



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Land of Hope and Glory? PART 2

**Britain's declaration of war on Germany in September 1939 radically altered the situation of the Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain. But, as with the pre-war period of settlement discussed in last month's article, it is not easy to arrive at a straightforward balance between the positive and negative aspects of that wartime experience.**

The initial effect of the outbreak of war on the Jewish refugees was severe. Those who had held German or Austrian nationality – though not Czech or Polish – automatically became 'enemy aliens' in the eyes of the British authorities.

The British government, not wishing to repeat the mistakes of the indiscriminate internment of 'enemy aliens' during the First World War, required all refugees to appear before tribunals, to assess the

*Continued on page 2*

### THANKING ALL

As 2017 draws to a close the AJR's latest activities have included services to commemorate Kristallnacht and two separate receptions to thank the hundreds of volunteers who give up their time each year to help AJR members.

These are covered in this issue, along with our regular blend of news, articles, culture and testimony. We also introduce a new regular feature – the debate of the month – and sadly announce the forthcoming retirement of our Consultant Editor.

We wish all our readers Chanukah Sameach.

National Memorial Chosen.....	2
Holocaust Memorial Day 2018 .....	3
A One-Boy Kindertransport.....	4
News.....	5 & 20
Letters to the Editor.....	6 & 7
Art Notes.....	8
Reviews.....	10 & 11
Another visit to Poland.....	12
Letter from Israel.....	13
Around the AJR.....	14 & 15
Parliament welcomes AJR volunteers .....	16
Looking for.....	17
Obituaries .....	18
Adverts.....	19

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This illustration is by Paul Humpoletz whose father was one of some 27,000 German, Austrian and Italian nationals interned as "enemy aliens" during WW2 in camps scattered across Britain, with the majority on the Isle of Man.

## Land of Hope and Glory? Part 2 cont.

level of security risk that they might pose. The vast majority of the Jewish refugees were placed in Category C, as 'victims of Nazi oppression' who posed no threat to Britain; they were not interned, though they became subject to certain restrictions. However, the refugees now faced the stigma of being regarded as 'Germans'; consequently, many refugees abruptly lost their jobs.

Worse was to follow. The government came under mounting pressure from the security services, the right-wing press and other groups suspicious of the refugees from Nazism, to detain the 'enemy aliens'. In May 1940, in the panic that accompanied the occupation of France and the Low Countries by the Germans, Winston Churchill, newly appointed Prime Minister, gave the notorious order to 'collar the lot'. This led to the internment of over 25,000 innocent refugees, including some 4,000 women, mostly in camps on the Isle of Man. Several thousand men were deported overseas; some were on the *Arandora Star*, which was sunk by a German submarine while bound for Canada. Others were on the *Dunera*, where the treatment of the detainees during the passage to Australia was appalling.

The inhumanity of detaining so many refugees from Germany and Austria was compounded by the inefficiency with which the measure was implemented and the incompetence with which, once under way, it was administered. Numerous accounts by interned refugees have highlighted the deficiencies in such basic necessities as food, bedding or sanitary facilities: eloquent examples are the composer Hans Gál's description of conditions at the Donaldson Hospital in Edinburgh, the classicist Paul Jacobsthal's grim picture of 'dark satanic' Warth Mills, a temporary camp in Bury, Lancashire, or the literary biographer Richard Friedenthal's memories of living under canvas at Prees Heath in Shropshire. Conditions improved once the internees reached the camps on the Isle of Man but even there the inmates suffered in cramped, confined accommodation in requisitioned boarding houses.

The physical conditions were, however, not the principal cause for complaint. What the interned refugees felt most keenly was the injustice of the measures taken against them, the infringement of their basic rights and freedoms on spurious and insubstantial grounds. As Jews who had fled from Nazi persecution, often after experiencing severe discrimination or even physical maltreatment, it was galling in the extreme for them to be detained

as potential German agents, sometimes in close proximity to German internees who were genuine Nazis. The ignorance and indifference of the British authorities, who initially failed to differentiate properly between Nazi sympathisers and Jewish refugees, arguably caused the refugees more anguish than any shortcomings in their physical conditions.

The detention of boys of sixteen, parted abruptly from their families or arrested at their schools, and of men in their sixties in poor physical condition gave the appearance of utter callousness. When the government reversed its policy of detaining refugees, following the sinking of the *Arandora Star* in July 1940, it instituted complex and unpredictable procedures for the release of those interned; lacking any semblance of logic or equity, these merely added to the psychological strain on those languishing in internment camps. The internees were released over a period covering the second half of 1940 and the early months of 1941. Internment marked the lowest point in relations between the refugees and the British.

However, once internment was past, the Second World War proved to be a key experience determining the attitudes of the refugees towards Britain. It was during the war that an abiding affection for the country and its people took root among

## National Memorial chosen

The AJR has sent congratulations to British-Ghanaian architect Sir David Adjaye and Israeli architect Ron Arad, who will jointly design Britain's new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

The winning design was announced at the end of October following an international competition which attracted almost 100 designs. The AJR was heavily involved in consultations concerning the Memorial and was part of the sub-group on testimonies.

The new Memorial will be in Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament and be mainly subterranean, while above ground it will



The National Memorial winning design

have the appearance of a series of fins. The architects' vision is "a Memorial embedded in the land" and they aim to "carefully sequence highly immersive spaces that juxtapose moments of solitary

engagement with moments of collective gathering".

The new Memorial and Learning Centre is expected to open to the public in 2022.

the Jewish refugees. The war brought the refugees a sense of pride and renewed self-worth at being able to participate alongside the British in a common cause: the war effort to defeat National Socialism. The wartime sense of solidarity reinvested the refugees with the feeling of belonging lost in their homelands and with the confidence derived from facing the hardships and suffering of war on the same terms as the rest of the population.

The first factor to make a favourable impact on the refugees was psychological: the determination of the British people from 1940 to resist Hitler at all costs. This stubborn refusal to contemplate defeat or surrender made a profound impression on the refugees. Few groups were more painfully aware than the Jews from Germany and Austria of the unbroken series of Hitler's victories, which seemed to endow him with a semblance of invincibility. Few groups were more influenced by the spirit of 1940, which punctured that aura for the first time: refugee memories of the war repeatedly invoke Churchill's speeches, the ritual of gathering round the radio to listen to the news, and the air battles of summer 1940. Winston Churchill became the living personification of the spirit of defiant resistance to Hitler. The refugees sensed the superiority of the British Prime Minister in the rhetorical duel between

the two men, when Hitler was exposed by Churchill's inspirational oratory for the shallow, ranting bully that he was.

From the summer of 1940, the refugees found themselves in the front line of a civilian population facing a sustained campaign of aerial bombardment; London was bombed nightly almost without interruption from September 1940 till May 1941. Those who experienced the Blitz in London and other cities repeatedly expressed their admiration for the behaviour of the British people, for their stolid endurance, unflustered coolness and good humour under fire. The strong sense of solidarity, the kindness and readiness to help those who were in distress or fell victim to the bombing made a particularly strong impression on the Jewish refugees, whose recent experiences as defenceless victims of state terror and public ostracism in their native lands made them especially sensitive to such qualities.

Many refugees rallied to the cause: large numbers, both men and women, contributed to the war effort by working in factories and offices, making everything from parts for tanks and aircraft to uniforms and blankets for servicemen. Others used their language skills, in the interrogation of prisoners of war or in the making of radio programmes broadcast to the Third Reich. Numerous refugees

also became involved in vital civil defence activities during the Blitz, volunteering for fire-watching or as ARP wardens. The refugees were understandably eager to join the fight against Hitler, though initially they were only permitted to serve in the lowly, non-combatant Pioneer Corps. But from 1943 refugees were admitted to almost all branches of the British forces.

Some 10,000 refugees served in the British forces, many of them seeing active combat. Sir Ken Adam, who later won an Oscar as a designer of film sets, flew Typhoon fighters in the RAF, while Sir Michael Kerr, who became a Lord Justice of Appeal, flew in Coastal Command. Colin Anson (Claus Ascher) was one of a select group of refugees who served in the elite German-speaking commando unit known as X Troop, while his future wife Alice (née Gross), who had arrived in Britain aged 14 in 1938, became a WAAF and worked in the top secret area of photographic reconnaissance. Many other refugees served proudly in units of the British army; after the war they founded their own organisation, the non-British Ex-Service Association, which had premises for many years at 3 Circus Road in St John's Wood. By its end, the war had greatly accelerated the integration of the refugees into British society.

