

KINDERTRANSPORT NEWSLETTER

AJR Special Interest Section

**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 – AUTUMN 2006
Editor: Bertha Leverton**

**Chairman:
Hermann Hirschberger**

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

Dear Kinder and Friends,

Once again we are approaching the start of a new year. Hopefully a better one than we are leaving behind.

So many of us have loved ones in Israel and our concern and worry is very real. How many murders, kidnappings, rockets are they expected to endure before striking back. Loss of life, injuries are terrible for all countries. The enemy's intention was stated quite openly. It was to destroy us. How many protests (such as high clergy holding a fast, sitting in tents on **our** behalf 70 years ago?

France was busy using its police force to herd their Jewish citizens and send them to their deaths. France now cannot expect the survivors of the camps living in Israel, to let them dictate to them when to give up the fight for survival. Poland and the Ukraine busier still doing the same, while Italy showed some compassion sending many Jews south out of Nazi reach. The world is so used to looking on Jews as victims, it can't get used to Jews as fighters. Thousands of Iraqi citizens have died and are dying at the hands of their own race. For years the citizens in Northern Israel had to live in shelters because of rocket attacks (totally unprovoked) the world press ignored it, as did some of our own Jews who rush to protest. Should a wave of real antisemitism (as happened in Germany and Poland) ever erupt here and Israel the only place of refuge, what would they do then?

I well remember in Germany from 1933 onwards, the Jewish newspapers equivalent of the Jewish Chronicle, had columns headed "Aus dem Judentum *Ausgetretem* (left Judaism). These columns grew weekly and the churches were busy baptising. But all this cut no ice with the Nazis, who did not even recognise their own God, as he was a Jew himself. Only anyone living in Israel themselves and knowing the situation first hand can really express an opinion. Certainly not the reporters, most of whom are only there for sending sensational pictures to their media. Remember the saying "*wen zwei straiten, freut sich der dritte*" (a fight between two is gleefully watched by a third).

We pray this coming Rosh Hashana should bring real and lasting peace to Israel and the world.

Hopefully our questionnaire project is almost ready for sending out. The delay occurred because we wanted to make quite sure that it is as correctly worded as possible and computer friendly when we get the returned forms. Hermann went to great length getting expert advice from professional pollsters, who kindly gave their opinion free of charge. In fact, they said they were favourably impressed and I hope you will be too.

I am looking forward to seeing my Israeli family soon (note I will be away from 28 September – 16 October). Also glad to report that my knee replacement op in June was successful (though still using my stick outside). The 43 steps I have to negotiate up my Jubilee Line tube station is a bit easier than it was. To get me to the office means another 40 steps in Stanmore, though Andrea picks me up most days I go there. I am lucky I have good friends.

We are having to postpone our Supper Quiz until after Chanukah, but hope to give you a date in our next Newsletter.

The KT Lunches are getting really popular and we all enjoy the good food (thank you Susie and team, not forgetting the chef) and Kinder meeting and speaker. 7 August was a bit different, no Speaker, but Annette took us around the world in 30 tunes on the piano. Her great playing was much appreciated. Also a good time was had by all for what was Hermann's 80th birthday party. He was the only one not to know details and kept on worrying beforehand that we had no speaker for that day. Perfect weather allowed us to hold a drinks reception (thank you Sigi) in the garden, followed by a special lunch and presentation of a book by WJR, a silver frame by AJR and on behalf of the Kinder a silver tray with eight little Kiddush bechers from us. We wish Hermann many more birthdays to come in good health together with Eva.

I am very much looking forward to meeting the Israeli group in Netanya for their Annual Meeting during Succot. My sister Inge was here for a few days and sends you all best wishes from Israel. An interesting article of hers appears in this Newsletter. Thank you Bernd (our Kinder Rabbi) for your Yom Tov article.

A few days after my return to England I'll be packing my bag again to join our USA group in New Jersey for their meeting on 2 November. Following that will be the opening of the Kindertransport Exhibition in Vienna, where I have been asked to do the honours and also talk to a school. Not being a Wiener, I will be drawing on my Munich dialect which is similar and hope they won't notice the difference.

Another news item, the new Kinder Statue is now in place at Liverpool Street Station and may be viewed at any time. This time it will bear a clearly marked plaque so everyone seeing it will know what it represents. The square (same as before) will be named *Hope Square*.

