

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

What made East Brent cross?

'When history repeats itself it occurs first as tragedy, then as farce.' Thus wrote Karl Marx and, unlike many of his oracular statements, this one has been borne out by history. The 'sensational' East Brent by-election is an obvious example. One could describe the result as uniquely farcical - certainly compared to the tragic outcome of the Oxford by-election of early 1939, a few months after Munich.

What was at stake then was the direction of British foreign policy *vis-à-vis* Nazi Germany - and, sad to relate, the electors were so short-sighted that the anti-appeasement candidate, Professor Lindsay, lost. This result clearly emboldened Hitler to tear up the Munich agreement and march into Prague, which in turn made the Second World War practically inevitable.

The result at Brent was likewise a victory for the appeasers, but a retrospective one, since it occurred *after* the event, i.e. war in Iraq. The aftermath of that war is protracted and painful - a problem compounded by a split in the West. The main splitter this time round is France, which is nailing America to the rack by impeding effective UN action over crisis-torn postwar Iraq.

After the Great War the boot had been very much on the other foot - with the USA withdrawing into its isolationist shell, and making France (and, to a lesser extent, Britain) carry the heavy burden of policing the Versailles settlement.

When France, confronted by a resurgent Nazi Germany, constructed the defensive Maginot Line, it lamentably failed to safeguard its left flank because Belgium, conveniently forgetting what happened to it in 1914, had declared itself neutral. (Consequently the Maginot Line was rendered useless because it did not continue all the way to the Channel coast.)

Today, France does to America what

Belgium did to her in the 1930s - she declares herself practically equidistant from both Saddam and Bush. Likewise the voters of Brent East did what their Oxford predecessors had done in that 'mean decade'. In fact, all that time ago Oxfordians suffered from fewer delusions than the voters of Brent: they simply thought that the best way of taming a ravenous beast was by trying to humour it.



German troops march into the courtyard of Prague Castle

In Brent, two large groups of voters - the Muslims and the Left - harboured additional misconceptions. The Muslims convinced themselves that the US-UK coalition was anti-Islamic, whereas, in fact, during the 1990s Anglo-American soldiers saved literally thousands of Muslim lives in Bosnia and Kosovo. The hard-core Socialists of Brent - after all, this was once Ken Livingstone's constituency - were probably seduced by the name of the Socialist Ba'ath Party, and by the temporary left-wing stance of the Liberal Democrats.

All this is, of course, farcical in the extreme. Can the Lib Dems with leaders like Shirley Williams (who defected from Labour because of its leftward drift) position themselves on the left of the British political spectrum - as Scargillites in sheep's clothing? Of course, they can't.

But the British electorate could, in the worst-case scenario, turn farce back into

tragedy. If Brent East is not a by-election flash-in-the-pan, but heralds a turning point in British politics, we may yet see an occupant of Number Ten eager to join a Paris-Teheran axis. This is not as far-fetched as it sounds. Lib-Dem appeasement extends beyond Saddam to al-Q'aida.

At the start of military operations against the Taliban, Jenny Tonge MP received Lib Dem conference cheers for declaring 'We should drop food parcels, and not bombs on Afghanistan.' Now, the Lib Dem Party wants murderous Guantanamo Bay prisoners to be returned to their countries of origin for trial by Syrian, Sudanese or Libyan courts!

If all this comes to pass, the Americans will abandon their thankless task of acting as the world's policeman and retreat into isolationism. The net result will be, not world peace - but the war of all against all. It is a fallacy to think that the United Nations could provide effective world government. In the absence of Uncle Sam, the world policeman, every tin-pot dictator on earth - in Pyongyang, Rangoon, Harare, Damascus and Ramallah - will have a field day.

And let us remember this: if France is today's Belgium, Israel is today's Czechoslovakia. It is undoubtedly true that, as constituted in 1918, Czechoslovakia did not conform to Woodrow Wilson's precept of the 'self-determination of nations'. The secondary injustice suffered by the Sudeten Germans gave Hitler the justification for inflicting the far greater injustice on Czechoslovakia, i.e. expunging the only democracy in Central Europe. It is not too fanciful to suppose that in the absence of countervailing American power, the Occupied Territories would become tomorrow's Sudetenland and be used to erase Israel from the map of the Middle East.

The Bible, literally - or liberally - interpreted

Richard Grunberger

The issue of clerical homosexuality is currently splitting the Anglican Church, with both camps adducing arguments which are too well-known to bear repetition. Judaism's inbuilt emphasis on family cohesion has so far insulated the Anglo-Jewish community from the full force of the controversy, although Rabbi Blue has been a high-profile taboo-breaker in the public sphere.

Homophobia is a hallmark of all intolerant societies, whether they be Fascist, Communist or theocratic as in Iran and Saudi Arabia. That did not mean that prominent homosexuals were necessarily great liberals - think Frederick the Great, Captain Röhm, head of the Nazi storm troopers, or Edgar J Hoover of the FBI.

On the other hand, there is no denying the fact that so-called gays have made a totally disproportionate contribution to world culture: in art Leonardo and Michelangelo, in music Tchaikovsky and Benjamin Britten, in literature Henry James and Proust, in philosophy Wittgenstein, in drama Tennessee Williams, in poetry Auden, in cinema Visconti and Schlesinger, etc etc.

As against this, one ought to consider how many leading British personalities, especially in the cultural sphere, were 'children of the manse'. If Anglican or Presbyterian clergy had been allowed to be gay in the past, English literature might not have been enriched by the Brontë sisters, Laurence Sterne or Louis MacNeice; HM ships might not have been commanded by Horatio Nelson, the National Theatre might not have been created by Laurence Olivier; and Number Eleven Downing Street might not have been inhabited by Gordon Brown. (Notice to my inveterate critics: if this last paragraph is construed as in any way homophobic, I am quite prepared to face the music.)

Kindertransport statue commemorates pre-war arrival at Liverpool Street Station

Ronald Channing

Children of the Kindertransport who, as predominantly Jewish refugee children, travelled by train to London's Liverpool Street Station in 1938 and 1939, gathered once again at this main railway terminus to unveil a statue dedicated to perpetuating the memory of their first arrival.

Some 65 years after the event, the rescuer of several hundred Czech Kinder, Sir Nicholas Winton, now in his 94th year, unveiled a plaque expressing gratitude to the people of the United Kingdom for offering a home, thereby saving the lives of 10,000 children whose parents desperately wanted to protect them from Nazi persecution in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Two of those rescued Kinder, Harry Heber and Erich Reich, assisted Sir Nicholas in unveiling the bronze statue of a child refugee standing next to a giant transparent case containing some of the precious few items of clothing, toys, family photographs and other memorabilia which the children were permitted to bring with them.

The Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, complimented Britain on having opened its doors to the children and paid tribute to the Central British Fund (now WJR), Sir Nicholas Winton, the Quakers and many others who had organised the rescue; the statue would remain an inspiration to the children of the future. The Home Secretary, the Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, spoke of the Kindertransport as demonstrating the nation's willingness to reach out, to embrace its duty and responsibility for helping others. The founder of the Reunion of Kindertransport (now

KT-AJR), Bertha Leverton, who responded on behalf of the more than 200 Kinder present on the station forecourt, recalled her own arrival at the station as a child of 15 with no parents, no command of the English language, no home and no destination. Among the distinguished gathering, which took place under a warm autumnal sun and clear blue skies, were the ambassadors of Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Israel, and Lords Janner, Aldington and Kindertransportee Lord Dubs. In commemoration of the Kindertransport, it was announced by WJR Chairman Nigel Layton that the station forecourt would henceforth be named 'Children's Square'.