**Anthony Grenville**

## THE POWER OF WORDS

Please join us for our service to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2018 at 2pm on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at the Belsize Square Synagogue, 51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will be officiating and we will announce the speakers in due course. Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the service.

Reflecting the theme for HMD 2018, 'The Power of Words', we will be holding a panel discussion at the shul immediately before



the commemoration. Beginning at 11.30am this workshop will feature representatives from various museums and libraries discussing the protection and preservation of documents at home. The panellists will also give advice on opportunities to digitise and donate family correspondence and memorabilia to educational and research institutions.

A light lunch will be served in between the workshop and the service at around 1pm, at a charge of £10 per person.

**To book a place at the commemoration service please email Karin Pereira [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk)**

**To book a place at the workshop please email Rosemary Peters [rosemary@ajr.org.uk](mailto:rosemary@ajr.org.uk)**

# A One-Boy Kindertransport



Tom with his grandfather



Tom with his mother



Tom today

I was born in Berlin in December 1928. I never met my father Heinrich Stoltenhoff, and was brought up in our Meyer family, my grandfather Papi, a doctor, and my granny Omi and their children, my Mum and her brothers Ernst, Uli and Klaus. And dear adored Hedwig, not Jewish, our cook and housekeeper and great friend, and always a source of sound advice, and loved by us all.

I went to a synagogue school in the Prinz Regenten Strasse; the Schul in the middle, attached to boys and girls schools either side. My family were close, but not religious. So I, the youngest, lit two lots of candles at the year's end, for Chanukah, and on our Xmas tree! That I was Jewish became ever more obvious to me, not only because of the synagogue school, but because swastika-bearing troops were marching down the Grunewald Strasse, shouting 'Heil Hitler' and singing Nazi songs. And there was other horrible evidence – yellow benches only for Jews in the park, and 'JUDE' scrawled on Papi's nameplate outside our flats, and on Jewish-owned shops.

And one day as I rounded the corner, I saw that my school was totally ablaze. Extraordinarily, the fire engines were playing their hoses not on my school but on the walls of the adjacent blocks of flats. I can

see it still. I was baffled, why not my school?

After this a family decision was taken to get me out of Germany as fast as possible, to join my Mum in London. She had earlier emigrated to set up a home where I could join her. So a children's passport was obtained, and I was taken to Berlin's Hauptbahnhof, carrying my little suitcase and joining many others waiting for a train. Many strangers were asked 'Are you going to London' and eventually a couple agreed to take me. Sadly my family and I said our goodbyes. Little did I know that I would not see many of them again.

Our route to England was a classic one: train from Berlin to the Hook of Holland, then a ferry to Harwich and train to Liverpool Street Station, where my Mum would be waiting for me. But there was a huge snag!

At the German/Dutch frontier, the Nazis had instituted a 'Stichprobe' (sample search). Some of the passengers were not allowed to continue, but were segregated and subjected to much more demanding investigation. Presently 'our' train departed; my carers and I were among those held back. Why, I wondered, what had they done? I remember that they carried cameras, and part of the Stichprobe's job was to prevent Jewish refugees from taking valuables with them; maybe that was the problem. Or there was concern about their paperwork or politics?

We were locked up while the interrogations and searching went on, extremely frightening for me, and surely

for my carers. At one point, needing to do a 'number 2', a female warder took me to a toilet, and stood there, watching me as I sat there with the door open. And suddenly I was constipated! Presently we were allowed to walk across the frontier, and we spent the night in a Dutch hotel. While all this was happening, my poor Mum met every train I could have been on. People told her of the Stichprobe, but she must have been desperately worried.

We were joyfully reunited, and she took me to the very small room she rented in Hampstead, at 28 South Hill Park NW3. What was my Mum to do with me, a nine year old refugee kid with hardly any English and she working? I joined a rather strange boarding school, 'The Caldecott Community', which provided care and education for boys and girls from broken homes, and for a few German-Jewish refugees. The Community was run entirely by ladies in a onetime stately mansion, 'The Moat', Maidstone, Kent. But the Community had to be evacuated and we ended up at Hyde House, near Wareham. There I learned English very rapidly, and presently went to Dorchester Grammar School, then was called up into the British army, then went to university to read physics.

I still have a tremendous sense of gratitude to Great Britain for saving my life, which would otherwise surely have ended in a concentration camp.

**Tom Jacobs**

# DEBATE OF THE MONTH

## ANNE FRANK TRAIN

In the context of the AJR's work to represent and support Holocaust refugees and remember their experiences for future generations, the AJR Journal is introducing a new feature whereby we will regularly invite our members and other readers to comment on topical issues that have made the headlines.



This month's issue is the recent decision by the German national rail network to name one of its new high speed trains after teenage Holocaust victim Anne Frank.



Tell us what you think by either emailing or writing to our editor ([editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)) or taking part in our special online survey by typing this address into your browser: [www.goo.gl/NXbAVj](http://www.goo.gl/NXbAVj)

## PRESSBURGER POSTSCRIPT



In the August issue of the AJR Journal we published an article on the Hollywood film producer Emeric Pressburger. Its author, Janos Fisher, recently visited Suffolk, where Pressburger is buried:

"We knew he was buried in the churchyard of a very remote village called Aspall. It has just 52 inhabitants, most of whom are involved in the local cyder making business. With the help of satnav we ended up at the top of an unmade road. A very high hedge concealed the church, but we eventually located it and its adjacent large churchyard. We looked at all the graves but could not find Pressburger's, despite asking the help of a local resident. Dejectedly we started walking towards the gate when, just by chance, I noticed it, set quite a distance away from all the other graves and partly covered by leaves. We cleaned it up as best we could, put some stones on it, and said Kaddish for him. We returned home happy!"

## KT statue wrapped up for good

Last month the AJR was delighted to support the placing of bright red coats on the iconic Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station, to help encourage Londoners to donate their old coats to those in need.



Experiential marketing agency Sense London and the charity Hands On London chose the Kindertransport statue as a hero image for the launch of the Wrap up London 2017 campaign, to help symbolize the number of coats Wrap Up London donates to refugees each winter. It was one of three iconic London statues – the other two being Sherlock Holmes at Baker Street station and Amy Winehouse at Camden Market – which featured in the launch event on 6 & 7 November.

Explaining the idea, Sense's Deputy MD Lou Garrod said: "We wanted to grab the attention of Londoners who are so often in head down mode as they travel through our city, and really get them to consider those who they probably walk past every day."

"A person's spare coat and their time not only helps to keep a person warm, it can also save their life," said Jon Meech, CEO of Hands on London.

The Chairman of the AJR-Kindertransport committee Sir Erich Reich said "This

campaign helps to signify how the underprivileged refugees and unaccompanied children need help today, just as they did in 1938/39."

In 2016, nearly 23,000 coats were donated, but in the seventh year of the annual collection the number of people living in crisis in London is sadly rising, so the need is even greater – especially when it comes to men's jackets.

Any coats donated will be passed on by Hands On London to those who need them most, including refugee charities, the homeless, the elderly and families in need.

To get involved visit [www.wrapuplondon.org.uk](http://www.wrapuplondon.org.uk)

# Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication.

## BORROWED IDENTITIES

I read with interest the bizarre tale of the Borrowed Identity (October) and the alternating joy and heartbreak as the story gradually unfolded. At the end Judith Rhodes asks for any more such examples, and I offer the following:

When I was the Rabbi for the Liberal Jewish community of Berlin, it was part of my workload to perform three or sometimes more funerals a week. I would of course talk to surviving family members to get some ideas for a Hespel, and frequently had conversations along the lines of "I understand she was 84?"; "Oh no, Rabbi, actually she was a few years older, but after the war she got new papers and made herself younger!"

One particular community was very small so every born (as opposed to converted) Jew was especially welcome. One person claimed to have been born in a DP camp and had no birth certificate, but showed me a letter from a Jewish community stating that he and his grandfather had been members in the 1950's and spoke of a Barmitzvah, so I accepted his claim. He became a member and is now chairman of a congregation. He recently told another member that he had contacts to get her any papers she wanted. Disturbed by this I contacted JTS at Arolsen and the community whose letter (on letterheads) he had shown me – and neither had any record of him!

I have come across several other cases where the cause may have been just Rechilut or slandering one another, but one will often hear tales like "She says she was in hiding in the war but actually she was a Luftwaffe Assistant" or "He says he was in Auschwitz, in a certain section, but I was there and I don't recall seeing him there." It is sad, but often one has, as a rabbi in Germany, to be very careful in whom one trusts and what one believes.  
*Rabbi Dr. Walter Rothschild*

## VISITING AUSTRIA

In your September Letters page Freddy

Berdach suspects there is still an undertone of antisemitism in Austria. He may well be right but such undertones probably exist in most European countries. Visiting Austria might well give him a lot pleasure.

