



# Volunteer Newsletter

Autumn 2009

## Inside this issue:

- Andrew Kaufman 2
  
- Carol Rossen 3
  
- Yursten  
Cetinkaja 4
  
- Stephen Isaacs 5
  
- Dementia fact  
sheet 6
  
- History of the  
AJR - Part 1 8
  
- Jan Botsch 8

## Upcoming events:

- 21 October:  
Volunteers  
training about  
Jewish  
Awareness in  
Stanmore
  
- 29 October:  
Volunteers  
training at the  
Holocaust  
Survivor Centre  
in Hendon
  
- 15 November:  
Mitzvah Day

## A Message from Carol Hart

Welcome to the updated version of the volunteer department newsletter. It has been quite a while since we have produced a newsletter. I am very fortunate that we have the services of an intern, Jan Botsch, for the next 12 months (more about Jan on page 8) and he has been responsible for producing this issue.

We have reproduced and updated two articles from previous newsletters, one is an interview with AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman and the other with Carol Rossen, the AJR Director responsible for personnel and administration. Jan has also been to meet two of our volunteers and his articles about them also appear in this issue.

The department has been very busy over the course of the last year but without doubt the highlight was the "Celebration of Volunteering" event that was held in June at the House of Lords. The event was hosted by Lord Janner of Braunstone and we were very fortunate to have the actor George Layton as our guest speaker. It was a very special evening and we were delighted that we were able to fill the Committee Room with over 60 fantastic AJR volunteers. Photographs from this evening can be seen on the AJR website.



Carol Hart, George Layton, Andrew Kaufman, Lord Janner

We have continued to run a variety of different training programmes this year, including a session on recognising and supporting people with dementia. We have reproduced notes on this session which can be found on pages 6 and 7. Later this month I will be running two further sessions, one on helping those clients who are hard of hearing and the second focuses on Jewish Awareness specifically for our non-Jewish volunteers. Notes on these sessions will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

It is our plan to make more use of the AJR website and all training and information about past and future events will be available on the volunteers section of the website. See [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk) for more details.

Thanking you all for your continued support,

Carol Hart

## The History of the AJR

Beginning in this issue, we will publish summaries of the history of the AJR in each Newsletter over the next year. Read more on page 8. The information is taken from

*Grenville, Anthony*: The Association of Jewish Refugees, in: The Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Vol.10 (2008)

For the whole article visit

[http://www.ajr.org.uk/documents/Exile\\_10\\_05\\_-\\_Anthony\\_Grenville.pdf](http://www.ajr.org.uk/documents/Exile_10_05_-_Anthony_Grenville.pdf).

# Andrew Kaufman - Chairman



***The AJR  
simply  
"cannot  
exist  
without the  
volunteers"***

Andrew Kaufman has been donating his time and expertise to the AJR for about twenty years now. He got involved with the AJR when the late Helmut Rothenberg, a former trustee, solicited Andrew's help along with that of Helmut's son, David (who later became the AJR's Treasurer and Vice Chairman), to "bring down the age of the management committee." Andrew's background as a practising international corporate lawyer and his fluency in German proved very helpful to the management of the AJR. He easily connected with the AJR and understands the experiences of our members since both of his parents came to England as refugees from Germany before the war.

Andrew became Chairman of the Management Committee, which sets the policies and programmes of the AJR. Andrew is also a Trustee of the AJR Charitable Trust, which is responsible for managing funds held in trust for the benefit of the AJR membership.

Andrew knows that AJR volunteers are a crucial part of the AJR because they spend time with members at a point in their lives when help is becoming of greater importance. "This is a two way relationship", said Andrew, referring to how members can help volunteers as much as volunteers can help members. As many of you know, the friendships that develop between AJR volunteers and members can be invaluable and lifelong.

Andrew sees his job as going beyond that of caring for AJR's current members and procedures. He sees his role as one of "managing change" within AJR. The Management Committee, as Andrew reported, has been actively discussing how to look after future generations, especially those who are second generation survivors or refugees. Some ways they are planning to do this are to fund education efforts that increase awareness of the Holocaust and its history.

Andrew is very proud of AJR's groundbreaking audio-visual Holocaust testimony archive, Refugee Voices, which was launched in June 2009. He notes that in creating Refugee Voices the AJR wanted to capture our members' experiences and that, "unless we acted quickly we were approaching a point when those testimonies – those witness statements – would be lost forever". In so doing he noted that the AJR had created, "an innovative resource that would enable future generations to study and learn about a part of history that has had profound consequences for how we live today."

Andrew who is married to Susie, Organiser of the AJR Day Centre, has two children and he is the proud and besotted grandfather of his 21 month old granddaughter Ella. In his spare time he loves to cheer on his football team Watford. He also enjoys travelling the world for business and pleasure.