At a reception hosted by Bloomberg LP, Dr Alexander Christiani, the Austrian Ambassador, Professor Jack Lohman, Director of the Museum of London, which is to take ownership of the statue, and Flor Kent, the sculptor, were invited to address the gathering by WJR's Vice Chairman, Linda Rosenblatt. Hermann Hirschberger, the Chairman of KT-AJR (Kindertransport), summed up the mixed emotions of the participating Kinder and expressed their appreciation for the creation of this permanent monument.

The Association of Jewish Refugees was among the first generously to support the project and contributed to the organisation of the historic commemoration ceremony. The project was conceived and brought to fruition by World Jewish Relief, established in 1933 as the Central British Fund, which found sponsors and homes for the children and took the leading role in their rescue.

See photograph montage on page 16

AJR Journal

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Speak, memory!

Richard Grunberger

Only a generation ago a novel entitled *Brick Lane* - Monica Ali's entry for this year's Booker Prize - would have been about the Jewish East End. However, in the twenty-first century, with E1 'rebranded' as Bangla Town to reflect the current inhabitants, the memory of what was once Anglo-Jewry's heartland is rapidly fading. That phenomenon only lives on in folklore, or in schmaltzy artefacts like the Wolf Mankowitz-scripted film *A Kid for Two Farthings*.

I only had a fleeting acquaintance with the East End in its interwar glory days. It was a balmy Saturday evening in June 1939 and, newly arrived in London, I sauntered along the Whitechapel Road in the company of my newly adopted uncle. It seemed as if the entire local population was taking the air, promenading to and fro in animated, noisily chattering groups that overflowed the pavement. I was surprised to see hoardings covered in placards advertising Yiddish plays in big Hebrew letters; the instructions on how to activate public water hydrants in case of fire were likewise in Hebrew.

Our walk took us past several East End landmarks. One building pointed out to me mysteriously as the *shvitz* had nothing to do with *Schwyzerdütsch*: it turned out to be a Turkish bath. Another was the Jews' Temporary Shelter, where immigrants who had come ashore at the nearby London Docks received food and lodging during their first few days in the new country. The third was the 'Union', i.e. the local office of the Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union.

In those days the rag trade was the main source of employment for East Enders. (By this I mean Jewish East Enders; non-Jews worked at the Docks, Hanbury's Brewery, the Whitechapel Bell Foundry or Spitalfields Market.) There was, of course, another market - Petticoat Lane, filled with bustle, noise and colour - in which Jews participated massively on Sunday mornings.

But Whitechapel amounted to more than a place for work and business. Israel

Zangwill, an alumnus of the Jews' Free School, wrote *Children of the Ghetto*, pioneering a new literary genre, Mark Gertler's painterly skills took him from the East End to 'Bloomsbury', and Isaak Rosenberg became one of the tragically short-lived Great War poets.

Nor was scholarship neglected. When the mathematician Selig Brodetsky gained the distinction of Senior Wrangler at Cambridge the East End had a secular *yomtov*. Jewish Studies, as pursued in countless local *chedarim*, also proved their value: at the Palace of Westminster Phil Piratin, Communist MP for Stepney and a non-graduate, once countered a Latin tag quoted by a Tory member with a retort couched in Biblical Hebrew.

But the East End's real gift of tongues lay in Yiddish. I still treasure the insults thrown at me by fellow garment workers because of my slowness - *bon mots* like *Er macht un a tzimmes* (He is preparing a carrot dish on a low flame) or *As er nait geit a roich* (When he sews smoke rises). In one workplace a tailor enjoyed great respect on account of his brother's, the violinist Albert Sandler's, frequent appearance on the radio. At teabreak once, a worried-looking presser showed Sandler a slip of paper bearing the name of his wife's illness, and asked his opinion of its severity. The tailor stared at the word intently and finally commented: *Ma soll nisht heren fun solche sachen* (One shouldn't hear of such things).

Mameloshen could also be wonderfully economical. Leaving work one evening I was accosted by a caftan-clad stranger with the words *Ma bedarf a mensch* (We are short of a tenth man). Those four words implied 'We need a tenth man to make up a *minyán* to offer prayers for a recently deceased person.' Clearly, the cryptic four-word phrase carried a weight of meaning accessible only to someone raised in the same culture. With the disappearance of the Yiddish-speaking East End, that culture has been impoverished.

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Conviviality at Leeds get-together

Ronald Channing

PHOTOS: RONALD CHANNING



Prof Griselda Pollock and
Arek Hersh

Trude Silman and guests

AJR members representing groups throughout Northern England, together with their joint hosts, the Holocaust Survivors Friendship Association (HSFA), gathered at Leeds Sinai Synagogue to share a stimulating and busy day in the latest in a series of regional 'get-togethers', one which again generated much enjoyment among the participants.

A warm welcome from HSFA Chairman Trude Silman was followed by one from Ronald Channing on behalf of the AJR, and from Marcia Goodman, who heads AJR's social services. Sheila Saunders, Chief Executive of Leeds Jewish Welfare Board, discussed the continuing refugee experience, and Hilary Robinson of BBC Radio Leeds played excerpts from her radio programmes on the German-speaking refugee community, notably on Sir Nicholas Winton, the rescuer of 669 Czech Kinder.

Much of the day was filled with innovatory discussion groups in which everyone had a chance to express themselves. Topics covered: speaking in schools, conversation, seeing life through the eyes of the second generation, revisiting one's country of origin, and recalling life's experiences. Their conclusions were succinctly reported by each group's 'facilitator' to

receive the consideration of the whole audience.

The regular meetings of the group chairmen at these get-togethers allowed for a helpful interchange of experiences in the individual groups. While there was a general view that 'get-togethers' should be organised for as long as was practically possible, another view was that, with the passage of time, travelling was inevitably becoming more difficult, even with the exceptional assistance the AJR was able to offer participants. Less widespread geographical areas for get-togethers might prove preferable. Smaller conversational groups, to be known as 'Continental Friends', were being successfully piloted in the Leeds/Bradford region and would shortly be introduced in other parts of the North by the AJR's effervescent and energetic Northern Regional Organiser, Susanne Green.

A delicious salmon lunch, accompanied by klezmer music, was served. Professor Griselda Pollock was a distinguished luncheon guest who, with the close co-operation of the HSFA and the backing of the AJR, was working to expand an archive of the testimonies of Jewish refugees who settled in Yorkshire. It will join those already lodged in the Brotherton Library of the University of Leeds.

Expanding AJR's social services in the North

Ever since AJR's Northern region social worker Barbara Dresner Dorrity began working in January this year, her services have been in continual and increasing demand. Though she is based in Manchester, where she has visited many members in need of advice, help or support, she has met clients as far apart as Bangor, Liverpool, Accrington, Leeds,

Chesterfield, Gateshead and Newcastle.

This success has enabled the AJR to extend Barbara's working week, from Mondays through to Thursdays, to help her cope. She can be reached by telephone on 0161 440 9926. As she is often 'out on the road', callers are asked to leave a short message to which she will respond as quickly as possible.

Schwab Trust's first awards

Ronald Channing

In memory of her late parents, Walter and Liesel (Alice) Schwab, Rabbi Julia Neuberger made the first awards from the charitable trust she established in their names, known as the 'Young Refugee/Asylum Seeker Endeavour awards'. The recipients were schoolchildren in the multi-ethnic London borough of Hillingdon, who were nominated as having made outstanding contributions to their schools, the wider community and their own social and academic achievements.