My re-acquaintance with Austria began in 1946 when I was stationed in Vienna with the British occupation army. It was clear that the Austrians were suffering greatly from the effects of the war.

In 1991 the Austrian government acknowledged the people's collusion with the Nazis. Since then Austrian historians began interviewing many of us who had survived the war, and many books have been written. Some of those who interviewed me became my friends. In 2004 I visited Vienna to attend the launch of a plaque at my old school, commemorating the Jewish teacher and pupils who had to leave the school when Nazi occupation began. I now also have friends among the teachers of that school.

As the world becomes smaller, we should use this process to try and do away with narrow nationalism.

This is also why I disagree strongly with Janet Clarke and Anthony Porter when they call the EU a bloated and dysfunctional bloc and claim that Britain can thrive outside the EU. Although some ruthless big businessmen and bloated billionaires probably can.

I cannot close this letter without adding my sincere good wishes and my thanks to Howard Spier for his work in the AJR and his help with my occasional contributions.  
*Eric Sanders*

## RUDOLF KASZTNER

Through unfortunate misunderstandings my article in the October issue was published incomplete, which put the last two paragraphs out of context. To rectify the situation, I need to explain that recent criticism (that had Kasztner acted differently, or not at all, the fate of

Hungarian Jewry would have altered for the better), is totally unjust.

Young researchers sitting in comfortable university libraries reading 60-70 year old records have absolutely no understanding of the impossible situation which Hungarian Jews faced. The tragic heroism of the Warsaw uprising and of Hannah Szenes is not the prism through which to reflect on those events. If you wish to appraise yourself of a more detailed analysis of the true picture, and to have a better appreciation of the context of my article you could read my blog <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/most-misleading-book-about-the-hungarian-shoa/> You could also read Ladislaus Löb's book *Dealing with Satan* and Anna Porter's *Kasztner's Train*, or watch the DVD *Killing Kasztner* by Gaylen Ross. You may also be interested to know that Kasztner was honoured in Haifa this summer. The fact is, as I know from extensive informed research of 130 publications, that Hungarian Jewry was not only incapable of responding to news of atrocities in the camps, but even refused to listen to it.

I recently discovered that in 1945 there was an ad-hoc 'trial' by a 'people's court' of members of the Budapest Judenrat, as described in "*Co-operation or Collaboration*" by Maria Schmidt in 1989. Prof. Braham, the doyen of Hungarian Holocaust research, wrote in the introduction to the book "... the post-Holocaust generations have no moral right to judge those Jewish bodies and individuals who played a role in those trying and fatal days.

This accords with the end of my October article: Do not judge your fellow until you come to his place. (Mishna, Pirke Avot 2:4).

*Tomi Komoly*

## ROMA FATE?

I was rather bemused by the letter from Michael Hilsenrath in October's Journal; my maternal grandparents were

deported from Berlin on 19 February 1943 on the same transport as members of the Roma community. They all went into the gas chamber together and did not come out alive. Were my grandparents murdered and the people from the Roma community not?  
*Lesley Urbach, London*

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#### THANK YOU PHIL

I should like to add a little more information to your October article "Discovering Personal Family Stories" with regard to "Lilian Levy writes".

My father, Abraham Pilchick (Phil) worked as an accounts clerk for the Jewish Refugees Committee from 1936 to the early 1970s.

One evening he arrived home from work in a state of agitation. He had been asked to throw out all the records of the people who had been helped throughout the time of the Jewish Refugees Committee's existence. He said that they were a valuable historical record and should therefore be kept.

The following day he spoke to Mrs. Epstein, his superior, who told him that if he could find somewhere to store them he was welcome to take them. He subsequently persuaded someone (I do not know who) to keep them in a garage where, as Lilian Levy says, they were found.

I am proud of my father's sense of the importance of preserving historical documents through his own love of history.  
*Helene Fireman, Richmond, Surrey*

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#### REMEMBERING ANNA ESSINGER

The editing of my November article "Ulm pays tribute to Anna Essinger" was rather misleading. Firstly the headline, as the establishment of the "Anna Essinger - Leslie Baruch Brent Prize" did NOT take place in Ulm but in Berlin. Two schools in Ulm-Herrlingen (where A.E. was born) have

long been called the Anna Essinger schools, but this particular event took place in a Berlin school that only last year decided, on fusing with another school, to call itself the Anna Essinger Gemeinschaftsschule.

I was asked to talk about Anna Essinger at the school's renaming event last year, during which Prof. P. A. Albrecht - the head of the Cajewitz-Stiftung - announced the setting up of the annual prize for pupils, teachers or parents who had made an outstanding contribution to the school and community relations during the year. I was asked to give away the first three prizes at yet another festive occasion in Zehlendorf, Berlin last July, and the picture with the retiring head teacher, Frau Eva Schmolli, was taken on that occasion.

The whole point, of course, is that Anna Essinger is well remembered in Germany though forgotten in the UK.  
*Leslie Baruch Brent (Emeritus Professor)*

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When Tante Anna came to Herrlingen to start her Landschulheim, her sister Klara Weimersheimer had been running her Kinderheim there for some years. This was also on very progressive lines. It was a school for younger children and I was there from the age of 3 to 12. Schooling began at the Kinderheim and after the age of 12 we walked across the village to the Landschulheim.

After Anna had moved to Kent, Klara emigrated to Palestine and there founded her own Meshek Yeladim at Pardess Chanah.

On another matter: as Anthony Grenville writes, refugee doctors had to requalify to practise here. But, whilst in England this meant starting from scratch, it could be done in one year at Edinburgh or Glasgow (which most did). Incidentally, Italian qualifications were accepted, and a lucky few that had studied there could work here from the start.  
*Peter Block, London SE24*

#### HOWARD SPIER, FORMER AJR JOURNAL EDITOR

I refer, albeit belatedly, to your October Journal. I too wish to join the list of readers expressing their appreciation of Howard Spier whom I had never had the privilege of meeting personally.

He used to devote so much of his time to letter-writers like me, at all times showing so much interest in whatever I had to say and always making sure not to divulge any confidentiality without prior consent.

I know that he will not be forgotten by the many readers who wish him well in his retirement.  
*Mrs. Margarete Stern, London, NW3*

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#### NO POLITICS PLEASE

I usually love reading Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's Letter from Israel, but was shocked to read the political tirade in the November issue.

Usually her letters are witty and informative on Israel. It is a pleasure to read them. But we are inundated with these politics in the national and Jewish newspapers and don't need any more.  
*Thea Valman, London NW11*

#### **WHY NOT TRY AJR'S MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE?**

The AJR offers a kosher Meals on Wheels service delivered to your door once a week.

The meals are freshly cooked every week by Kosher to Go. They are then frozen prior to delivery.

The cost is £7.00 for a three-course meal (soup, main course, desert) plus a £1 delivery fee.

Our aim is to bring good food to your door without the worry of shopping or cooking.

For further details, please call  
AJR Head Office on 020 8385 3070.

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Degas' unforgettable ballerinas are now on show at the National Gallery's exhibition, *Drawn in Colour*. Degas from the Burrell Collection, which houses more than 20 of his paintings, pastels and drawings.



Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, *The Rehearsal*, about 1874  
© CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection

The romantic images of the dancers in their diaphanous skirts demonstrate their perfect poise, whether tense or flowing, in full colour. They are so dramatic you can almost hear the music to which they are dancing. Degas painstakingly placed layer upon layer of tracing paper over his images with a secret glue made especially for him, but he left the final layer unglued for maximum luminosity. His interest in the swell and flow of the dancers' movements reflects his frequent visits to the ballet school at the Paris Opera.

But the truth is revealed in his more intimate portraits of women bathing, or towelling themselves dry, which some contemporaries disdained for their intrusiveness. Their curvilinear appearance is less sensual than creative; in the twists and turns of female form he anticipates Picasso. One of my favourites is his red painting, *Combing the Hair*.