Many thanks for the many good wishes by cards, letters and by phone (please **always** include your phone number so that I can get in touch). I wish you all a very good, healthy and peaceful year, together with Hermann and Andrea.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bertha". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'B' at the start and a long, sweeping tail on the 'a'.

P.S. Sorry about the delay in sending out our project questionnaire. It took longer than we anticipated to get it right and to enable the person chosen to enter the returned forms to be computer friendly. Hermann who is a perfectionist was not ready to accept anything not of the highest standard. I never realised the precision work involved. When I started working on the idea of a Reunion, I could have been much more precise and also saved things I then discarded, not realising their importance. Even though I handed over to the Wiener Library and Sussex University boxes full of things, I now know to be important archives. My small home is crammed with photographs, videos, tapes which should be saved. Owing to my sight problem I find it impossible to sort and catalogue myself. So here is a serious request for help for an intelligent member of RoK, with time to spare **after** November, to help me to get this important job started.

Some years ago, the Wiener Library had a wonderful non-Jewish volunteer researcher from the USA, and it took us both weeks to sort and collate the material. So who can come to help me this time? I don't have email or a computer, my helper at the Wiener Library brought her laptop, she became so engrossed in the project, she was sorry to return home to New York. She also wanted to learn the meaning of the many Yiddish phrases used by the general public in New York, so spent some time on that also and entered it on her laptop. Infact, I have found everyone who learns about our history gets hooked on it, as did my postman in 1988/89 who wanted to know why I received so much mail. The Manager of The Harrow Leisure Centre at that time in June 1989 became so involved, he insisted on taking part. We had policemen for security outside the building, during the event who spoke to many of us. And still the interest goes on, making us Ambassadors and part of the history.

Children of the Kindertransport

Sculptor – Frank Meisler

**In gratitude to the people of Britain for saving the lives of
nearly 10,000 unaccompanied mainly Jewish children
who fled from Nazi persecution in 1938 and 1939**

*"Whosoever rescues a single soul is credited
as though they had saved the whole world"*

Talmud

Dedicated by

**Association of Jewish Refugees
Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief**

September 2006

HOPE SQUARE

Dedicated to the

Children of the Kindertransport

**Who found hope and safety in Britain
through the gateway of Liverpool Street Station**

**Association of Jewish Refugees
Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief**

September 2006

Hearing is Thinking

To my mind the most stirring sound of Rosh Hashanah is that of the Shofar, a simple, uncomplicated ram's horn. It is the only instrument of ancient Israel to have survived to this day; it was not a musical instrument like the harp or lyre but one for use in religious and secular ceremonies. Since Temple times it is solely for liturgical usage. It also served as a specific artistic symbol, as found portrayed, for instance, in the mosaic floors of ancient synagogues.

"If the Shofar is sounded (as an alarm) in the city, shall the people not be afraid?" so questions the prophet Amos (3:6). As we hear the 100 separate "tunelets", do we not tremble, as it stirs our thoughts and consciences? Do the sounds leave us unmoved?

When a person speaks, we hear the voice through words. So, likewise, as the Shofar is sounded we hear the sound, the voice, in Hebrew *kol*, speaking to us through its variant types of "tunelets." Each one has a message for us, singly or in combination with others, be it *tekiah*, or *shevarim* and *teruah*, singly or combined.

The "tunelets" are a picture of life. The *tekiah*, a continued blast, the smooth sound, represents the smooth path. Creation – Rosh Hashanah recalls the birthday of the world - produced a world that would have been easy and comfortable. had subsequent events not turned out otherwise. *Shevarim*, three broken tunelets, represents the break up of that smoothness, while *teruah* with its nine smaller tunelets shows an even greater breakdown. However the repeated *tekiah* after *shevarim* and *teruah* takes us into the future, when the break up of things is restored to a oneness, to a whole once again.

The *tekiah gedolah*, the great, long *tekiah*, looks to the far future, to the time of the Messianic era when life will be the golden life as envisaged by G-d at the time of Creation.

It is no wonder that the Rabbis discussed and decided the exact wording of the *berachah* (blessing) prior to the Shofar being blown, namely "to hear (to listen to) the voice (sound) of the Shofar." The Shofar has a message, like a prophet, to each and every individual, a message which each one must hear and listen to. Human life may not always be smooth running and easy; there are all kinds of difficulties, all kinds of hurdles to overcome, be they in our activities, in our actions, in our thoughts or in our beliefs.