Julia Neuberger, whose father was born to parents from Frankfurt and whose mother was a refugee from Nazi Germany, recalled her parents' passionate belief that refugees and asylum seekers brought 'talent, enthusiasm and energy' to their country of refuge. For many years Alice Schwarb was the admired arts correspondent of the AJR magazine.

The children came from war-torn countries such as Somalia, the Congo, Afghanistan and Kosovo and, in common with their predecessors on the Kindertransport, had arrived without their parents, who had often been brutally murdered.

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Return to Prague

Susan Medas

My family had to flee from Berlin at the very beginning of the Hitler regime, not only because we were Jews, but also because my father was the political editor of *Vorwärts*, the Social Democrat Party newspaper. The newspaper was banned immediately in March 1933, which caused most of its editors to leave Germany, a number of them for Prague. There they remained in the hope that the Nazi regime would not endure too long.

Unfortunately some of them, including my parents, became trapped in Czechoslovakia as they were unable to flee before the German invasion in March 1939. They would have had to appear before a Gestapo representative to obtain permission to leave but, since my father was on Hitler's wanted list, this was, of course, impossible. I remember that shortly before I left Prague on one of Sir Nicolas Winton's transports, my mother told me: 'We are going to meet your father on Wenceslas Square. He is in hiding now. You must not call him father. Please be very careful.' And so it was that I saw my dear father for the last time in dark glasses, a beard and a broad-rimmed hat to cover his features, while my mother discussed something with him.

I was ten years old when we fled to Prague and nearly 16 when I left for England. We spoke German at home as my father came from Prague and my mother from a beautiful valley in Sudetenland. My father sent me to a German school as he thought this would be easier on our return to Germany. Fortunately, it was necessary for every child to learn Czech as a first foreign language. So

for about two-and-a-half years I attended Czech lessons, went shopping, and heard and spoke this language, never realising that one day, many years later, I would return to Prague with my basic Czech, which I would then be able to re-learn with the help of my landlady, a tolerant and devoted teacher.

I returned to Prague in 1984 on discovering that one of my cousins, who had survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Belsen, was living in the Czechoslovak capital once again. Indeed, she was able to tell me about five other surviving cousins and I met them all in due course. It became increasingly difficult to leave the city after short visits to my cousin. In 1994, on a beautiful September afternoon, I walked the familiar streets once again before returning to London. I was thinking:



Prague's 16th-century Jewish Town Hall

how could I manage to *live* here, in a furnished room or some such, with the opportunity to earn just enough money to support myself?

As I reached the lovely former palaces on Mala Strana I saw a sign saying 'Language School'. That was it! I marched in knowing there was

work. I had been lucky enough to learn English as a youngster; all Czechs had to learn German first under occupation and later Russian, but they hated both equally and badly needed English in order to compete with people in the rest of Europe. So it came about that I returned to Prague in October 1994, in time for the autumn term. I was provided with accommodation in a sort of teacher hostel, even given a small salary for a 10-15-hour teaching week, and a chance to re-learn Czech with the opportunity of becoming a resident rather than a tourist.

I was eager to hear how both Jews and non-Jews had fared under communism - about the good and bad times - and how they had tried to adjust to the complete change after 1989. Even though we lived through the war in Britain, it is very hard to imagine what it is like to live under foreign occupation for 50 years. It is very humbling and I admire the spirit and courage of those who did.

So now I am 80 years old and happy to be alive. I am grateful for my years in exile and for my many friends in Great Britain, as well as in Hungary, Sweden, the United States and, particularly since my return, among members of Prague's Jewish community, mostly of my age. I am also grateful to many Czechs, who had to live under German and Soviet occupation and are now trying to make sense of their new, capitalist world.

Today's Jewish community in Prague is small but flourishing. There is a day centre in a Jewish nursing home, a kindergarten and even a Jewish school for older children. There are six synagogues, some now acting as museums. There are first-class concerts, an excellent transport system and Prague's ten centuries of marvellous architecture - and more, so you will not regret a visit.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

PATIENCE AT BREAKING POINT

Sir - In September 1938 (65 years ago) my family and I escaped across the demarcation line separating the Sudetengau from Czechoslovakia as a result of the Munich appeasement. Our town Plzen (Pilsen) is 10 km from Nyrany, where the Brunners lived for two centuries. My mother's family came from Wassersuppen (Nemanice), a hamlet near the Bavarian border but in Bohemia.

After reading recent Letters to the Editor, August and September in particular, my patience reached breaking point. The *AJR Journal* editorial should be compulsory reading for opinion-formers for its wide-ranging historical as well as current content. Would they still try to propound their propaganda with antisemitism, anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism as their main object? Their xenophobic tirades give no indication of a sense of humour (and therefore of balance), not to mention a willingness to ever accept the rational views expressed by your and other publications. That a majority of thinking individuals regard the Iraqi war as just will have strengthened their view. Would we be able to provide a list of benign academics to show the idiots that they should return to their school desks if they want to debate on equal terms?

*H Brunner
Poole, Dorset*

CONSEQUENCES OF AIR RAID

Sir - What on earth possessed you to grant houseroom in the October issue to a lapsed member - one F Goldberg from Arundel? 'I may have missed something', says F Goldberg. He certainly did for, apart from the civilian and service dead, there were many Jews who were saved from the death camps as a result of the confusion that

reigned in Dresden after the raid on the city.

*Ernest G Kolman
Greenford, Middx*

NORTH OF WATFORD

Sir - I am intrigued as to why a correspondent living in Elstree (September issue) should recommend that the AJR's AGM should be held at various locations in the country and not where the largest number of members live, which presumably is London.

The purpose of an AGM is to give the executive the opportunity to inform members of significant events in the past year, and to explain future plans to improve the organisation for the benefit of its members. It is also customary to seek approval of the accounts and to highlight any extraordinary items of income or expenditure.

All this information is necessary to consider if management is doing a proper job and, at the end, in simple terms, a vote to continue will express approval or rejection.

The fact that this year's AGM was the shortest ever and was held away from where the majority of members live may be in line with current spin, but is perhaps not as democratic and open as it should be. Of course, it is true to say that the majority of AJR members are old and not really interested any more.

*HE Reiner
London NW7*

DEV DEFAMED

Sir - You state (July issue) that de Valera had Michael Collins murdered, a charge unsubstantiated at best and probably defamatory. It has gained currency in this country from a film about Collins made by Neil Jordan. Jordan's new-wave Irishman is perhaps an atheist but certainly an anti-cleric who takes his dislike against the

dominating church of his youth to the extent of fighting against all the features of the then Irish Free State. And if that means calumniating de Valera, so be it.

*F Steiner
Banbury, Oxfordshire*

1936, 1956 AND 2003

Sir - I take this opportunity to refer to the October issue of *AJR Journal* with reference to Mr F Goldberg's letter. I felt like responding to it and I am very pleased that Mr Grunberger did so. This gentleman with his Jewish background ought to have realised Saddam's very likely intention to eventually use his missiles against Israel. To prevent any such action and further murders by this brute, it was in my opinion necessary to eliminate him. It should have been done already in 1991. I base myself on the failure of Britain and France in not having acted when Hitler marched into the Rhineland in 1936. At that moment we could have smashed his regime as the Wehrmacht had opposed Hitler's action. This would have saved millions of lives and no Holocaust.