Just watch the tension on the face of the girl whose hair is being combed, and the way she places her hand on her head to lessen the pain, while the comber grips the long hair in her hand in an attempt not to hurt her.  
Until 7 May 2018

The relationship between Salvador Dali and Marcel Duchamp is designed as a conversation piece at the **Royal Academy's** exhibition **Dali-Duchamp**. The two could not have been more different: Dali the suave showman, essentially an artwork in himself, and the subtler, chess playing Duchamp, who sought and found art in everything he saw, even in chessboard moves. Duchamp rejected painting, partly because his work had been rejected by the Cubists, but also because he preferred to shock his audiences with humorous images, such as his famous urinal, or his lobster

telephone. While Dali shocked viewers with his outlandish dream paintings, Duchamp used found objects. A short video shows the two eating live creatures jumping off a plate, and a dandified Dali at a bullfight. Duchamp disliked the repetitive formalism he found in art and opted to use everyday objects, presenting them with a difference, tools which made him the father of Conceptualism. Dali briefly rejected painting in 1928 for film and photography but soon turned to surrealism and dreams. His famous *First Day of Spring*, executed with exceptional skill and nuanced irony, is a kaleidoscope of colour, objects, and people without any sense of perspective so you have to grope for shape and meanings. *Apparition of Face and Fruit*, with the face emerging from the stem of a fruit bowl, is equally challenging, evoking a frenzy of dreams and nightmares, which almost prefigure the robotic age. Dali's *Christ of St John of the Cross*, in which Jesus gazes down on the world he has just, left remains for me the most powerful Crucifixion image I have ever seen. In *Cubist Self-Portrait* a clear image of Dali's almost demonic face with his curling, questioning eyebrows cleverly emerges. There are resonances between the two artists, but also clear differences.  
Until 3 January 2018



Salvador Dalí, *Surrealist Object Functioning Symbolically – Gala's Shoe*, 1931 (1973 edition).



Marcel Duchamp, *The King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes*, 1912.

## Annely Juda Fine Art

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(off New Bond Street)  
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**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**



## A LIMMUD4DIASPORA?

The concept of a 'Limmud4Diaspora' has resulted from joint research among roughly equal numbers of Jews, Roma and Armenians (the three most persecuted minorities in Europe) into how to promote greater understanding of diaspora within their host countries.

Diasporas (the members of a people scattered over many nation states but unified by a culture derived from ancestors that were originally persecuted to the point of fleeing the ancestral home to seek asylum elsewhere) are a fact of the 21st century. Diasporas exist across borders and perhaps in future may become even more influential in a globalised world than nation states. The number of such diasporas is growing, especially recently with Yazidi and Rohingya refugees establishing diasporas in Europe, as well as the now well established Rwandan and Bosnian diasporas.

Limmud has proved a great success in the Jewish community. It began in the US in 1976 and was introduced to Britain in 1980 where it has grown from a small group of families meeting at Nottingham University each December to nearly 3000 people meeting in the Birmingham NEC Hilton, plus Day Limmudim in many cities through the year. It has also spread to many European countries and Australia.

I think it is time for Jews to introduce this inspirational kind of conference to other diasporas, starting by sharing learning with Roma and Armenians. This might eventually prove an efficient path to integration within and across communities. However I personally have no aptitude for organising big events and no talent for fundraising, so need others with these skills to come forward.

I would love to hear your readers' views on the project. Any ideas or offers of help would be most welcome. I would also be pleased to come and speak about my work and the Diaspora project with any group that invites me.

For more details please contact me on [rutheclb@gmail.com](mailto:rutheclb@gmail.com) or 020 7794 7968.

Ruth Barnett

## BIRTH

### Segal, Theodore

Marcelle and Jeff Black are delighted to announce the birth of their second grandson, Theodore Julian, born in New York on 11 October to Danielle and Ethan Segal.

## BEREAVEMENT

### Singer, Peter

On Friday 6 October after a short illness, Peter Singer aged 94. Greatly missed by his family and many friends.

## A Single Rose

by Clive Linke, New Ash Green, Kent



At our table in the dining room  
There is a single rose in a silver vase.  
I look across at my cousin,  
Now an old woman,  
And remember her as a beautiful, young girl.  
Something stabs and twists in my heart.

What have we done with our lives?  
What has happened between now and then?  
When did the thunder  
Start rolling over the hills  
And through the valleys of our lives?  
My gaze wanders over the crowds  
Eating and talking.  
I try to understand.

In this Jewish restaurant  
The old waiter leans across  
And I see the tattooed number on his wrist.  
I am reminded of the hideous past  
Which stands behind me,  
Like a spectre from the grave.

Why do my eyes turn  
To the pale pink rose in the metal vase?  
The shadows drag at me, I feel them at my throat  
Clawing me down.  
But the sun shines through the window,  
Glistening on the rose before me.

I put a flower in her hands.  
We kiss goodbye and look for a moment across the years  
Into each others' eyes.  
The years fall away and we part as we  
did so many years ago,  
Walking away under the blossoming trees  
And the petals drifting in the sunny air,  
Into the preciousness of spring.

# REVIEWS

**DER JUDE MIT DEM HAKENKREUZ**  
 By Lorenz S. Beckhardt  
 Aufbau Verlag  
 ISBN 978-3-7466-3293-2.  
 In German.

This is the first book I have read that starts with the author's circumcision but actually it is relevant to the story; the author, a professional journalist born 1961, only learned as an adult that he was Jewish and then set to work to explore both his own Judaism and his Jewish family history. In a dusty bookshop in Tel Aviv he found a book which included a photograph of his grandfather Fritz Beckhardt, a highly-decorated flying ace of World War 1, in his plane, decorated with a swastika! This then sparked off years of deep research into the previously secret family history, exploring both his own Jewish identity and that of various ancestors. The result is a fascinating sequence of interlinked biographies of his parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, the grandparents-in-law and all concerned, in the Rhineland and Hesse. He describes in a flowing and readable style the history of their careers, as shopkeepers near Wiesbaden, the rise of right-wing sentiment, the unavailing efforts of the Centralverein or the Reichsverband jüdischer Frontkämpfer (association of Jewish war veterans) to resist, and their fates.

Beckhardt, as a professional journalist, has managed to write a sober historical account. He has ploughed through the archives of the prisons and the police departments, of the Gestapo and of Buchenwald - and yet all is written with a cold, controlled anger at the appalling inhumanity and brutality of it all, at the ingratitude and hypocrisy of neighbours and fellow citizens and above all of a country which condemned his family to poverty and exile, to deportation and death. This is not just 'a' history, it is THE history of his own ancestors and what made them deny their own identity even after the war - and thus his own identity too, for it was not

until he was 18 that he even learned he was Jewish.

It is a brilliant account, not only of the political and personal developments that led to the rise of the Nazi vote but also of the way Nazi ideology crept into the general population and the effect this had on ordinary people. How about this from p.192: "From 1927 already the Centralverein issued a list with hotels and institutions hostile to Jews". In the illustrated advertisement supplements the entries increased that promised "Our village is visited only by Christian guests"... Or the kosher butcher who in 1934 was brought before the Wiesbaden court for slaughtering a bull and was told "You have placed foreign law, namely the Talmud, above German law; since this is however a first offence I sentence you to only two months jail." The binding of the family Haggadah, an heirloom passed from generation to generation until confiscated in 1940, was decorated with Hebrew letters and swastikas in gold! Hence this had been a symbol of good luck for the family....

Beckhardt describes sitting in archives and libraries, reading through newspapers, publications of both the 'Reichsvertretung jüdischer Frontkämpfer' and of the SS as well as the archived minutes of meetings of Lodges and sports clubs, wondering why those involved could not see the signs more clearly. "Der Spuk wird bald vorbei sein" (the nightmare will soon pass) was the common theme until von Hindenburg's death and the Nürenberg Laws of September 1935, when it became clear that continued integration of Jews into Germany was impossible. His father and aunt were sent on a Kindertransport to London, Sheffield and Cornwall; his grandparents managed to escape to England via Portugal but his father, despite everything still a patriot, decided afterwards to return to the old homes near Wiesbaden - and had to fight endlessly with cynical bureaucrats who aimed at ensuring that "the Jews" got as little of their property back, as little compensation, as little respect as possible. Plus the villagers still boycotted his store for decades, and complained only about their own suffering in the war.... The fates of other relatives and their murder is also brought into the

story in his own personal journey to the Judaism he did not know he had inherited. He is left with two burning questions - Why did they stay so long, and why did they go back?  
*Rabbi Walter Rothschild*

**ALBERT REUSS IN MOUSEHOLE: The Artist as a Refugee**  
 by Susan Soyinka  
 Sansom & Company  
 ISBN 978-1-911408-16-1

Albert Reuss was already a successful artist and sculptor in Vienna when the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938 forced him to flee to England and reinvent himself.

