As many names are still missing, those who possess information on victims that are not recorded in the Yad Vashem Database are urgently requested to submit them.

Those intending to submit the Yad Vashem Page of Testimony that was inserted in the AJR Journal are kindly requested to send the completed forms to the AJR. Additional forms are available through the AJR.

**OUR CHANUKAH PARTY WILL BE HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 28 12.05 FROM 5.30PM – 8PM
AT THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS CENTRE,
CORNER PARSON STREET/CHURCH ROAD, HENDON
(BUS 240 AND 183).**

We are grateful to them for providing us with this venue, owing to the late dates this year, it being the holiday season when the day centre is closed.

Early booking is advised, owing to space. (If you cancel 10 days before the date we will refund your money).

PLEASE SEND STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE TO BERTHA LEVERTON, at the AJR office together with your cheque made payable to KT Publications, to receive your ticket.

THERE WILL BE ENTERTAINMENT, PRESENTS ETC.

1/WE.....

ADDRESS.....

TEL.....

WOULD LIKETICKETS @ £12 per person

TOTAL ENCLOSED £.....

FOOD SUPPLIED BY FOLMANS KOSHER FISH RESTAURANT

PLEASE STATE FISH

OR

VEGETARIAN ALTERNATIVE AVAILABLE