The sounds of the Shofar should make us stop, perhaps shake and tremble, to move us to examine ourselves, what we have done, what we must do, what we have achieved, what we should or could achieve, in our personal lives, in our relationship with G-d and fellow humans.

After the preparation of the month of Tishri, Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of this process, the beginning of re-creating ourselves, culminating in the purifying action that Yom Kippur should present to us, a purifying through confession and hope of forgiveness, so that we can start the next phase of our lives refreshed and anew. Before we can ask G-d for forgiveness we must ask our fellows to forgive us and make good any damage we have caused to them. The final effective act in this request to Man and G-d, in that order, is contrition and repentance with the resolution not to repeat our erring ways, but to improve them to the best of our ability. The Shofar at the end of the day signifies the hope for a happy and pleasant future, that is embodied in the concept and celebration of the Festival of supreme joy, Sukkot.

Shanah Tovah. I wish you all a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

Bernd Koschland

CONGRATULATIONS

Gillie and Henry Rawson , Leeds on their Diamond Wedding on the 2 October

Alisa Tennenbaum, Editor of the Israeli NL has become a great-grandmother

Ursula and George Ader who celebrate their Golden Wedding close to Rosh Hashana. PG on your 60th. Ursula is one of our very young ones, being three years old on arrival.

Kurt and Renate Treitel a Grandson, Conrad Samuel Robinson (Shmuel Yehoshua) on 26 June 2006

Renate Treitel 75th birthday on 6 August 2006

Herb Goldsmith on his 80th birthday in June

OBITUARIES

David Wolfgang Goodman/Wolfgang David Guttmann, came to England as part of the Kindertransport in 1938 passed away on 17 April 2006.

Louis Charles Selo has died aged 55, deeply mourned by his mother Lore, wife Anna and children Martin, twins Monica and Sebastian.

Milestone at Liverpool Street Station and coming soon to Berlin – Vienna – Utrecht – Hoek van Holland

From the beginning of the Jewish year 5767, a new milestone - a sculpture of a group of five children - reminds us of the Kindertransport of the years 1938-39. The milestone is at Liverpool Street Station, where the majority of the children who came by Kindertransport from Nazi-occupied Europe arrived in Britain.

A total of 10,000 mostly Jewish children, born in Germany, Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia, survived the Holocaust in British families. Their lives were saved, but 80 per cent of their parents were victims of the Holocaust. This first milestone marks the route the children travelled and honours the warm welcome they were given by the British population.

The children had travelled on the German Reichsbahn to the border crossing at the city of Aachen. In the Netherlands, their first stop was Utrecht. Their journey continued via Hoek van Holland to their final destination of Harwich. They met their British foster parents at Liverpool Street Station for the first time.

The Kindertransport was made possible through the generosity of Great Britain and numerous organisations and concerned private individuals (for example, Mrs Gertrude Weissmuller, Sir Nicholas Winton, Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld).

For the purpose of documenting the history of the Kindertransport, the other locations along the route of the Kindertransport are to be symbolically marked with milestones.

The bronze sculpture was created by the artist Frank Meisler (www.frank-meisler.com), who lives and works in Jaffe/Tel Aviv. As an eight-year-old child, Frank Meisler made the journey from Danzig via Berlin to London with the Kindertransport.

Lisa Schaefer
Projektleiterin, Berlin
Email: Schaefer.lisa@berlin.de

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Exhibition

“Monument for Helga Beer” (1931-2005) - Retrospection and sculptures.
At Michaelhouse, Trinity Street, Cambridge
October 30 - 2006 - November 11 - 2006
Monday - Saturday 9.30 am to 5 pm
(opening on Sunday 29 October 3.30 to 5.30 pm)

RSVP

email: koperbeer@zonnet.nl

email: andreas@michaelhouse.org.uk

Berlin-born Rabbi Harry Jacobi, who arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport, became an OBE for services to the Jewish community. “It is lovely to feel appreciated” the Liberal Judaism vice-president, 80, said. “I am looking forward to celebrating with the family.”

Adrienne Behrendt wants poetry for book to be published from any source. Send poems to Mailbox, POB 2044, New Britain, CT 06050, USA.

LETTERS

Dear Kinder – As I am not quite the oldest Kind in our group, I do happily admit to my age of 80 and thank you most heartily for my lovely party and the gift of the silver tray and Kiddush Bechers presented to me on this occasion. It will of course be used this Yomtov and will be a centrepiece at our table.