There is the parallel with Saddam and I was pleased to read in a recent biography of Anthony Eden that he indeed had this in mind in opposing Nasser at Suez. America stopped us, but Foster Dulles later stated this was the greatest mistake of his life. The present 'Iraqivitis' here and in the USA is therefore quite pointless.

Also for an additional reason, and again we can go back to events in Germany. After the Great War the Allies sent inspectors to discover whether rearmament was taking place there. They spent quite a time in Germany with zero success, because the activity had taken place in Soviet Russia. So perhaps we should have a good look round in the Syria of Assad, Saddam's friend. Furthermore, both Schröder and Chirac, an opportunist and an alleged crook, should realise that the Coalition acted in the very interest of the West.

*EA Kaufman
Harrow, Middx*

POLYGLOT

Sir - I recently came across the following, which may raise a smile with some of your readers. A well-known American newspaper asked its readers to suggest

alternative meanings to everyday words. One of the words was 'oyster', the new definition of which was 'A person who liberally sprinkles his conversation with Jewish expressions.'

Frank Reichmann
Finstock, Oxon

CONTRA BRAUNER

Sir - I was surprised to read in your letters column (September) that someone actually studies Jane's Surveys! It must be fascinating to know whose weapons are killing which people. Mr Brauner's research doesn't alter the fact that chemical weapons of mass destruction which Saddam used on his own people were supplied by the US (Rumsfeld) and the UK's chemical warfare centre at Porton Down welcomed Iraqi scientists with open arms. A little more research would have reminded Mr Brauner that France also supplied Israel with the means to build its nuclear reactor/atomic weapons at Dimonah and, if France hadn't supplied fighter planes after the US had refused to do so, Israel would probably not exist today.

Jon Rumney
London N20

CORRECTION

Sir - The photographic exhibition of personal objects carried in suitcases by Kindertransportee children did not open in the former Terezin concentration camp in the Czech Republic but in the former Terezin ghetto. Terezin, or Theresienstadt, did have a small KZ, the Kleine Festung, malá pevnost or small fortress, but the town to which 139,000 Jews were sent from the Czech lands, Germany, Austria and Holland, and from which 87,000 were sent on to death camps in the East, of whom 3,097 survived, was a ghetto - a hell of a difference.

Frank Bright
Ipswich, Suffolk

BOUQUET

Sir - Thank you for 'The BBC, PC and the PM' (September issue). It wanted saying, and it was said well.

Otto Fischel
London N3

Sir - To all the staff who helped to organise the afternoon tea. My

husband, myself and friends would like to thank you sincerely for the wonderful tea and concert you organised. We had a most enjoyable afternoon and it was so well organised. Looking forward to the next one.

Mrs S Arnold
Bushey Heath, Herts

KINDERTRANSPORT CO-OPERATION

Sir - Five years ago World Jewish Relief commissioned *Für Das Kind*, the sculpture to commemorate the Kindertransport, which Sir Nicholas Winton, together with AJR members Erich Reich and Harry Heber, unveiled at Liverpool Street Station on 16 September. We were also delighted to announce that the station piazza on which the statue stands has now been named Children's Square. The ceremony was truly a dignified and memorable occasion.

The statue now stands as a national landmark, serving both as a permanent reminder of the events which took place 65 years ago and as a message of tolerance, compassion and humanity for future generations. We urge everyone to visit it with their friends and family.

As we all have a responsibility to ensure that the message from this piece of history reaches a wider audience, World Jewish Relief, in consultation with the Museum of London, the AJR and other interested organisations, is planning an annual Kinder Day, details of which will be announced in due course.

We would like to thank the Association of Jewish Refugees for its generous support and for its help in making the arrangements in the months leading up to the unveiling ceremony. We also offer our gratitude to Bertha Leverton, who spoke on behalf of the Kinder, and to Hermann Hirschberger, the Chairman of KT-AJR, for their participation on the day. We are indeed very proud of *Für Das Kind* and all that it stands for.

Linda Rosenblatt
Vice Chairman, World Jewish Relief

Copies of the commemorative programme for the event may be obtained from Laura Kaye at WJR offices, tel 020 7691 1776 and email lk@wjr.org.uk.

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The Victorians specialised in narrative paintings worth a thousand words. Through his prodigious musicals it is easy to sense Andrew Lloyd Webber's natural attraction to the romantic, the proscribed, the tragic and the florid. The tales, in other words, of Gothic tragedy, doomed love, the celebration of a moment in time. Now the popular composer has revealed his artistic provenance to the nation: **Pre-Raphaelite and Other Masters: The Andrew Lloyd Webber Collection** is on show at the **Royal Academy** until 12 December. Lloyd Webber clearly favours British nineteenth-century works in this celebration of fantasy and female beauty, while venturing gingerly into the early twentieth century with a **Picasso** and a **Stanley Spencer** or two.



A Vision of Flammitta, 1878
Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Most of the works shown, by artists like **Sir John Everett Millais**, **William Morris**, **Dante Gabriel Rossetti**, **Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones**, **John William Waterhouse**, **Sir Stanley Spencer** and **James Jacques Joseph Tissot**, have never been seen in public since they entered his collection.

The Pre-Raphaelites were a revivalist group seeking inspiration from the art preceding the High Renaissance, a form they considered spiritually purer. They used biblical and literary references to generate powerful, if somewhat stylised, emotion.

Everything here seemed so red - carmine, russet, mahogany! But those generous, pouting ruby lips of a Rossetti or Burne Jones, the classical Greek noses, the romantic longing for a near-impossible perfection - are all telling the same story.

Shakespeare's 'pangs of despised love' are palpable wherever you look; the subject, though always sensuous, is also doomed, whether it is the burial of a bride - her dress brilliant red, her face ashen - or Romeo and Juliet. The fair Ophelia makes several appearances, mainly floating to her death, where she is joined by the Lady of Shallot, also drifting away in her doomed boat. What is it with women and water? At least **Millais's** unforgettable *Cinderella* comes off best! But this art form feels very derivative, at best recalling the sensitivity of a **Leonardo da Vinci**, as **Burne-Jones's** work does, after he rejects **Rossetti's** dreamy medievalism for a neo-classical style, with its dramatic handling of light and shade.

Recommended: **Millais's** *The Proscribed Royalist*, in which a terrified Puritan girl conceals her Royalist lover (again a theme guaranteed to move Lloyd Webber); **Tissot's** *The Orphan*, in which a young woman and a child in black approach the reedy river - water again; and anything by **Stanley Spencer**, whose robust spirituality puts all the romance into perspective. I found **Luke Fildes's** *Village Wedding* outstanding for its emotional integrity. Here is a vivid portrait of village faces at the wedding procession, from the bitter-sweet empathy of an old woman, to the curiosity of a young girl, and the disarming modesty of the bridal couple themselves.

At last a chance to view the **Ben Uri** permanent collection. Here at Boundary Road are the old classics, like **Simeon Solomon** and **Solomon J Solomon**, the stylised rabbinic themes of **Emmanuel Levy** or **David Bomberg**, the darkly powerful **Jacob Kramer**, now joined by the new abstract artist, **David Breuer-Weil**. But hurry - only a few days left.