Born in 1889 into a large Jewish family Albert had a difficult childhood. He made several attempts to find a career including working for his father as a butcher, being an electrical salesman and an actor. Eventually his love of drawing prevailed and he became an artist despite no formal training and, like Hitler, failed his entrance exam for the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.

In 1916 Albert married his beloved Rosa Feinstein, who tirelessly promoted her husband's art at every opportunity and modelled for his pictures. They stayed devotedly together until her death nearly 55 years later.

He first exhibited at the avant-garde Hagenbund exhibition in 1925 focusing on new artistic currents and had one-man shows at the prestigious Würthle Gallery in 1926 and 1931. Clouds gathered as he built up a prosperous and respected artistic life. Conversion to Christianity did not save Albert and Rosa from persecution and with Quaker help they escaped as his work was branded "degenerate" art.

Most of their possessions, including a large library, musical instruments, furniture and pictures, were confiscated and sold. Mercifully a large crate of..... oil paintings and another of sculptures survived. Tragically some of his family perished.

But Albert's indomitable spirit prevailed despite the shock of internment in a

primitive Shropshire camp. Forced to start again from the beginning at over 50, he held numerous exhibitions in towns throughout England, moving to Mousehole, Cornwall in 1948 and establishing the ARRA Gallery. From 1953 he held regular one-man shows at the renowned O'Hana Gallery, London.

His style changed and became more abstract and melancholic, perhaps reflecting his distress. The couple had no offspring themselves but he described his pictures as "children." Fortunately he had patrons and supporters who provided both financial and moral support.

But he could be querulous and difficult and it proved impossible for a biography to be finished in his lifetime, although he lived to see his art accepted and come full circle in his native land. Several provincial galleries still hold works with the Newlyn Gallery, Cornwall, having a large collection of his oil paintings. His work is also in Tel Aviv, in the British Museum, and of course in Vienna.

The book is beautifully produced with colour photographs of many of Albert's pictures. Penzance author and retired educational psychologist, Susan Soyinka, also had Viennese relatives killed in the war. She became fascinated with her subject after seeing his work at a Cornish exhibition two years ago and has really got under the skin of his life and work. Her well-researched book offers insights into how past events shaped his outlook. It is dedicated to "all refugees, past and present, who have been forced to flee their homelands owing to war, conflict and persecution."  
*Janet Weston*

**FLEEING FROM THE FUEHRER:  
A Postal History of Refugees from the Nazis**  
**By Charmian Brinson and William Kaczynski**  
**The History Press (English)**  
**Verlag Philipp von Zabern (German: translated by Caterina Andreae)**  
**ISBN 10: 0750961882, ISBN 13: 978-0750961882**

This well-researched book accomplishes what postal historians strive for: a

definitive historical narrative based on excellent philatelic material. For the postal historian there are the primary sources – covers, enclosures, philately – but it is the secondary sources which give this book its 'heart'.

The authors give a masterful account of the tribulations of refugees attempting to flee the Holocaust and include well-researched vignettes of the senders and receivers, together with high-quality postal history illustrations. The research describes the situations in which refugees found themselves, from pre-war to post-war travails.

There are chapters devoted to life in internment camps in Britain, France, Asia, Africa, the West Indies and, of course, Palestine. Not infrequently a vignette concludes with the heart-wrenching sentence: "transported from there to Auschwitz where she perished".

Chapters are devoted to both the secular and religious organisations that sought to assist in the welfare of these escapees from Nazism, as well as to the post-war internment camps for displaced persons (DPs), the last of which remained in existence until 1957. There is also an excellent, eclectic chapter on undercover mail in wartime, and a moving chapter on "People who made a Difference".  
*(With thanks to Jesse I. Spector M.D.)*

#### **EXPERIENCING ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS**

**By Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg**  
**Publisher: Karnac Books**  
**ISBN 13: 978-1780491714, ISBN 10: 1780491719**

Long-standing AJR member Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg has made a distinguished career as a consultant psychoanalytic psychotherapist and for many years was vice-chair of the prestigious Tavistock Clinic. She has very great insight into the human mind and emotions, and this comes to the fore in her excellent book. In addition, a great bonus for the lay person is that her style is easily accessible, fluid and interesting, with many fascinating descriptions of (anonymous) case-studies with which she has dealt.

Throughout life we undergo many changes in our circumstances, beginnings and endings of relationships, gains and losses. This book highlights the emotional turmoil which, to a greater or lesser extent, accompanies these changes.

The author shows how all these aspects of change evoke primitive anxieties, stemming from our earliest experiences of coming into this world. The loss of what is familiar, the fear of the unknown, as well as the fear of being unable to manage on our own, remain in the depth of our psyche throughout life and are re-evoked at times of life-changing events and to some extent by any ending and beginning.

Freud stressed the importance of the "work of mourning" when someone we love and/or depend on dies, and drew attention to the fact that mourning occurs in other situations, such as losing one's country, or an ideal. Isca Salzberger-Wittenberg describes how bereavement affects young children, adolescents, young and old people. She also looks at all the ordinary endings in life such as the separation from mother when the child begins to go to nursery, leaving home to go to college, losing one's place of work at retirement, losing one's youth. She stresses how important it is to prepare and work through these and other losses for it is only if we continue to value and absorb the good aspects of the experiences we have had - rather than remain angry about what we have lost - that we are able to internalise and carry them within our heart and remain open to appreciate the preciousness of living in the present.

"Experiencing Endings and Beginnings" touched this reader deeply and explains many barely-understood emotions and reactions to life events, whether they be happy or sad.  
*Kathy Cohen*

**Have you read any books recently which you think are worthy of a review in these pages? If so please email our editorial team on [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)**

# ANOTHER VISIT TO POLAND

In September my husband and I took our grandson Max to Poland. Two years previously we had taken another of our grandchildren. We wanted to show them where my parents had spent their happy years, so full of hope and ambition. This year I was apprehensive about the visit, aware that antisemitism was on the increase as indeed in so many countries.

We visited first of all Wroclaw (Breslau, when it was in Germany). We saw the university where my father had studied, the synagogue that my parents may have attended, the beautiful square in the centre of the town and the cemetery where one of my grandfathers was buried.

We then visited the four-storey house that my grandmother Ring had owned before her deportation and death. As we stood outside trying to imagine her life there, a young woman opened the door. She spoke English, so I told her how my grandmother, my mother, aunt and uncle had once lived there, and how my grandmother was driven out in 1942 and forced to relinquish all her possessions before being deported, as so many Jews, to her death.

This lady – Joanna – became increasingly interested and invited us into her flat on the first floor. This was beyond our wildest dreams. On our previous visit we had only been able to see the house from the outside. I had an uncanny feeling as I climbed the stairs that my grandmother had trodden. We were offered tea and biscuits. Where was the anti-Semitism I had feared? There was no sign of it, quite the contrary.

We had also planned a visit to the nearby village of Osolin (Esdorf), where my father had built a house and farm and where my two brothers and I had lived as children. We told Joanna we needed an interpreter (the present owner spoke neither English nor German and we speak no Polish) and she instantly agreed to help us, and arranged for a friend of hers to drive us.



Ruth Schwiening, together with the Polish hostess who welcomed her into her home.

Once at the house we experienced an increasing warmth and growing interest by Elzbieta, the owner. She showed us round and looked at our 1929 plan and photos of the house. In my imagination the farm still belonged to us, but I was pleased it was in good hands and felt that my father would approve. I found it hard to fight back tears. It was as if my father stood there, smiling, with me in his arms, a happy young man, having realised his dreams: a loving wife, three children and his farm.

In 1936 my father was forced to sell his farm at a loss and my parents emigrated to Austria, at that time still an independent state. During *Kristallnacht* my father was arrested and taken to Dachau. My parents' dream was shattered.

I had to leave before my emotions overwhelmed me. Max, our grandson, was aware of my sadness and put his arms around me in sympathy. We said our goodbyes with hugs and in gratitude for the kindness our new Polish friends had shown. We all felt that a strong bond had developed. We are in touch with them now and Joanna has promised to visit us in England.

**Ruth Schwiening, née Auerbach**

**JOSEPH PEREIRA**  
(ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years)  
is now available for DIY repairs  
and general maintenance.  
No job too small,  
very reasonable rates.  
Please telephone 07966 887 485.

## THE WELL

by Ruth Schwiening

They are behind you. Run my child, run. Don't you hear the thump, thump, thump of their shiny black boots? So well-polished. Thud, thud, thud. Don't you see those calf-length boots? Run my child, run faster, faster. They are getting closer. Don't you see their boots? Run faster, faster.