May we all meet on many happy occasions to enjoy each others company.

Together with Eva I wish you all a very healthy and good year, sincerely

Hermann

THANKS FOR SEARCH

Dear Bertha – I wish to thank you for putting my request in your last newsletter, re my search for my relative from the Kindertransport in England.

Fortunately, Mr Arnold Waxman answered, by mail, telling me that he was together with my cousin in the Bedford boys hostel and knew of his accident, where he is buried, and even the number of his grave. I feel grateful that my cousin Fritz Torkfeld has a place of rest known.

*Miriam Wolf
Tel-Aviv, Israel*

Dear Andrea - I am writing an article for **Mishpacha**, the international Jewish family weekly magazine, entitled "The Kinders - Then and Now" and wondered if you might be able to help me. I'd like to know some facts and figures that I couldn't find on the Web;

How many Kinder are surviving today?

How many in England/Scotland/Ireland/Wales?

How many in other places? Where?

What percentage are mitzvah observant?

What percentage assimilated into Christianity?

And of these, how many returned to their Jewish roots later?

We are an Orthodox magazine, and as such I would particularly like to talk to any Kinder who are Orthodox, or who assimilated and afterwards returned to Yiddishkeit.

If you could perhaps put me in touch with someone, either by email or telephone, I would be very grateful.

Also, if perhaps you have any interesting photos that we might be able to use for the article?

Thanking you in advance for your help

Editors note: We get many questions like this. To be able to answer them, the Questionnaire being sent to all of you very soon, should be the answer. BL