RG's INTERFACE

Vienna The *Entartete Musik* exhibition highlights the enormous Jewish contribution to Austrian music. In 1928 *White Horse Inn* composer Ralph Benatzky wrote: 'Of the leading operetta composers - Oskar Straus, Emmerich Kalman, Leo Fall, Edmund Eysler ... only Lehar and I are Christians. Of the librettists there are none that I know.' Jews also formed a huge proportion of the music-loving public. At the Ring-Theater Fire of 1881 nearly half of the 900 opera-goers who died were Jewish.

Berlin The reputed film director Margarethe von Trotta has just completed *Rosenstrasse*, which depicts a unique incident in the history of Nazi Germany. In 1943, when the authorities ordered the deportation of Jewish factory workers living in mixed marriages, their wives courageously staged a demonstration and got the order rescinded.

Stuttgart Klett Lotta have published Holger Gumprecht's *Literarische Spaziergänge durch das Heilige Land*. This features the reactions to Israel of émigré writers like Arnold Zweig, Leo Perutz and Max Brod, as well as sabras like Amos Oz and Abraham B. Jehoshua.

Tel Aviv The renowned Museum of the Diaspora has announced its temporary closure because of a crippling shortage of funds.

Frankfurt The Jewish Museum is exhibiting the literary memorabilia - manuscripts, lithographs, portraits - collected by the critic and TV personality Marcel Reich-Ranicki during half a century.

Centenaries (i) Theodor Adorno was an influential philosopher and musicologist. In the former capacity he had a controversial relationship with the 'generation of 68'; in the latter he assisted Thomas Mann's labours on *Doktor Faustus*. (ii) Bruno Bettelheim was a psychologist whose work focused on children. Though highly regarded in his lifetime, his reputation has suffered a drastic eclipse since his suicide in 1990.

The price of disruption and dispersal

A CHILD OF OUR TIME: A YOUNG GIRL'S FLIGHT FROM THE HOLOCAUST

Ruth David

IB Tauris 2003, £17.95

By and large, there are fewer memoirs by former Kindertransport children than by survivors of concentration camps. This is partly due to the notion that, as we were spared the hell of the camps, we didn't suffer. The camp survivors' searing tales usually begin with an idealised picture of an extended family through to the experience of ghettoisation and deportation. One cannot but admire the heroic courage and fortitude of the writers. What is not always appreciated is that our experience also required courage of a different kind: to endure, at a tender age, growing up in an alien country, separated from the mother whose fate was a daily cause of anxiety, and news of whose death, in many cases, confirmed our worst fears.

Due to the two marriages of her father, Moritz Oppenheimer, Ruth David was brought up in a family of seven children. Her father owned a factory and considered himself a loyal German citizen. In the village of Fränkisch-Krunbach where they lived, the Oppenheimers were well-established and respected until the Nazis came to power. Then they were suddenly cold-shouldered by the neighbours, and a bus taking Ruth and other Jewish children to school was viciously attacked by one of these. Ironically, years later, on a return visit to her home-town, the same neighbour's son insisted on taking her to see his father. The father denied knowing her! Back in 1939 the gradually-turning screw of Nazi persecution persuaded her parents to send her to England on the Kindertransport.

Ruth was 'dispatched' to a hostel in the North of England ruled by two tyrannical Austrian Jewish women. Their task of caring for so many vulnerable children had been foisted on them, and they took their

REVIEWS

displeasure out on some of their charges. Teachers and local friends were kind but, like myself, Ruth was unable to discuss her German past and her feelings of loss with them. They, in their turn, were either too tactful or too incurious to raise the subject with her. Only at night were inhibitions loosened a little, as the hostel girls wept quietly into their pillows.

As an educated woman looking back on her childhood and adolescence, the author brings a historical perspective and understanding of the complex emotions of those times to her narrative. She turns out to have been relatively lucky in that all her siblings survived, though her parents did not. Nevertheless, the events that took us all from our homes exacted a severe price on her, as on all of us, in disruption and dispersal.

Martha Blend

Learning the lessons

SURVIVAL: HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS TELL THEIR STORY

edited by Wendy Whitworth

Quill Press in association with the Aegis Institute, 2003

Few peoples have left such copious testimonies as Holocaust survivors, Sir Martin Gilbert points out in his foreword to this book. Despite this, he continues, there exist today no more than 4,000-5,000 Holocaust memoirs in all, including privately printed ones. Put differently, no more than 5 per cent of survivors have published their memoirs in book form. It is here that Beth Shalom is making such a signal contribution to Holocaust literature. This 427-page paperback collection could not have come into existence without the help and guidance of the Smith family, the founders of Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre, and in particular without the dedication of Marina Smith.

The volume contains 46 testimonies - 'the largest chapter of their lives

[condensed] into just a short chapter for this book', as Marina Smith puts it in her introduction. Martha Blend, John Chillag, Nicole David, Kitty Hart-Moxon, Freddie Knoller, Trude Levi, Bob Norton, Vera Schaufield and Lisa Vincent are just a few of those whose stories are represented here.

As may be envisaged, the testimonies tell of concentration and extermination camps, death marches, ghettos, resistance, hidden children, refugees and Kindertransportees.

Throughout, the emphasis in the book, as indeed it is at Beth Shalom, is on its educational purpose. The book contains notes for teachers, a very useful index, many fine photographs, and highly expressive poems and drawings, all reproduced in an understated way which requires no elaboration.

In a sense, it is difficult to know what to add about a volume whose aim is so self-evident. How does one comment on the lives of those who as children experienced what we can barely imagine?

Like Beth Shalom, and other institutions which memorialise the Holocaust, both in this country and elsewhere, this book will stand as a monument. One can only hope that lessons will be learned. Can we really be so optimistic?

Howard Spier

Two swan songs

FREUD'S ALPHABET

Jonathan Tel

Scribner, £10.99

KAFKA'S LAST LOVE

Kathi Diamant

Secker & Warburg, £16.99

These books focus on the last days of perhaps the two greatest Jews of our time. Both are about last love: one of that of an aged man, the other of that of a man in early middle age. Other parallels suggest themselves. Freud influenced the work of Franz Kafka, whose literary output in turn intrigued Freud. Both were victims of the worst of latter-day diseases: Freud of cancer (of the jaw), Kafka of TB.

Jonathan Tel's book is smoothly

written, idiosyncratic in its use of the alphabet, which the reader need not take too seriously, and short at 177 pages. At the centre of Freud's last love, namely London, is the reconstruction of his glory days in Vienna - the study with its 'psychoanalytical couch' in Maresfield Gardens, Hampstead. From there he conducts his affair by exploring, as best he can - often only in his mind but also still physically - London, that genuine physical example of Europe's history, which he compares with Paris, the cradle of his fame, and Vienna, the acme.

He even still analyses the odd (no pun intended) patient, but many of his last days are spent with his faithful friend and biographer Dr Ernest Jones, who acts practically as a nurse to the dying giant. In effect, Jones does in the end help to ease Freud's passage from life.

Though Kathi Diamant's 344-page epic on Kafka is a biography, it is so well written that it is a better read than many a novel. It includes a slight oddity in that Dora, Franz's last lover, has the same surname as the author. Yet they are not related.

The 25-year-old Dora D and the ailing Franz K met at a German Baltic seaside resort. They fell in love instantly and went together on an odyssey dictated by Kafka's intermittent stays in hospitals or clinics in Berlin, Vienna and Prague. They also spent short periods living as husband and wife.

All the time he worked obsessively on his great works, which he called 'mere scribbles' and wished to be destroyed after his death. In fact, Dora burnt some of his writings before his eyes. She nursed him until the end, which she gently expedited, but then she - rightly - broke her promise, and assisted Max Brod in preserving his estate for mankind.