In the future, Andrew hopes to increase the number of volunteers the AJR works with because the AJR simply "cannot exist without them." He would like to see younger people joining the AJR's force of volunteers so that there is a wide age range of AJR volunteers.

# Carol Rossen - Director



**The AJR  
"couldn't run  
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They are  
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Carol Rossen has been with the AJR since August of 1981 when she helped out at the office one day a week. Before the AJR, Carol worked for Walt Disney in London.

Ludwig Spiro, who was then Treasurer and is now President of the AJR saw in Carol the person that would be capable of bringing the AJR Head Office "into the 21st century". Carol has also been pivotal in the planning and organising of AJR's last four office moves, which have seen Head Office finally settle in our current location in Stanmore, Middlesex.

After working for two administrators and filling in for one, Carol was appointed Head of Administration and Personnel nine years ago alongside Gordon Greenfield, who was Head of Finance. They were both subsequently appointed Directors five years ago and have since been joined by Michael Newman.

Carol now deals with all staff matters and keeps the AJR members' interests at heart. She is "very proud of the staff" because they are caring and work as a team. At the end of the day, Carol feels the AJR "couldn't run without their volunteers, as they are invaluable." She also works closely with Chairman of the Trustee Board Andrew Kaufman.

At least twice a year, Carol takes about 50 members on holiday. This November she is organising a trip to Israel for ten days and then in January 2010 she will be taking members to Bournemouth for seven days.

Carol comes from an Anglo-Jewish background, which made her a unique staff member when she started at the AJR, because at the time, about 90% of the staff were from a refugee background.

In her spare time, Carol likes to dine out, play bridge, and kalooki. She also likes to travel especially to America, Israel, the Far East and Australia where her brother in law lives.

Carol is very close to her family, which consists of her husband Adrian, her son Scott, who lives in New York, daughter Sarah and son-in-law Ohad. She has three grandchildren, Maya, Ayala and Tamir, who have recently returned to the UK having lived in Israel. Carol is extremely grateful to her husband for all of the care and support he gives her. Carol is one of five children, two older sisters and two younger brothers. She is lucky to have a very close relationship with her Mother and all her family.

One of the highlights of Carol's year is the annual Tea and concert that she organises for AJR members. The first of these Teas that she held was for the 60th Anniversary of the AJR in 2001. The last Tea was attended by approximately 300 guests. The afternoon includes entertainment and a delicious tea.

Carol loves working for the AJR because she learns more about the members everyday and never ceases to be amazed by their stories.

# Yursten Cetinkaja

## A volunteer with heart and soul



*"We are like friends. She is really nice", says Yursten about her client*

"We are like friends. She is really nice", replied Yursten Cetinkaja when I first asked her about the lady she befriends. While she was describing the relationship, it became clear that she truly enjoys the visits. She has been volunteering for the AJR for three years. Whilst she was studying, she stumbled upon an advertisement about the AJR. After some research into the organisation, she contacted Carol Hart and started to befriend shortly after.

Volunteering for the AJR wasn't Yursten's first social involvement in a charity. When she left Turkey and arrived in London, 19 years ago, she worked as an au pair for an English family. Later, whilst Yursten was a waitress, she looked after an elderly lady. She used to be a caretaker in a residence for elderly people in North Finchley. In the beginning she did these jobs primarily to earn some money, but very quickly she discovered that social work gives her real pleasure.

Yursten is connected with Jewish life in different ways. She worked with Jewish people, she has Jewish friends and though she isn't Jewish herself, she has an incredible knowledge about Jewish history. This is due to her studying Sociology at university in Turkey, where she wrote her dissertation on 'Jewish Genocide'.

As the name suggests she scrutinised different reasons for the genocide, including social and emotional factors. She tried to look at the genocide from different angles and read many history books to get a wide knowledge about the topic.

Later, in London, she returned to her academic studies this time reading Psychology and Criminology. She graduated in 2009 and is now searching for employment. Yursten wants to do her Masters in Psychology and Criminology in the near future.

When I asked Yursten what she gains by volunteering, she began to talk about 'giving her pleasure', 'becoming fulfilled' as well as 'feeling empathic' and I felt that she truly loves her work as a volunteer. She explained that she wants to continue her involvement with the AJR, even if she finds a new job.

Today Yursten lives at Muswell Hill together with her husband, whom she married in 1991 and her 17 year old son.

"I'm very proud of what I am doing" is Yursten's final comment when talking about her involvement with the AJR. And the AJR is really grateful to have such a committed volunteer.

# Stephen Isaacs

## A very impressive personality and AJR volunteer



*Stephen knows how important [his] visits are*

Stephen Isaacs welcomed me enthusiastically when I visited him at the 2020 optical store in Tottenham Court Road. Born in 1941, he spent most of his younger days in Wales where he studied optics, a profession he continues to this day.