They are getting closer and closer. Surely now you see their boots. Don't you hear the crunch of those so well-polished boots trampling on the souls of the 6 million? On the souls of "Our People"? Don't you feel their foul breath or hear their raucous laughter? Don't you hear them singing their song? "Deutschland, Deutschland". Run, run my child.

They are stretching out their iron-gloved hands. Run faster. Jump, jump my child. The voice was gentle, loving, pleading. Here is your home. Down, down. Swirling, flying, floating. The arms caught me.

My father's arms. Strong, gentle, comforting arms. Here is the well I built for us. Here we are safe. Sleep now my child. Sleep without fear. Quiet your small, beating heart. Dream that of the innocent and that of eternity.

# LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD...



A recent evening at the Leo Baeck Institute in Jerusalem left me with a bitter taste in my mouth.

The evening brought two groups of people together under the aegis of the 'Intergenerational Dialogue' programme. One group consisted of non-Jewish youngsters from Germany who have come to Israel to work as volunteers. Many of them have recently graduated from high school, some of them work with former residents of Germany and Holocaust survivors, while others are active in medical facilities or work with young children. They are enthusiastic about the path they have chosen to follow. They do their best to learn Hebrew, to support the local population, and to integrate into modern Israeli society, albeit only for the year they devote to this mission before returning to Germany. They are all here in the framework of the German organization known as Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (Ot Kapara in Hebrew; Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, or ASF in German). The organisation was founded in 1958 by the

Evangelical Church in East Germany, and prompted by the acknowledgement of guilt that Germans needed to face at the end of the Second World War.

The second group consisted of veteran Israelis who reside in and around Jerusalem, some of them former residents of Germany, others – like myself – the children of former refugees now living in Israel. Some of the members of this group were able to converse in German, but in order to enable everyone to participate the meeting was conducted in English.

The topic of the evening's meeting, very appropriately for the period of Rosh Hashana, was 'new beginnings,' and each participant was invited to speak briefly on the subject. One member declared that he had recently received a new prosthetic leg, and had decided to abandon his wheelchair and crutches and would henceforth endeavour to get around using only his sticks, and eventually nothing at all. The consensus was that that is certainly a new beginning, and a very admirable one at that.

Another person mentioned the start of every new day, with the pleasures of hearing the birds, seeing the flowers in the garden, and enjoying the little things of life. Yet another person, a lady who claimed to be ninety years old but didn't look a day over seventy, said that each new grandchild (she has seven) is a new beginning. I thought of people

I know who have twenty or thirty grandchildren and my head began to spin.

The moderator distributed a page containing the poem *Stufen (Phases)* by Herman Hesse, in the German original with Hebrew and English translations alongside. The poem seems to sum up Hesse's approach to life, accepting the inevitability of change and praising the human capacity to accept whatever comes our way. I was reminded of the account in H.G.Adler's book about Theresienstadt, where he describes the arrival of Jewish prisoners at the concentration camp, and the devastating effect this had on their psyche as, stripped of all material and psychological support, they were obliged to come to terms with their new situation. That was certainly a new beginning, but not a positive one.

The meeting ended with a long lecture about the Moslem religion given by a representative of that faith. What precisely that had to do with 'new beginnings' I failed to understand, and the account we were given tended to have worrying political overtones. Another speaker was waiting to give his account of Judaism, but it had got too late for me to remain and I was obliged to leave. I must say I was relieved to do so. I could not help but be reminded of the well-known cliché about where good intentions lead.

## COMMEMORATING KRISTALLNACHT



AJR members and guests commemorated Kristallnacht at a special service at Belsize Square Synagogue on 9 November. The service was led by Rabbi Stuart Altshuler and included a candle lighting ceremony as well as speeches by AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman, AJR member Ruth Jacobs and Ben Barkow, Director of The Wiener Library.

From L to R: Ernest Simon, David Fertig, Peter Hallgarten, Janet Weston, Ben Barkow, Gerda Svarny, Hortense Gordon, Ruth Sands

# Around the AJR

## BRIGHTON & HOVE: DESERT ISLAND DISCS

Each member chose a piece of music to which we listened, ranging from popular songs to classical pieces, as well as a luxury item to take to the island.

*Ceska Abrahams*

## CARDIFF: UJIA APPEAL

Harvey Bratt of the UJIA talked about central Israel's economic success, in contrast to the poorer northern regions bordering Syria and Lebanon. He spoke about making trips to Israel affordable for the under 26s and appealed for legacies to the UJIA to be included in members' wills.

*Stella Lightman*

## DUNDEE: DUNDEE BOTANIC GARDENS

Eight local AJR members met for tea in the

University gardens' lovely café. Thank you, Agnes, for organising this get-together on 'the other side of Scotland'.

*Flora Selwyn*

## EAST MIDLANDS: SOCIAL GET-TOGETHER

Some second generation joined our usual members for lunch and we welcomed Esther Rinkoff, who brought us information of future AJR events.

*Bob Norton*

## EDGWARE: GILBERT & SULLIVAN

Nick Dobson and friends treated us to G&S songs and others from the same era. It was lovely to join in with the ones we knew.

*Edgar H. Ring*

## ILFORD: ARMCHAIR TOUR

We watched a video of London's East End and shared our memories of former synagogues, of the Cable Street battle and of the Grand Palais, home of Yiddish theatre.

*Meta Roseneil*

## LIVERPOOL: CITY HOPPING

Michael Brown (originally Franz) entertained

approximately 40 AJR members and their guests with his lively tales about his journey through five British cities after arriving from Germany.

*Eric Cohen*

## MUSWELL HILL: FILMING OUR WORK

An informal get-together turned into an afternoon of filmed interviews of AJR members. We listened to amazing stories of members' wartime experiences which we had not heard before.

*Jackie & Jack Sheldon*

## N W LONDON: THE ARMY CHAPLAIN

Dr Rob Ginsburg spoke about his father Alec's 16 year career as a Jewish Chaplain. His first posting in 1947, to the Middle East, ended after receiving a grenade through his office window.

*David Lang*

## RADLETT: AN EXPERT GARDENER

Nick Dobson spoke about new variants of garden flowers he has developed, and illustrated it with beautiful colour photographs.

*Fritz and Elfriede Starer*

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**Child Survivors' Association-AJR**

Henri Obstfeld

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## DECEMBER GROUP EVENTS

All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. As the exact timings of these events are often subject to last minute changes we do not include them in the AJR Journal and suggest you contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

Glasgow	3 December	Pre-Chanukah lunch
Cheshire	4 December	Social get-together
Book Club	6 December	Social get-together
Ilford	6 December	Chanukah party with entertainment
Pinner	7 December	Chanukah party
Wessex	7 December	Chanukah tea, quiz and a talk by Rabbi Jesner
Harrogate/York	11 December	Social get-together
Essex	12 December	Chanukah party with Westcliff Synagogue
Liverpool	12 December	Chanukah party
Birmingham	13 December	Chanukah lunch and speaker from Anne Frank Trust
Kingston & Surrey	13 December	Chanukah party
Leeds	14 December	Chanukah party
Glasgow book club	14 December	Social get-together
Manchester	17 December	Chanukah party
Newcastle	17 December	Chanukah lunch
Brighton	18 December	Chanukah party

## EALING GROUP

Members of the Marlow group joined Ealing to relive the days of The Cosmo and Dorice restaurants. Charlotte and Tony Balzac, whose fathers were brothers, recounted their special memories of these two establishments on "the Finchley Strasse" with photos, menus and restaurant reviews.

Delicious wiener schnitzel, viennoiserie and proper fresh coffee all evoked the taste of 'home', be it Vienna, Berlin or Hungary. We were joined by Carole, the Ealing Synagogue administrator, whose mother (originally from Berlin) used to enjoy meeting friends at the Cosmo or Dorice.

The talk provoked much nostalgia amongst those who remembered both restaurants and this led to memories of other enjoyable establishments: the Green Park hotel in Bournemouth and the Rinkoff bakery in East London.

For Julie, the latest ARSP intern to arrive at the AJR, this was the perfect introduction to the welcoming warmth of our members and to the discussion that, inevitably, leads to food.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## VISIT TO THE JEWISH MUSEUM

### Spotlight on the JFS

Members recalled their time and their relatives' experiences at the Jewish Free School during a fascinating Jewish Museum visit. Former deputy head teacher David Harris gave an illustrated talk on the history of the school. We saw other museum highlights and also had a chance to peep at the Designs on Britain exhibition on its opening day. A delicious bagel lunch followed.