They were odd partners for such a close relationship since Dora came from an ultra-orthodox *shtetl* background and retained a life-long love for the Yiddish language. After Kafka's death, she embarked on an odyssey of her own. She married a German communist and they

migrated to Russia. He was sent to the *Gulag*; she and her daughter Marianne escaped, and eventually lived in England. Dora died aged 54 and is buried in an East Ham cemetery. Both books are highly recommended.

John Rossall

Hoisted Sayle

OVERTAKEN

Alexei Sayle

Sceptre, £12.99

In literature, versatility is the name of the game, viz the ex-merchant seaman Josef Conrad and the ex-policeman George Orwell. The author of *Overtaken* is an ex-actor. Acting is notorious for disposing its practitioners towards politics - think Ronald Reagan, think Mel Gibson, think Glenda Jackson, who once bared her breasts, and now bares her teeth to spit venom at her party leader.

For a time the comic actor Alexei Sayle seemed inclined to go the same way. He directed his venom at America plus Israel for the psychologically interesting reason that he is a Jew (by matrilineal descent). His father, a scouse trade unionist, met his Lithuanian-born mother in the Communist Party. Young Alexei grew up in a CP-saturated atmosphere where, when his classmates mentioned holiday excursions to Blackpool, he would talk about *Lidice*. (Not that he learned much about that atrocity; relating the schooldays incident in a current interview, he doesn't even refer to Heydrich.)

Despite - or because of - this ignorance, he writes a guest column in *The Independent*. However, he has not been seduced into politics as a career option and, disenchanted with stand-up comedy, has recently opted for literature. After two collections of short stories he has now published his first novel, *Overtaken*. Its hero, Kelvin, is a 30-ish builder and property developer - which may seem out of character for an author with Sayle's radical-left convictions.

However, he sugars the pill by giving readers with an appetite for facts information about motorway construction, building materials etc, of which they might have been unaware. Kelvin has a tightly knit band of chums with whom he indulges in what might be described as stylish culture-vulturing: walking holidays, trips to art galleries and visits to bookshops where TV chefs autograph their new recipe books. This kind of idyll ends precipitately with an act of unexpected mayhem, which will have readers reaching for their valerian drops. Hereafter, *Overtaken* changes gear and transmutes into a mellow, sub-Dostoyevskian mode.

On this evidence, the always larger-than-life Sayle is a split personality: half literary Dr Jekyll, and half Americaphobe, Israel-baiting Hyde.

Richard Grunberger

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PROFILE

Howard Spier

Fred Barschak

A dash of eccentricity in the air?



HQ of the British Salvation Army in Austria.

Fred has an early memory of two SS-men paying a visit to his parents' restaurant. 'What can I do for you?', his father politely enquired, no doubt fearing the worst. In fact, the men asked what was on the menu and then sat themselves down to a typical kosher meal. Later it became apparent that they had been scouting around the city in search of buildings suitable for confiscation by the Nazi Party. While admitting he has no conclusive proof, Fred is convinced one of these SS-men was Adolf Eichmann.

Fred gave his first public concert as a violinist at the tender age of seven, just two days before the Anschluss.

Fred was one of 50 Kindertransportee children sent to Hull. He is scathing about UK Jewry's response to the Kindertransportees: 'This was certainly not Anglo-Jewry's finest hour', he declares passionately. Fred turned out to be luckier than many of the children, staying with a caring Jewish family. The family was reluctant to adopt him, concerned that he should remain in contact with his family in Vienna.

At the age of ten, Fred won a

scholarship to a local public school. Lack of money was to plague him here, as in later life. He was unable to continue either his studies or his violin lessons: there were few, if any, competent violin teachers in Hull, while nearby Leeds, which had a considerably larger number of competent teachers, was at that time an expensive day's outing away.

Having served as a sergeant in His Majesty's Air Force for two years, Fred entered Queen's College Oxford, where he took a law degree, intent on a career at the Bar. But he gave up, again faced by money problems. He moved to London, took a job as a property consultant, then started up on his own. 'I took to property like a duck to water', he reflects.

In 1970 Fred resumed playing the violin after discovering that his Vienna teacher had been living in London all these years.

In the mid-1980s Fred felt a keen disappointment in Anglo-Jewry once again when only 60 people turned up at the unveiling in London's Hyde Park of a memorial to the Holocaust. In 1988, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss, Fred, a member of the Board of Deputies' Yad Vashem Committee, took several months off work to organise an exhibition on Hitler's annexation of Austria. In 1993, worried by the activities of Holocaust-denier David Irving, he organised a lecture by Alan Bullock on Hitler and the Holocaust which was attended by 1,000 people. In 1994 he played a prominent role in a BBC TV documentary entitled 'Blueprint of Genocide', again exposing Irving's antisemitism. In the following year, the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, he was a member of the Yad Vashem Committee which brought one of the leading Soviet liberators of the Nazi death camps over to England.

Nowadays, Fred devotes himself almost full-time to his property business. He has wound down his involvement in Jewish communal life: he is by his own definition 'not a committee man.'

Thirty-six-year-old Aaron Barschak left more than a little egg on the face of the police this June when, dressed in something resembling the attire of al-Q'aida chief Osama bin Laden, he got himself into a 21st birthday party thrown by Prince William at Windsor Castle and proceeded to plant kisses on the astounded prince's cheeks. Aaron had little need to gatecrash: he was kindly escorted to the party by one policeman after another, in the most embarrassing royal security crisis in years.

The incident, despite causing much amusement to the nation, was of course a source of concern to Aaron's 72-year-old father Fred, who assured reporters that his son was harmless and was merely seeking publicity for his comedy act. Aaron, he told the media, was a professional stand-up comedian who had probably wanted to make the headlines before his scheduled appearance at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Fred admired his son's courage and humour - if not his judgement.

Fred too, it must be said in all honesty, is no shrinking violet. A property developer, virtuoso violinist and law graduate from Oxford rolled into one, he is a colourful personality who gives the impression of considerable pent-up energy, pacing the room with a driven restlessness, reacting to frequent calls on his mobile with snap judgements, and making appointments on the hoof. There is more than a dash of eccentricity here.

Fred's Jewish roots run deep. His father was born in Tarnopol, his mother in Chernovicz. His father was a leader of the religious Zionist Mizrachi movement - not, Fred adds scornfully, to be confused with *today's* movement, which he sees as part of a religious establishment that has been hijacked by the right. His parents ran a successful kosher restaurant-cum-hotel in Vienna's Jewish district. The restaurant also served as an informal meeting place and information-exchange centre for ex-Polish Jews. The building still stands - it's now the

INSIDE the AJR

Weald of Kent group formed

Meeting in the home of Mr and Mrs Max Dickson, 18 of us formed a new group. It was lovely to meet so many AJR members and most interesting to hear a brief outline of everybody's history. Our hosts provided a lovely tea and we thank them for their hospitality. *Inge Ball*

Next meeting: Wednesday 12 November

SW Midlands enjoy each other's company as the wine flows

On a beautiful autumnal day we gathered at the home of Richard and Wendy Newton in English Bicknor in the Forest of Dean. They had laid on a magnificent three-course lunch to the strains of Israeli music and, with the wine flowing, we thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. *Ruth Jackson*

Next meeting: Sunday 7 December in Pershore

A relaxed afternoon in Harrogate

Having discussed the 9 September Leeds get-together, which we judged a great success, we spent a relaxed afternoon together. One member, who had recently been involved with the Leeds International Piano Competition, entertained us with some of his interesting experiences. *Inge Little*

Next meeting: Wednesday 19 November, 2 pm at 1 Masham Close, Harrogate

Essex couple overwhelmed by Frankfurt welcome

Having accepted an invitation from the city of Frankfurt to pay a visit to their hometown, Frieda and Sidney Graham were among a group of former citizens who found a new world and a new generation awaiting them. They were overwhelmed by the warmth with which

everyone greeted them, the beautiful hotel in which they were given accommodation, and the wonderful day trips they were offered. *Julie Franks*

Next meeting: Tuesday 11 November, 11.0 am. Bettine Le Beau: 'Happiness is an attitude of mind'

Brighton & Hove Sarid: from Berlin to Brighton

In a discussion of how we came to be where we are today - that is, living on the South coast - the usual starting points were Berlin, Breslau, Bratislava, Vienna and the like, with intermediate stays in north-west London. However, there were other places en route: the North Riding of Yorkshire, the West Country and Manchester, to name but a few.