SEARCHES

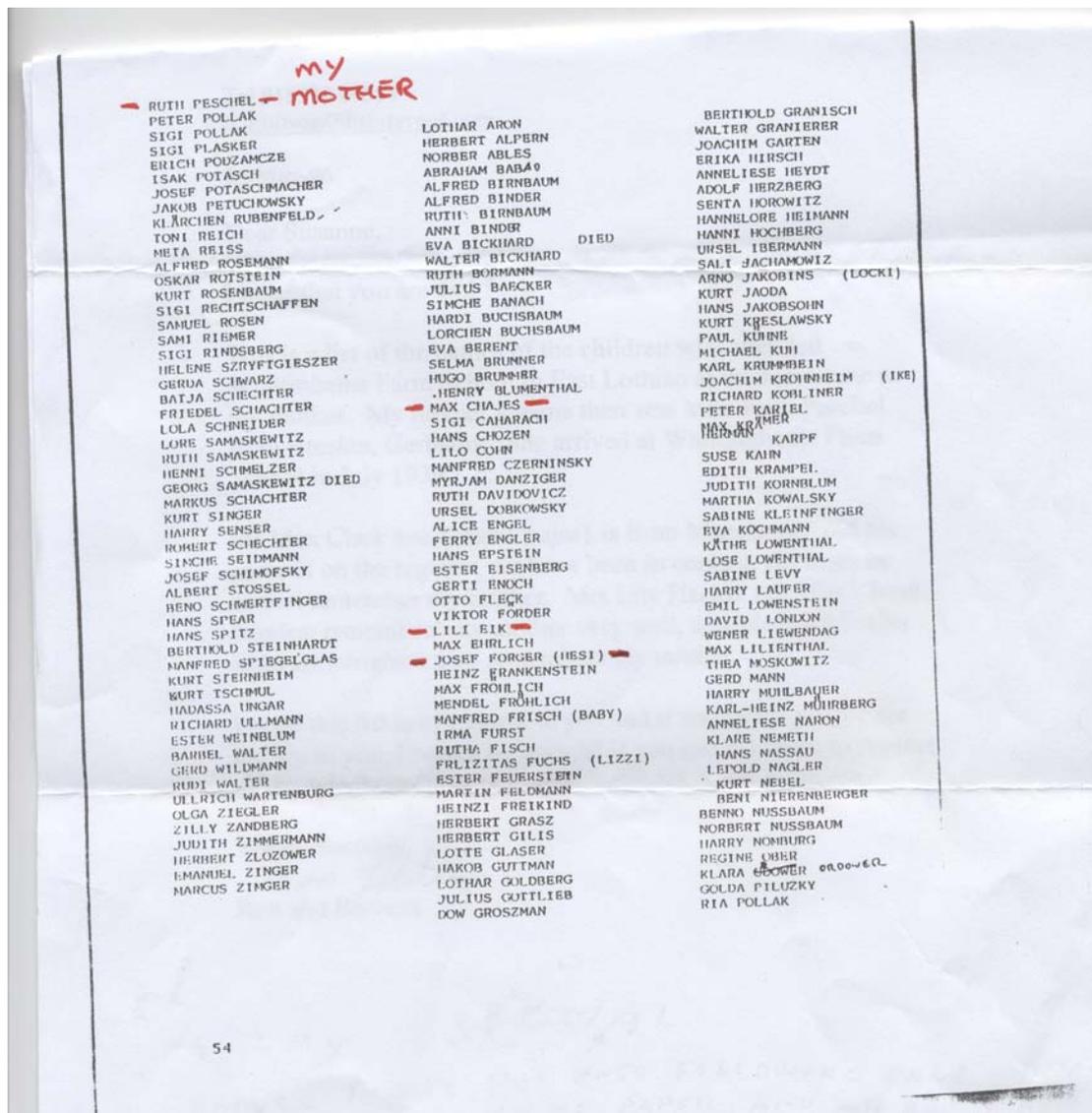
VERY SPECIAL

The following is a list of names of children who attended Whittinghame Farm School in East Lothian at the same time as my mother. My mother's name then was Miss Ruth Peschel from Breslau, Germany. She arrived at Whittinghame Farm School in July 1939.

Mr Max Clark nee (Max Chajes) is from Manchester and his name is on the register, we have been in contact, although he cannot remember my mother. Mrs Lily Hacker nee (eik) from London remembers my mother very well, and Mr Josef Forger from Birmingham also remembers my mother.

I hope this list is of interest to you and if any of the people are known to you, I would be grateful if you can ask them to contact me by telephone, post or email.

Mr Ron Ibbitson, b.ibbitson@btinternet.com



SEARCHING FOR MY KINDERTRANSPORT COUSIN DINA WASSERMANN

My first cousin, Dina Wassermann, was, as a one year old baby, given to the Kindertransport in 1939 by her mother, my maternal aunt, Marie Wassermann, because my aunt was facing imminent deportation to a concentration camp, and she wanted her baby to live. I have my cousin, Dina Wassermann's birth certificate (copy) in my possession. Dina was born in 1938, in Berlin, Germany, and her mother placed her in a Jewish Orphanage, called Yudisches Suglings Heim, located on Exercier Str., in Berlin. From that Orphanage, people from the Kindertransport took her to England in 1939. Her mother, my aunt Marie, was later killed in Riga Latvia in a concentration camp there, in about 1942. Now, my cousin Dina Wassermann may have at that time been adopted by an English family, and may have a different last name, (or, she may now have a different last name if married). Any information as to where she may be found or what institutions I may turn to for help, would be greatly appreciative. Doesn't the Kindertransport Assn. and/or the British govt. have any files or lists of children/babies they took to England in 1939? If so, please let me know how I can access such a list or file. Also, if she was adopted in England after she arrived there from Berlin, how can I access English adoption records? As she most probably was taken from Berlin to England by boat, there must be ship manifest records of passengers who made the trip in 1939. Also, visas to England and immigration records, etc. for 1939. There is a chance that Dina was adopted by an English couple in Berlin, and the adoption took place at the Jewish orphanage--the Yudisches Suglings Heim as I mentioned, on Exercier Str., Berlin--and then that couple took her back with them to England. My mother did receive a letter from her sister Marie in 1939 stating that "an English couple came to the orphanage and adopted Dina and took her with them to England." So the adoption may have occurred at the Orphanage in Berlin--and perhaps this was a way to legally take Dina out of Berlin on the Kindertransport--or there is a slight chance she was not part of the Kindertransport, but adopted by an English couple in Berlin, and taken to England. However, the fact that she was taken by "an English couple" from that orphanage in 1939, when many Kindertransports took place, leads me to believe she was probably on the kindertransport from Berlin to England. And since she was only a one year old baby, she had to have one or two adults carry her and care for her during her trip to England. The German Red Cross told me (about 12 years ago) that all adoption records are sealed in Germany, but I would think that since this was all done under great duress, these records might now be opened by me. And perhaps since 12 years ago, the German laws have changed, and they would now open these records for me. I also would like you or someone else to find out if and how I could access the adoption records from the Yudishes Suglings Heim on Exercier Str. in Berlin, processed in the year 1939. I have spent a lifetime searching for my cousin Dina--the only survivor of the family. I am now 63, so she would be about 67 now. My name: Helen Blitzer, address: 70 Haverford St., Hamden, Connecticut, 06517 USA. Tel: (203) 281-1337 email: tovalightning@aol.com