*Janet Weston*



## AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB



Please join us at our Card and Games Club

Monday 4th December at 1.00pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue,  
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

Open to all levels Bridge players – come and join us

We also offer card games, backgammon, scrabble. You decide.

Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient – the more the merrier

A sandwich lunch will be served upon arrival with tea, coffee and Danish pastries.

£7.00 per person

Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.

Please either call Esther Rinkoff on 07966 631 778 or email [esther@ajr.org.uk](mailto:esther@ajr.org.uk)



"These papers are a piece of family history which I will treasure forever"  
Jerry Springer

## Piece together your family history

In the 1930s and 40s, World Jewish Relief rescued tens of thousands of people from the Nazis. We have the digitised family records of those we helped. Now we want to give them back to you, for free.

Find out if we helped your family at:  
[www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives](http://www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives)  
020 8736 1250

# Parliament welcomes AJR's volunteers



John Mann MP addresses AJR volunteers at the Parliamentary reception From L to R: Michael Newman, Tony Grenville, Carol Hart, Andrew Kaufman and John Mann MP

Last month the AJR organised an event at the House of Commons for some of our 350+ volunteers, as a gesture of appreciation of their invaluable work. On 13 November approximately fifty volunteers assembled in the appropriately splendid setting of the Jubilee Room, established in the annexe of Westminster Hall in 1977 to help commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Carol Hart, the AJR's Head of Volunteer and Community Services, introduced the event by explaining that Tulip Siddiq MP - at whose invitation the event was being held - had been called away to deal with the case of her constituent, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, currently detained in an Iranian prison. John Mann MP, chair of the All-Parliamentary Group against Antisemitism, had generously offered to stand in Tulip Siddiq's place.

In his short but eloquent speech, John Mann welcomed the volunteers to the Palace of Westminster and extolled the virtues of volunteer work, a virtue of British public life that he called the life-blood of democracy.

The long-serving Consultant Editor of the AJR Journal, Tony Grenville, whose forthcoming

retirement has just been announced, then gave a brief history of the early years of the Jewish refugees from Hitler in Britain. He described the conditions in Germany in the years between 1933 and 1939 and the impact on the Jewish community of Nazi measures discriminating against and persecuting Jews. He also shared insights about the importance of the British Parliament to the Jewish refugee community, not just the changes in the British immigration policy in the 1930s, but also the changing attitudes of the British public towards Jewish immigrants and the reactions of Anglo-Jewry to events in Germany.

The principal address was given by AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman, who first thanked Tony Grenville and then took the opportunity to formally thank everyone responsible for organising or carrying out volunteering work for the AJR. "I continue to be amazed and humbled by your commitment, enthusiasm and compassion. The support you offer our members is life-changing and we at the AJR are very grateful to you all," he said.

Andrew explained that, as the AJR's first

generation members become older and frailer and their numbers decline, the level of support we offer them is increasing. Many members are now benefitting from more than one service from within the volunteers department. He highlighted in particular the computer help programme, the befriending and telephone befriending services, the dementia support services, and the 'My Voice' project. He also spoke warmly about the volunteers who sit on the AJR's grant applications committees, those who help produce an audio version of the AJR Journal each month, and those who help out at our hundreds of regional meetings and events throughout the year.

Everyone agreed that the Houses of Parliament provided a wonderful and appropriate setting for recognising the valuable work of the AJR and its volunteers. And while most of the volunteers who attended were London-based, the rest of the country is by no means forgotten. In fact a second celebration was held just a few days earlier in Manchester, when we invited all the AJR volunteers in the north of England to join us at the Jewish Film Festival's special screening of 'An Act of Defiance'.

## CLAIMING UK COMPENSATION

The UK Government continues to invite eligible victims of Nazi persecution or their heirs, to apply for compensation for any UK assets that were confiscated during WW2 and not yet returned to them.

Under the Trading with the Enemy Act 1939, the UK Government confiscated assets held in British territories owned by residents of enemy countries including the former Nazi Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Baltic States. This was designed to prevent the assets being used against the UK or its allies during the War.

In 1997 the Government agreed that these individuals, many of whom were victims of Nazi persecution, had suffered an injustice in not having their seized UK assets returned and should be compensated. The Enemy Property Payments Scheme (EPCAP) was devised to administer compensation payments.

Under the EPCAP and Baltic State Schemes nearly 1,300 claims for compensation have been received and over £23 million has been paid to 500+ claimants across the world.

The EPCAP website ([www.enemyproperty.bis.gov.uk](http://www.enemyproperty.bis.gov.uk)) has details of all UK assets that were under the control of the Custodian of Enemy Property. Persons interested in claiming should firstly check on this website to ascertain any right of ownership before contacting Janet Plumridge by email [Janette.Plumridge@beis.gov.uk](mailto:Janette.Plumridge@beis.gov.uk) or at: *EPCAP Secretariat*  
*Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy*  
*1 Victoria Street*  
*London SW1H 0ET*



# LOOKING FOR?

The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and others looking for people or for help in particular subjects. Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you can help.

## LONG-LOST FRIENDS OR RELATIVES

TV presenters Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford are preparing a new family entertainment TV show, in front of a live audience, for Channel 5. All the stories will be about real-life events and the people involved, with a regular feature on reuniting people who have lost touch with each other. Perhaps there is someone you would like to be reunited with, or you would like to thank an unsung hero who saved your life or did something extraordinary in troubled times past? If so please send a brief outline of your story by email to their producer.

*Richard@goowoomedia.com*

## NAUGARD / NOWOGARD

Piotr Mankowski from Nowogard in Poland is looking for anyone who had roots in the town when it was called Naugard, located in the former German Province of Hinterpommern. Piotr is researching the Jewish history of the town, keen to ensure it is not forgotten. As he writes 'I was told that Jews here died three times – by ordinary death, by broken matzevot and finally by oblivion. I don't want them to die a fourth time and be totally forgotten.' He can be contacted at the email below or through Lesley Urbach whose mother came from a nearby town: *lurbach@aol.com*

*Piotr Mankowski: piomank@gmail.com*

## DESCENDANTS OF KARL AND HANA EISLER

Ehud Biener is looking for information about the family of Karl Eisler who resided in Jagerndorf (Krnov) before the war, and perished with his wife Hana née Berl. Their

children, Kurt Paul and Doris Lily, managed to escape with the Kindertransport to England. Doris (married name: Barnes) had a daughter named Carol Ann Crawford. *ebiener@hotmail.com*

## WW2 CHILD REFUGEES

Rachel Mills is investigating Jewish child refugees/orphans living in England towards the end of WW2 and after. She is particularly interested in the effects of the British social climate on their lives and wellbeing and would be grateful to receive any relevant information or memoirs.

*rachym\_95@hotmail.co.uk*

## SUSI SCHINDEL

Martin Schindel is trying to find information about Susi Schindel who was born in Frankfurt/Main (Germany) on 01.02.1927. She left Frankfurt with a Kindertransport in 1939 and lived in England for a while. In 1985 she was living in Jerusalem under the name of Shoshana Heilbrun, and she informed Yad Vashem that her parents, Mendel Schindel and Dora née Weiss, had been murdered in Minsk after deportation from Frankfurt in November 1941. Martin would like to get in contact with her or any of her relatives.

*martinschindel63@gmail.com;*

## GOING GERMAN

The film company Krueger Productions is planning a new TV documentary about UK citizens who are eligible to apply for restored citizenship in Germany. It will look in detail at the historic events that have affected their families in the light of the complicated times we find ourselves in today. They would like to hear from anyone who is considering applying, or who has already applied, for restored citizenship and is prepared to share their journey and decision with the public. *juliette\_wallace2@hotmail.co.uk*

## ASSISTED BY ZBINDEN?

Luc Zbinden is searching for testimonies of children who were helped to escape from Paris to the Spanish border by his late grandfather, Paul Zbinden, between 1940 and 1944; Paul Zbinden (pictured above)



Paul Zbinden

was a pastor who lived in St-Jean-du-Gard and travelled frequently to Paris. He regularly brought back small numbers of Jewish children, smuggling them under the carriage while German soldiers searched the train, and afterwards helping them to reach unoccupied territory.

*zbindenluc@gmail.com*

## ELLA BRIGGS (née BAUMFELD)

John Bird and David Green from the University of the West of England would be grateful for any information about Ella Briggs, in particular her life in the UK from 1936 to her death in 1977. She was born in Vienna in 1880 and became the first Austrian woman architect. She practised in London and environs for much of the period from 1936 to 1977. We feel that Ella has not received the attention of scholars to match her importance as a pioneering architect, painter, photographer and interior designer.