Next meeting: Monday 17 November, 10.45 am. Members of the writing group will share their thoughts

DIY at North London

Our latest meeting was essentially a 'DIY' occasion - and all the more interesting for that. Some 20 members told of their recollections of the day war broke out. Somehow, bearing in mind the unveiling of the Kinder statue at Liverpool Street Station, it seemed a particularly fitting time.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: Thursday 27 November, 10.30 am. *Jews Are Not Cats*, a play written and performed by members of the Shalvata Drama Group

Isle of Wight-Bournemouth link-up

Myrna Glass's efforts to establish contact between Bournemouth and Isle of Wight AJR members did materialise! Not only that, but when Herta and Walter Kammerling met Pauline Worner in Cowes, and John and Erica Prean in Ryde, there was an instant rapport. Herta, Walter and John all hailed from Vienna and had been members of Young Austria, which made for a lively evening of reminiscences. *Erica Prean*

Next meeting: Wessex, Wednesday 3 December. A film on Beth Shalom

Foot-tapping in Cambridge

Fourteen members met in Sarah Fabian-Baddiel's home for an enjoyable foot-tapping session listening to an illustrated talk by Alf Keiles on the 'widely interpreted' Jewish contribution to Jazz. This was followed by delicious refreshments during which we admired Sarah's lovely garden with its unique Victorian fireplace. In the winter session, we will be holding morning meetings.

Francis Deutsch

Next meeting: Thursday 6 November, 11 am

South London talk on life in an internment camp

We heard a most interesting talk by AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro on life in an internment camp. At the outbreak of the war many refugees had to go to internment camps; some were sent by ship to Australia and Canada. Ludwig was in the Ochen camp on the Isle of Man until 1941. He told us about life in the camp, the various important jobs he held, and how other internees passed the time. *Anne Poloway*

Next meeting: Thursday 13 November. Prof Jo Wolff on 'The rights of the underprivileged'. This will also be the ninth birthday of the South London group

West Midlands enjoy informal meeting

Eighteen of us attended this meeting at the home of Corinne and Paul Oppenheimer for 'Tea and Cake'. We enjoyed the opportunity to sit and natter in very congenial surroundings. We had a raffle including a bottle of champagne Corinne had been given and raised £45, of which £25 went to a children's charity and the rest to our group. *Henny Rednall*

Next meeting: Sunday 16 November, 2.30 pm at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue to watch Israeli films. Please phone Henny Rednall on 0121 373 5603 to confirm attendance

Ilford people getting to know one another

Almost 30 people turned up for this second meeting of our group. The talk by *AJR Journal* Editor Richard Grunberger on 'Can immigrants ever become British?' was excellent and very well received. There was a friendly ambience and there is every prospect that Ilford will become a closely knit group as people begin to know one another. *Meta Rose Neil*

Next meeting: Wednesday 19 November, 10.30 am. Members' contributions to this country'

Pinner Holocaust discussion

Members of the B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge joined us for a session on 'The effects of the Holocaust through the eyes of survivors and the second and third generations', chaired by Gerald Hellman. There were four speakers. Hermann Hirschberger still felt the pain of having to leave home, parents and country as a 12-year-old. Robert Pearl, a 17-year-old student, spoke of the profound effect a visit to Warsaw and the death camps had on him. Tal Wolgroth, brought up in Israel, was just four when he first noticed the number on his grandfather's arm. JFS teacher David Lerner found nightmares he had at the age of ten recurring. Summing up, Ludwig Spiro reminded us how vitally important it was to provide Holocaust education for generations to come.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: Thursday 6 November, 2 pm. Andrew Herskovits, 'The Jews of Spain before the Spanish Inquisition'

Pinner: repenting for one's sins

Zvi Stanislavsky, from the Education Department of the Jewish Agency, spoke on 'The offer of the sacrifice of Isaac and the Temple'. In an intricate piece of detective work, he explained how the location of King Solomon's Temple was the site of King David's altar and of Abraham's offer of Isaac: there are many biblical clues if only you know where to look and understand what you read. The symbolism of it all is responsibility and repentance for one's sins - wholly appropriate at the time of Yom Kippur.

Paul Samet

Next meeting: Thursday 4 December, 2 pm at Pinner Synagogue for our traditional Chanukah party

Next meeting

**Norfolk: Tuesday 18 November
East Midlands (Nottingham):
Wednesday 26 November**

INTERVIEWERS REQUIRED

The 'Refugee Voices' filmed interviews project requires experienced interviewers to conduct interviews (for a fee) in the Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Sheffield and Hull areas.

Please contact Dr Anthony Grenville, by letter to AJR, by phone on 020 7419 0139, or at ABgrenville@aol.com.



PHOTO: RONALD CHANNING

This year's Volunteers' Thank You Lunch was held at the AJR Day Centre in Cleve Road. Seventy-five volunteers, including befrienders, Day Centre helpers and drivers, readers for *AJR Journal* on tape, office volunteers and representatives of AJR groups, enjoyed music, magic and a delicious lunch. Volunteers' Coordinator Carol Hart thanked everyone for their dedication. Volunteers pictured are, left to right, Germaine Spencer, Inge Heichelheim, Bobbie Landenheim, Lynda Marks, Vera Morris and Charles Spencer.

Paul Balint AJR Day Centre
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KT-AJR Kindertransport special interest group

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Wed	5	Mike Mirandi
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Mon	10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	11	Jenny Kossew
Wed	12	Nicola Smedley
Thur	13	Opdahl Trio
Sun	16	DAY CENTRE OPEN
Mon	17	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	18	Hounslow Community Opera
Wed	19	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	20	Ronnie Goldberg
Sun	23	CLOSED
Mon	24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	25	Katinka Seiner & Laszlo Easton
Wed	26	Michael Heaton
Thur	27	Madelaine Whiteson
Sun	30	CLOSED

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Birthdays

The AJR would like to extend congratulations to Walter Salomonson on his 100th birthday on 5 October and to Paula Salomonson on her 95th birthday on 3 October.

Deaths

Fowler. Lucy Fowler, née Smetana, born Vienna 6 September 1919, died Nottingham 23 August 2003. A remarkable and courageous woman, much loved and greatly missed by family and friends. Susan Soyinka for the family.

Vanson. Manfred Vanson OBE passed away in Jerusalem on 17 September aged 87. Greatly missed by his daughters Dorothea, Esther and Ruth and their husbands, his 18 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren, as well as by his many friends and acquaintances.