S.S. Bodegraven Survivors: This ship was known as the last kindertransporte on May 14, 1940 leaving port near Amsterdam and arriving near Liverpool, England after a harrowing escape. It was attacked by returning Nazi aircraft and had at least one death on board. Survivors and details of that trip are sought for documentation. Gershon Kohn, Max Kohn, and Ralph Kohn are known survivors. Contact niclone@aol.com with information. Paul Kent, son of Gershon Kohn niclone@aol.com

A TV documentary company (based in London) is looking for Czech, Austrian and German survivors who came to Britain via Kindertransport. I am also keen to contact any former schoolteachers who taught Kindertransport evacuees when they arrived in Britain. Please contact Joanna Nolan at jmdnolan@hotmail.com or on 07947 358686 if you would be willing to share your story with me.

I am researching the story of the Kindertransport. I am a student at Exeter University and completing my MA in History. My dissertation intends to understand the emotional impact for the Kindertransport children of settling in England during the war years. I wish to consider in particular the feelings that they held towards possessing a particular identity and how this was affected by their experiences within England.

To successfully develop my research I desperately need to listen to the thoughts and recollections of survivors of the Kindertransport.

Any help or advice would be greatly appreciated. I am eager to talk to anyone who has any connection of useful information or advice about the history of the Kindertransport. If you would like any other information please do let me know?

Frances Williams

Rose Gotley is assisting Lou Kleiman in making contact with anyone who remembers his deceased wife Regina. The following are names taken from her autograph book. Gita, August 1947, R enll?, Loly Banonz? Ella, Adilebshien 11 Nov 1967, Luine Claybor, Shirley Whitworth, Isaac Barron 22 October 1947, Shirley 8 November 1947, Maurice 22 October 1947, Vera Morris, Pat Hines, Rosita, Margaret Tole (or Tole) and Shirley "by hook or by crook, wanted to be last in the book. Please contact Louis Kleiman via andrea@ajr.org.uk

Peter Kurer is still interested in hearing about Quakers. via andrea@ajr.org.uk

Sent in by Alan Gill

34950 Sugihara Conspiracy of Kindness

A Kindertransportee in England, Eric Cohen, who was helped by the Dutch heroine, Gertrude Wejsmuller-Meijer, has sent me photocopies of key pages from her book "No Time for Tears", published in Dutch, in 1961, by Van Kampen-Verlag, Amsterdam. Alas, the book is long since out of print and copies are as rare as hens' teeth.

Her claim to fame is that she actually managed to rescue, and send to Britain, a party of Jewish children after the Dutch capitulation in May 1940. A dear friend in Australia, of Dutch origin, has translated the pages for me and I think they will be of interest to you. The story is touched upon in my book "Interrupted Journeys".

THE LAST SHIP

On the 6th May 1940, she travelled to Emmerich to fetch an eighty-six year old blind Jewish woman. She was warmly welcomed by the commander of the Gestapo who proudly showed off his men in their brand new bluish grey uniforms.

"Nice uniforms", she said, "are they for Sunday best?" "No", he answered, "we now wear this colour uniform ever since the invasion of Czechoslovakia when some of our men were arrested by our own soldiers since the uniforms were so similar. She acted as if she did not understand, however, the Gestapo commander was so pleased with the news about the invasion, that he took her into a room with a view of the street in front of the police station. He pointed out a man in black uniform. "What kind of uniform is that?" he asked. "How would I know", she answered.

"That", he said proudly, "is a tank soldier" and he then pointed out what looked to her like a beer barrel on tracks. She did not elaborate further as she did not quite know what the German description would be of an armoured "tank".