*John.bird@uwe.ac.uk*

## DZIERŻONIÓW/REICHENBACH, SILESIA POLAND

An Israeli/Polish/German/British group are creating an exhibition and book of oral histories from individuals who lived in the above town. We have collected a number of interviews of (German) Jewish families who lived in the town before the War (although more are welcome), but are particularly interested in interviewing members of Polish Jewish families who lived in the town post-War.

*ruth.geall@gmail.com*

If you would like to place a search notice in a future issue of the AJR Journal, please email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk) including the words **SEARCH REQUEST** in the title of your email.

# OBITUARIES

## Keith Lawson

Born Berlin 17 March 1925, died London 4 October 2017

**Keith Lawson (née Kurt Sally Lazarus), 92, of Glatton, Cambridgeshire, passed away at Hinchingbrooke Hospital and is survived by his wife, Olive and his three sons: Ian, Gary and Robert.**

On 19 July 1939, aged just 14, Keith left Germany with a single suitcase on the Kindertransport and sought refuge in England. He would not see his parents again.

After becoming proficient in English and working on various farms in Suffolk and Wiltshire, Keith joined the Royal Engineers upon reaching his 18th birthday. After military training he was shipped out to Burma where he was responsible for transport and earth-moving equipment, rising to the rank of Sergeant.

Keith was released from the army in 1947 and joined the construction company Gilbert Ash, building on his army experience. Whilst at Gilbert Ash he met Olive Doreen Gill, whom he married in Ormskirk Registry Office in 1951.

As a qualified mechanical engineer, his role moved to Northamptonshire in 1956 and four years later he became a Plant Manager for Mitchell Construction in Peterborough and a

family home was built in Warmington, East Northamptonshire. Away from the work place, Keith took an active interest in local community projects and was a keen player and supporter of Oundle tennis club.

Following the collapse of Mitchells and a brief period of consultancy and running his own business, Keith joined Tarmac in 1978 and rose to be Managing Director. Keith came to be recognised as an expert in his field and had an international career with frequent business trips to Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

He retired from the construction industry in 1988. In retirement, Keith and Olive moved to Glatton and Keith kept himself highly active playing bridge, golf and bowls as well as daily visits to the gym and swimming pool.

Once retired and still fluent in German, Keith found it easier to talk about his childhood experiences and became an active member of the Association of Jewish Refugees, where he forged friendships with fellow Kindertransport survivors.

A challenging childhood, a 66 year marriage, a colourful career, an active retirement, yet the thing he most cared about was his family.

He adored his family and took great pride in the achievements of his sons, his daughters-in-law, and eight loving



grandchildren.

An intimate family service was held at Peterborough Crematorium on the morning of 13 October 2017 and was followed by a memorial service in the afternoon at the Haycock Hotel, Wansford, near Peterborough. Close to 200 people were in attendance to commemorate and celebrate Keith's extraordinary life.

The memorial service was conducted by Graham Berkman, a Lay Leader from the Peterborough Liberal Jewish Community. In lieu of flowers, the family requested charitable donations be made to the Lighthouse Club. Keith was a life member of the Lighthouse Club.

The service provided an opportunity for family, former colleagues and friends to recognise Keith's many qualities including his self-deprecating wit, charm and generosity. He was a mentor and friend to many as well as a loving husband, a brilliant father and a wonderful grandfather. He will be sorely missed.

**Ian, Gary & Robert Lawson**

## Edith Weisz

Born Vienna 12 September 1932, died Cambridge 1 March 2016

Edith's father, Dr Alexander Teich, was imprisoned after the Anschluss in 1938 but because of his friendship with several influential Christians, including James Parkes, was released from prison and came to Barley, near Cambridge, at the urging of Parkes. Shortly after that, he was interned on the Isle of Man as an enemy alien. Edith and her mother arrived in England just before the war.

At a moving memorial ceremony for Edith, who died last year, organised by her daughters Rachel and Minnie, a friend from childhood, Lisl Levett, recalled that she and Edith, together with their parents, met regularly at a venue in Cambridge organised by the Refugee Committee. Edith converted to Judaism before her marriage and later returned to Cambridge where she became a well-loved member of the Cambridge Jewish Residents' Association.

**Emma Klein**





### AJR FILM CLUB

Our next film showing will be at Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ  
 on **Monday 11 December 2017 at 12.30pm**

Lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served first.

### FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS

Starring Meryl Streep and Hugh Grant

In the 1940s, New York socialite Florence Foster Jenkins (Meryl Streep) dreams of becoming a great opera singer. Unfortunately, her ambition far exceeds her talent. The voice Florence hears in her head is beautiful, but to everyone else it is quite lousy. Her husband St. Clair goes to extreme lengths to make sure his wife never finds out how awful she truly is. When Florence announces her plans for a concert at Carnegie Hall, St. Clair soon realizes that he's facing his greatest challenge yet.

**£8.00 per person**

**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL**

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)



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### AJR ANNUAL CHANUKAH PARTY All Welcome



Thursday 14th December 2017 at North West Reform Synagogue  
 Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN  
 Cost £10.00 per person payable on the door (Places must be booked in advance)

Starts at 12.00pm Ends at 3.00pm

A welcome by The Chief Executive of AJR Michael Newman

Delicious two course lunch

A performance by magician Zap, who will perform table magic to amaze and entertain you during lunch.

After lunch we will have further entertainment by Nick Dobson and his group of singers – a selection of favourite songs to get your toes tapping and singing along to

It is essential that we know exact numbers for catering. Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

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**Jonathan Fishburn** buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

Contact Jonathan on 020 8455 9139 or 07813 803 889 for more information



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## DR GRENVILLE TO RETIRE

It is with a heavy heart that we let you know of Tony Grenville's decision to retire as Consultant Editor of the AJR Journal at the end of the year.

Having stepped into the breach when Richard Grunberger suddenly passed away, Tony's expertly-crafted articles have brought great entertainment and enlightenment to our readers for twelve years. His overviews have been at the forefront in maintaining a critical connection to our members, as is reflected in their praise (and occasional disagreement) on the letters page.

In his capacity as Consultant Editor, we have been fortunate to benefit from Tony's peerless knowledge of, and unique insights into, the world of the German Jewish émigrés. He has consistently produced masterly pieces that evoke the culture, heritage and traditions of the German-speaking Jews before, during and – especially – after the Second World War. As our historian-in-residence, he has responded to innumerable enquiries from members, journalists and researchers, cementing his unrivalled position as the foremost scholar on his subject.

Alongside these roles, Tony was a co-director of the original *Refugee Voices* testimony collection and a co-creator of our *Continental Britons* exhibition, and of *Double Exposure*, an exhibition focusing



on the Jewish refugees from Austria, among whom were his parents. As well as being the first historical study of the Jewish refugees after 1945, his book, *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970*, is our first-choice gift to speakers at our events. Tony is also Chair of the London Committee of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies (having been a founder member), for which he recently co-organised a three-day conference that the AJR supported.

Announcing Tony's decision to AJR staff, Chief Executive Michael Newman said: "I am grateful that Tony has offered to help ensure a smooth transition as our thoughts turn to how to identify his successor, but I personally shall greatly miss his expert wisdom and his kind and gentlemanly demeanour. Tony has made a unique contribution to the AJR, chronicling our history while providing commentary on current affairs and the issues that affect us. He will always have a special place at the AJR and I am sure you will join me in wishing him a long and happy retirement."

## ANY BUTTONS?



Pupils at The Lakes School in Windermere are appealing for any unwanted buttons in order to help them reach their six-million total for a Holocaust project.

Teacher Laura Oram says "With our school's connection to the 'Windermere Boys', who were liberated from concentration camps in 1945, a pupil suggested we acknowledge the victims of the Holocaust with a memorial containing six million buttons, one to represent each individual".

3,000 buttons have been collected to date - please send any buttons you can spare to Laura Oram at The Lakes School, Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 1HW (laura.oram@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk)

## MAZELTOV ALF



Congratulations to Alf Kieles who simultaneously celebrated his 90th birthday and his granddaughter's batmitzvah. Alf has been a long standing member of the AJR and regularly hosts the Radlett Group meeting in his home.

Alf Kieles with fellow AJR member Anita Grant and regional co-ordinator Esther Rinkoff (centre).

## ERRATUM

There was a notice in our November meeting advising that the AJR Annual Election meeting would take place on 6 December. In fact the meeting took place on 6 November. We apologise for this misinformation.

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