Condolences

The AJR expresses its condolences to the family and friends of the late Dr Frank Falk, a founder member of the AJR, who passed away at the age of 95 at Osmond House. (There will be an obituary in the December issue.)

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Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Michael Newman

Another insurance extension

To allow further time for potential applicants to file claims for unpaid insurances bought before the Second World War, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) has announced a final extension to the deadline for submitting claims: 31 December 2003. This additional time has been granted for heirs of Holocaust victims who held an insurance policy to search the ICHEIC list of more than 400,000 names on their website www.icjeic.org.

Completed applications must now be submitted by **31 December 2003**.

Deadline extensions

The application filing periods for two other compensation funds have also been extended to **31 December 2003**:

The Austrian Reconciliation Fund, which pays reparations to slave labourers in Nazi-run camps in Austria. For application forms, explanatory materials and further information, please contact PO Box 44, A-1011 Vienna. The telephone number is 0043 1 513 60 16 and the fax number is 0043 1 513 60 16 15. Details of how to apply are also available from the Fund's website www.reconciliationfund.at.

The Council for the Compensation of Holocaust Victims in the Slovak Republic pays compensation to Holocaust victims (or their heirs) whose properties were aryanised during the Second World War. The Council can be reached at Kancelaria Rady, PO Box 115, 820 05 Bratislava 25, Slovak Republic. The Council's website is www.holocaustslovakia.sk and email kanrada@stonline.sk.

Further help

Written enquiries should be sent to Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to michael@ajr.org.uk. Assistance can be provided strictly by appointment at the Holocaust Survivors Centre in Hendon, north London. For an appointment please ring 020 8385 3074.

Miracles still happen

Irene White

Do you know Walter Salomonson? He is a living miracle in every sense of the word. He is 100 years old this year, as straight as a ramrod, and with a lively sense of humour. Maybe you think this is not a real miracle, but then you may not know that Walter is blind - that is the reason why he wears dark glasses.

Until his retirement Walter worked at the post office, going by bus into town. His wife, Paula, who is only 95 years old, is in a home. She has lost her memory. Walter visits her several times a week without fail.

I first knew them well when, years

ago, they went to York with me on a coach trip. Walter was interested in everything: the Minster, the Museum, the Viking Centre. People went out of their way to be helpful to such a charming, intelligent gentleman without realising that he was blind. Often, when we walked around Edgware, people would stop him and ask the way. Without hesitating, he would direct them to their destination. I still have some hand-carved books of his, which I treasure, in my front room.

Good luck to you, Walter, and to your lovely wife Paula! To me and thousands of your friends, you are a miracle.

Arts and Events Diary - November

Sun 2 New Israel Fund: 'Concert for Co-existence'. Ralph Kirshbaum (cello) and Peter Frankl (piano) play Beethoven, Prokofiev and Schumann. Wigmore Hall, 4 pm. Tel 020 7935 2141

Mon 3 Gerald Holm, 'Denmark: the "fairy-tale kingdom"'. Club 43

Mon 10 Dr Gwen Williams, 'The 19th-century English novel'. Club 43

Thur 13 Dr Daniel Summerfield, 'From Falashas to Ethiopian Jews: The external influences for change' (book launch). Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London. Reception 6.00 pm Haldane Room, lecture 6.30 pm Gustave Tuck Theatre

Mon 17 Ernst Flesch, 'A journey through Italy and Greece'. Club 43

Mon 17 Dr Jabal Buaben, 'Islam and Christianity'. Council for Christians and Jews: Muslim Dialogue. Camelford House, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 3-4.30 pm. tel 7820 0090/0845 1662 205

Tues 18 Professor Edward Reichman (Yeshiva University, New York), 'Mummies, Philosophers and Smallpox: Rabbinic response to scientific discoveries throughout the ages' (annual Jacobovits memorial lecture). Institute of Jewish Studies, University

College London. Darwin Lecture Theatre, UCL, 8 pm

Mon 24 Clement Kryslar, 'Gem stones in history and literature' (lecture with slides). Club 43

Wed 26 Dr Otto von Habsburg, 'Is Europe a world class player?', Anglo-Jewish Association. Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, Regents's Park, London NW1. Reception 7 pm, lecture 7.30 pm. Tel 020 7486 5055

Fri 28 Dr Anthony Grenville, 'The emigration and settlement of refugees from Austria in Britain after 1938'. Institute of Germanic Studies, 29 Russell Square, London WC1, 6 pm. (There is as yet no proper social and cultural history of the *Austrian* component of the German-speaking emigration to Britain from the Third Reich. Those unable to attend the lecture please send comments to Dr Grenville at the AJR.)

ORGANISATION CONTACTS

Club 43 Belsize Square Synagogue. Meetings 7.45 pm. Contact Hans Seelig tel 01442 254360

Institute of Jewish Studies, University College London, Gower Street, London WC1 tel 020 7679 3520



Kindertransport statue unveiling

PHOTOS: RONALD CHANNING



1. Sir Nicholas Winton, Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks, Bertha Leverton, Home Secretary David Blunkett and WJR Chairman Nigel Layton
2. Rt Hon David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, addressing the distinguished guests
3. Sir Nicholas Winton unveiling the commemorative plaque
4. Kindertransportees Erich Reich and Harry Heber with Sir Nicholas Winton at the statue of a young child they have unveiled
5. Linda Rosenblatt, WJR Vice Chairman, responsible for the organisation of the unveiling ceremony at Liverpool Street Station
6. Child's statue with giant case displaying clothes, mementoes, photographs and toys the Kinder brought with them in 1938-39
7. Articles displayed in the case
8. Rickie Burman, Director, Jewish Museum, Flor Kent the sculptor, and Prof Jack Lohman, Director, London Museum
9. Sir Nicholas Winton with Lord (Alf) Dubs, one of the 669 Kinder he brought to England from Czechoslovakia
10. Hermann Hirschberger, Chairman of KT-AJR (Kindertransport)

Newsround

Deputy leader of German Jews elected

Frankfurt community activist Salomon Korn, 60, has been elected deputy leader of Germany's Central Council of Jews following the resignation of Michel Friedman, who admitted to having used cocaine. Mr Korn told *Die Welt* he feared that up to 20 per cent of Germans harboured at least unspoken antisemitic views.

Holocaust survivors plan visit to Vienna

Austrian-born survivors of the Holocaust who are living in the UK are to be the guests of the mayor and municipal council of Vienna in a visit organised by the Holocaust and anti-racist department of the London Jewish Cultural Centre.

Terezin opera inspires NSPPC project

Brundibar, a children's opera by Hans Krasa and Adolf Hoffmeister which was originally performed at Terezin concentration camp, has, according to a report in the *Jewish Chronicle*, inspired an NSPPC project to promote the voice of young people. The work was recently performed at the Royal Academy of Music by students from Manchester's Chetham's School of Music and by primary school pupils.

Census figure on Jews out by a long way

An analysis of the 2001 UK census by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research suggests that the figure of 266,749 UK Jews recorded was incorrect: the real figure is in all probability between 296,000 and 342,000. The Institute said that one of the main reasons why many people did not wish to identify themselves as Jewish was because of memories of the Holocaust and other persecution.

Belarus shipments suspended

World Jewish Relief has altered its distribution procedures after finding that a small part of its aid shipments to Eastern Europe has not been reaching its destination. Shipments of clothing, bedding and other goods to Belarus suspended since May this year are to resume shortly.