In 1967 Stephen was a volunteer in Israel and had his first exposure to Jewish culture, which has continued to fascinate him. Later he worked in Zambia for six years, before moving to London in 1974.

Stephen has no refugee background but when he attended an optical exhibition in Paris, he was shocked and disturbed to meet a German salesman, who tried to sell him glasses from people, murdered in the extermination camps.

Stephen has been volunteering for the AJR for six years. His involvement started by accident. One day he saw a little advertisement for volunteers for the AJR in a church magazine and just decided to contact Carol Hart.

Stephen was introduced to Sarah<sup>1</sup>, a 91 year old former doctor, and he feels that he has been visiting her for what “seems like 100 years”. In the beginning of his involvement Stephen had a double responsibility, because he had to visit his frail mother in Wales as well.

Over the years he established a very close relationship with Sarah, though she can be pretty challenging. And he knows how important these visits are because he is the only person Sarah has in her life.

It seems, however, that Stephen has a special affinity with befriending. He used to live near Regents Park and met there - again by accident - an elderly, Jewish woman from Salonika in Greece. Having never previously spoken about her life, she told him about her terrible experiences during the Second World War. After a few months, she agreed to have her testimony recorded. She was also, later, interviewed by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute.

Today Stephen lives in St John’s Wood and has three adult children, Marc, Tami and Sacha. He is also the proud grandfather of two grandchildren. He has a very close relationship with his family, and from time to time he is supported in befriending Sarah by his daughters.

In his spare time Stephen enjoys reading and travelling. His special interest is Jewish history and culture and this has increased over the last years. To him, however, the most important thing in his life is his family.

The AJR is very pleased to have such a responsible volunteer and we want to thank Stephen for his ongoing involvement.

<sup>1</sup>The name of the lady who Stephen befriends has been changed to protect her personal rights

# Dementia training fact sheet

## *What is dementia?*

Dementia is not a disease in itself. It is a term used to describe a group of symptoms. These include a gradual loss of memory, a decline in the ability to think and reason, and problems with communication.

These symptoms are caused by a variety of different disorders and conditions. The most common of these are Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and dementia with Lewy bodies.

It is possible to have more than one form of dementia. Older people, in particular, may have both Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

## *Who gets dementia?*

While the risk of developing dementia increases dramatically with age, the majority of older people do not develop the condition. The Alzheimer's Society believes that the majority of people in residential or nursing care are likely to have some form of dementia. It is not, however, an inevitable consequence of getting older.

Dementia is not associated with any particular race, gender or culture. People in all walks of life may be affected – university professors, doctors, scientists, artists, office and factory workers.

## *What causes dementia?*

The cause of Alzheimer's disease and most other dementias has yet to be established. Alzheimer's disease is probably caused by a combination of factors. We know more about vascular dementia, which occurs when brain cells are deprived of oxygen from an efficient blood supply. People with high blood pressure, high blood fats and diabetes are at a greater risk of developing vascular disease.

## *Incidence of dementia*

Under age 65	1 in 1,000
Age 65 to 70	1 in 50
Age 70 to 80	1 in 20
Over age 80	1 in 5

It is thought that there are over 750,000 people in the UK who have some form of dementia. Of these, 18,500 are under 65.

## *Alzheimer's disease*

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia. The German neurologist Alois Alzheimer first described Alzheimer's disease in 1907.

During the course of the disease `plaques` and `tangles` form in the structure of the brain. Researchers are unsure how or why these changes occur, but they result in the death of brain cells, particularly in the outer layers of the brain. People with Alzheimer's disease also have a shortage of chemicals called neurotransmitters in the brain: these are involved in the transmission of messages.

## *Vascular dementia*

In vascular dementia (including multi-infarct dementia), the blood supply fails and brain tissue dies. Very small strokes (infarctions) in the brain may be experienced as `dizzy spells`, and an accumulation of these small strokes can lead to dementia.



## ▶ ▶ ▶ continued from page 6

In vascular dementia, the decline is more sudden than in Alzheimer's disease, progressing in a more erratic series of `steps`. The person may experience elements of depression, mood swings or epilepsy. Some areas of the brain may be worse affected than others, depending upon the severity or concentration of the strokes. Many people who have vascular dementia have an insight into the problems they are experiencing.

### *Signs and symptoms*

Very few people with dementia will have all of the problems listed below. This is simply a guide to the kinds of problems that people with dementia and their partners, families and friends may come across.

Although the signs and symptoms of dementia are important, an individual does not suddenly become just a collection of symptoms. They respond to their dementia in their own way. Memory loss may cause extreme distress in one person, but only mild concern in another.