I was hardly inside when a lieutenant, a sergeant, police sergeant and policeman entered the room. The sergeant placed the muzzle of his firearm on my stomach while the lieutenant told me I would have to accompany him to the police station. I asked him: "Do you have a car?" The lieutenant answered "No, but with a piece of shit like you, we shall walk through the Kalverstraat so that everyone can abuse you." Well, that was just too much even for me and I told him: "Sir, would you be so kind as to phone the "Spinhuissteeg" (address). He did that for me and I did not have to go. I went home feeling rather angry and dejected and once I got there, I heard from the neighbours that a van had come and that the driver had said they were coming to get me. I nodded and went to bed. The next morning, a soldier was at the door asking me to come and see the commander of the garrison in the Lairessestraat. I said to him "Young man, you go and tell your boss that if he wants something from me, he should come here. Please also tell him that yesterday he did not want to know me, and

that today it is I who does not want to see him and that if he has a job to do, he had better do it himself. An hour later, this soldier was back again and said his boss had told him there was a message for me from England.

The commander of the garrison told me then, "Madam, you must, as quickly as possible, accompany the children of the orphanage to Ijmuiden, where they are doing their best at this precise moment to hold up a ship, while in London permission is being sought from the Royal Navy. I shall give you a note for each guard who may try and hold you up on the way. I shall write in the note that you are doing a job for me. Armed with the note, I hurried directly to the Lijnbaansgracht (address) to see Mrs Van Tijn who was in charge of the orphanage.

She was not there, she was having lunch in the American Restaurant, and there I asked her permission to hire some buses and I also asked her to warn the Jewish committees that they would be able to come and also board the ship and escape to England. At half past one, I was at the orphanage with five buses, however, when I tried to go inside the building, the porter held me back and told me I was not able to go in any more as I was a danger to the state." I found it very strange that such a mild mannered man who had known me for so long, was acting so strangely. I stopped myself from becoming annoyed and said "All right then, I cannot go in any more - but the children are still able to come outside so you go and fetch them. I have the buses here and shall take them away with me." He had to think about this one for a while but he did go and fetch the children and joined the buses in the Lijnbaansgracht (address).

There was, however, no sign of the administrative staff. What I did see was a group of about forty Jewish citizens at their wits' end who asked me what they should do. I let them board the buses and then in the Weteringschans I saw one of the supervisors, a German woman. I stopped the bus I was travelling in and let her come on board. In Ijmuiden, our buses were held up by thousands of cars and droves of people shouting at each other and waving their arms. I got off the bus and walked ahead, past the cars and groups of cyclists until we arrived in the harbour where the military held back the crowds as they had been directed to do by the government.

I did not agree with this stance then and I still feel the same. I still feel it is madness to stop people who are trying to escape. Even if they were hanging by the tops of their fingers off the ship's railing, that would be better than the alternative: fall into the hands of the Germans. The note from the garrison commander did not help either. Outside the garrison, no one pays any attention to him. Fortunately, I saw Mr Koning, director of the "Maatschappij Nederland". He took me with him to speak to the naval commander, his name was Hellingman but I forget his rank. I still remember how very calmly he assured me, "Of course, Madam, you may come on board and take as many people with you as you can."

The "Bodegraven" of the KNSM in the harbour was our ship. It would have been possible to take on board thousands of people but they were held back. Orders had come through that the "Bodegraven" should be sunk as had happened in the case of "Coen" which I myself had seen sink, likewise with the ships of Wijsmuller. That was also unbelievable, allowing ships to be sunk while they could have sailed.

Mr Koning brought his Jewish friends on board the "Bodegraven". I brought people to the sluice gates in my buses. They brought on board Mrs Vos with her two sons and also Dr Wijsenbeek, accompanied by his family. Dr Wijsenbeek was very helpful. He said to me "You will not be able to get away from this chaotic traffic situation with your buses, so take my car keys which I shall no longer need anyway."

I brought my children on board and the captain said "Madam, do stay on board and come with us." I answered "Captain, I still have commitments at home." I told the children a white lie, leaving my coat and handbag on board, asking them to look after my belongings, this to reassure them that I was planning to come with them. I felt they were rather afraid without me.

I still tried to get more people on board but rumours were going around that the sluice locks would be destroyed and that Ijmuiden would come under water. This was, however, stopped by Mr Nelissen from the Water Board who convinced a few British officers in Ijmuiden that the whole of Amsterdam would be flooded if they let the sea come into the locks.

At ten minutes to eight, the "Bodegraven" left the harbour. I waved goodbye. This was the end.

FIVE TIMES THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX WORKING DAYS

This was all she told us of this incredible and impartial story of how she brought eighty children on board of the last ship to leave Ijmuiden, ten minutes before the Netherlands capitulated. For many years, the Dutch did not know what war was like within our boundaries. Within living memory, no one had the need to flee from our safe shores. And then, all of a sudden it is war, our troops are attacked, Rotterdam is flattened, our safe country is in chaos, thousands flee the country in desperation, jostling each other in the crowds gathered in the harbour of Ijmuiden, and we see ships sink in front of our eyes.

Then, she comes by with her five buses, taking more people with her on the way... then she brings those who have been entrusted to her care on board of the "Bodegraven" and still searches for others who may also wish to come.

then she stands on the wharf and waves to the ship... then she turns around to go home where she belongs andthat is the end.

9.6.06

Translated by Dieneke Carruthers - The Last Ship

The following article appeared in *The Jewish Vegetarian* magazine

MISRACH

By Inge Sadan Engelhard

Do you ever look closely at old photographs, sepia-coloured and stiffly posed, grandparents or even great-grandparents, and wonder what their lives had been like, their thoughts, their feelings and their dreams? Did they dare to have dreams? Or was it a life of drudgery, in "the old country" trying to make ends meet until the blessed arrival of Shabbat or Yomtov, when there was an atmosphere of tranquillity for a short time and a special effort had been made to prepare the festive meals. Were there even vegetarians by choice?

My grandparents lived, as had their families before them, in the little township of Pruchnik, whose nearest real town was Lvov/Lemberg. In 1900 the total Jewish population there was 1,796, although to hear my father speak of it, it sounded as big as London, but without the latter's amenities.

The surrounding forests provided work for the more physically able as timber merchants, and some worked in the leather business, whilst others scraped a living as best as they could, as milk deliverers, water carriers and in general supplying the needs of each other.

Naturally, all the little boys attended Cheder, and by the time they were able to work, they were well versed in all the Jewish subjects that today would be learned in college. It was no great feat for them to speak German, Polish and Hebrew (with the Ashkenazi accent of course) with Yiddish as the mother-tongue. In the course of time, depending on the political geography, there could be further linguistic additions, like Hungarian and the various Slavic tongues.

My grandfather, who knew of my existence (born in Germany) but whom I had never met, sent my mother a Mazeltov letter, with my name painted in gold and wishing her, in flowery Yiddish, everything that could possibly bring her happiness with the advent of my arrival. I still have the letter. It seems that he had inherited the family tradition of being artistic, but not too financially practical. He loved to paint, and since his handwriting was beautiful, it seems he worked as a bookkeeper in the timber industry.

Any spare time was spent in painting and Hebrew calligraphy, and being a fond father to his eight (surviving) children, he decided to present each of them with two paintings to grace their homes. One was a Mizrach, which one hangs in an east-facing direction, so that it is easy to see which way to face when praying, useful in colder climates when the sun does not give any clues, and the other picture was of the counting of the Omer period, the seven weeks between Pesach and Shavout, the first harvest as well as the giving of the Torah. Each picture was lovingly illustrated with the symbols of the traditions connected with the theme. Every time I look I find something new which I had never noticed before (a bit like my favourite Hendryk Averkamp winter scene, hanging in the National Gallery,

London and which always reveals new and fresh details). The art is certainly not to be compared to the Italian Masters, maybe more in the Grandma Moses style but more symbolic and with a love and understanding of his religious background. They are signed with the Hebrew date equivalent to 1924 and “from your father”.

The legacy of these pictures were treasured by the recipients and found their way to Palestine (of 1935) France and Munich. My family’s pictures did not survive the five years’ wanderings of my parents during World War II, but being very sentimental about the few possessions which did survive, I borrowed the original paintings which my Jerusalem cousins owned, had them copied, framed, and now I look at them daily with pride and love.

A little PS. My grandfather died around 1933 and after two years, my grandmother immigrated to Palestine to live with her eldest son and his family in Jerusalem. I managed to get to know her when she was 97 and she told me the story of her betrothal and marriage. It seems that when she was 15 her father returned from morning prayers one day and announced that she was now a Kalah (bride). She was too embarrassed to ask who the lucky groom was, until much later in the day, when she was told, and was even pleased, as the two had known and played together as small children, and she liked him. Three years later when she was 18 and he 17 (!) they were married, and lived happily ever after.

The photo, certainly not Hampstead Garden Suburb surrounds, must have been taken at the Golden Wedding, as he was wearing festive garb and she had her coveted 5-row strings of pearls, also not everyday wear.