A person with dementia may seem:

- apathetic
- less interested in hobbies or activities
- unwilling to try new things
- unable to adapt to change
- less able to make decisions or plans
- slower to grasp complex ideas
- ready to blame others for `stealing` mislaid items
- more self-centred.

A person with dementia may also:

- be forgetful of recent events
- be repetitive in speech or actions
- be confused regarding time and place
- be neglectful of hygiene or eating
- become angry or distressed very rapidly
- see or hear things that are not there.

All of the above listed in a way that recognises the progressive nature of dementia.

### *Getting a diagnosis*

There are several reasons why it is important for people with dementia to get a proper diagnosis:

- It helps a person with dementia and their family to plan for the future.
- Once diagnosed, the person with dementia may be able to benefit from new treatments.
- Other health problems may be identified and appropriate action taken.
- Other sources of help and advice can be identified

There is no straightforward test for dementia. A diagnosis is usually made by excluding other causes. Most GPs will ask a specialist for help in carrying out a diagnosis. In many areas there are special clinics, usually known as `memory clinics`, that provide help for people with suspected dementia.

## Association of Jewish Refugees

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# The History of the AJR

## Part 1: Foundation and Wartime Years

The AJR came into existence at a meeting on 20 July 1941 attended by twenty invited people, who elected an Executive, which was complemented by the AJR's Board, a larger body consisting of distinguished members and of representatives from related organisations and from the AJR's local groups; the Board was known as 'the parliament of the AJR' and met either once or twice a year.

At the outset, the AJR saw its role as 'representing all those Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria for whom Judaism is a determining factor in their outlook on life'. In contrast to other refugee organisations, the AJR recognised the Jewishness of its members as fundamental, in the sense that it was the reason for their having been forced to emigrate in the first place. Realistic in its assessment of these refugees' attitude to their native lands, the AJR recognised that the overwhelming majority of them would not wish to return to Germany or Austria.

The AJR called for the removal of the restrictions imposed on the refugees as 'enemy aliens', which prevented them from contributing to the war effort. In the longer term, the AJR calculated that such demonstrations of loyalty to Britain would help to secure the right of the refugees to remain in Britain after the war, as permanent residents with full citizenship.

The AJR struggled to alleviate its members' situation, offering them the services of a trained social worker, legal advice hours and the broader security of knowing that they had an organisation of their own to which to turn. But it was sorely ill equipped to deal with the workload created by the stream of individual members who wrote or called with their many and varied problems, in addition to the day-to-day running of the organisation itself.

The AJR's achievements under daunting wartime conditions were nevertheless remarkable. It provided basic services for its members, in the form of assistance and advice. It established local groups in a large number of towns and cities across the country. It soon began to organize public events, the first of which was held in summer 1941, immediately after its foundation. The attendance at these meetings proved to be gratifyingly large. So many hundreds of people turned up for the AJR's public meeting on 3 September 1945 that an overflow meeting had to be held, at which a further 1,200 were present.

Planning ahead for the post-war period, the AJR set up a range of subcommittees to deal with 'special tasks', such as organisation and propaganda or public relations. Its top priority was to secure the right of its members to remain permanently in Britain and to combat any proposal to have them repatriated to their native lands after the war.

Later the AJR added a register of refugees in Britain who had relatives on the Continent, so that Jews liberated from Nazi rule could more easily locate family members in Britain. The AJR was also planning for the rebuilding of Jewish life after the war; the issue of restitution, which was to become one of the most important parts of the AJR's work, was already prominent here.

▶ Next Time: [The AJR in the Early Post-war Period](#)



**Carol Hart**  
Head of Volunteer Services

## Note about Jan Botsch

My name is Jan Botsch and I am a volunteer from Germany and will be working for the AJR for one year. After a week-long preparation seminar in Krakow and Surrey I started volunteering for the AJR in September.



I graduated with 'A'-levels in July and have been placed in the UK by the German charity ARSP (Action Reconciliation Service for Peace), an organisation committed to building peace and reconciliation between Germans and victims of Nazi-Germany. I wanted to help people in need and to learn more about Jewish history and life. So I decided to volunteer for ARSP during my gap year.

The AJR is providing different areas of work for me. On the one hand I support Carol Hart, Head of Volunteer Services,

with administrative work, including the quarterly newsletter for volunteers, a next of kin database and several volunteers' fairs at Jewish secondary schools. For the other part of my work I am gaining practical experiences at social work, when I help at the AJR day centre, at different regional group meetings or when I befriend members of the AJR.

During my stay I want to explore London and the UK as much as I can. I like sports, especially football and spend much time playing or watching it. Whilst I am here I hope to improve my language skills as well.

I am very happy with my varied tasks at the AJR and I am very grateful about the great opportunity and the big support which I am getting from all the staff at the AJR.

We're on the Web  
[www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)