

'The MP for refugees'

On 7 December 1969, a ceremony was held to mark the opening of Eleanor Rathbone House in Avenue Road, Highgate, which provided sheltered accommodation for elderly Jewish refugees from Nazism. The 12-storey block, containing some 50 flats, was the proud result of several years of joint effort by the AJR and the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief, through which restitution monies from West Germany were then channelled. The building was named after a gentile Englishwoman, in grateful recognition of her unique contribution to the welfare of the Jewish refugees from Hitler and in memory of her battle to rescue the Jews of Europe in the teeth of official prevarication in Britain and Nazi savagery in Europe.

Eleanor Rathbone was born on 12 May 1872 into a Quaker family that had built its fortune on shipbuilding in Liverpool; her father was a Liberal MP for the city. The Rathbones were also a dynasty of philanthropists, inspired by their deep-seated Quaker ethic to engage in social and welfare work on behalf of the poor, the sick and the underprivileged. After studying at Somerville College, Oxford, Rathbone threw herself into social work, amassing considerable experience both of studying the ills that disfigured industrial Britain and of campaigning for their alleviation. She was particularly active in issues that affected women, notably in the campaign for female suffrage that convulsed the country before the First World War.

Susan Cohen's recent study, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (Valentine Mitchell, 2010), shows how the focus of Rathbone's activities shifted, once women had



Eleanor Rathbone

been granted the vote after the First World War. She had been elected as an Independent councillor on Liverpool City Council in 1909 and it was as an Independent that she was elected to Parliament in 1929, as one of the two members for the Combined English Universities (seats that were abolished in 1950). From her new position of influence, she campaigned for the improvement of the position of women in India and the British colonies in Africa, focusing on such abuses as child marriages. It was the issue of child marriage that caused her to undertake a fact-finding tour of Palestine in 1934. This was to prove a turning point in her career, leading her to become a supporter of the Zionist cause and a champion of the Jews, a people for whom she developed a profound admiration.

As the international situation deteriorated in the 1930s, Rathbone's humanitarian activism became harnessed to her political opposition to Fascism and her tireless campaigns

for the victims of Nazi anti-Semitism. She was among the first to grasp the seriousness of the threat posed by National Socialism, both to Britain and to the Jews. Writing on the thirteenth anniversary of the Nazi-inspired boycott of Jewish businesses on 1 April 1933, Werner Rosenstock recorded in his editor's column in *AJR Information* of April 1946, three months after Rathbone's death, how she had sought to draw the attention of the civilised world to the persecution of Germany's Jews, since the cruelties that the Nazis were inflicting on the Jews were a clear warning of their intentions towards the entire civilised world. As Rosenstock made clear, Rathbone hoped to galvanise public opinion into effective opposition to Nazism, and thereby to protect the Jews of Germany and to avert the threat of Nazi barbarities on a vastly greater scale:

One of the few who, at that time, found prophetic words, was the late Eleanor Rathbone. At a protest meeting in Liverpool on the 5th April, 1933, she said that even if the persecution of Jews would cease, it would have fulfilled a task – a task different from what the Nazis had visualised. It would have taught us to see in the 'outbreak of temperament' of the German people a serious menace to the world. Maybe, she concluded, the present sufferings of the Jews would save the world from future and even greater sufferings – because they warned us in time.

Rathbone's hopes in this respect were to be disappointed for the persecution of the Jews in April 1933 was to be followed by far worse. If her words ring strangely today, in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the unparalleled suffering endured by European Jewry, then that is because her moral and political stance was determined by the expectation that the sufferings of the few and defenceless would automatically provoke the

continued overleaf

'THE MP FOR REFUGEES' *continued from page 1*

intervention of the many and powerful on their behalf. Rathbone's strength was her humanitarian idealism, her passionate belief that British policy must be guided by tolerance, humanity and generosity of spirit. Her concern for the plight of the victims, which was sorely tested by government policy, was a beacon of light in a chapter of Britain's history that was often at best a murky shade of grey.

The sudden and savage intensification of Nazi persecution of the Jews in 1938, following the incorporation of Austria into the Reich in March 1938 and the 'Crystal Night' pogrom in November 1938, triggered a crisis as large numbers of desperate Jews sought to enter Britain. In face of official indifference to the plight of the refugees and the government's reluctance to adopt a wholeheartedly humanitarian approach to them, Rathbone established the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees (PCR) in the critical month of November 1938, in the wake of the fresh crisis provoked by the handover of the Sudetenland to Hitler under the terms of the Munich Agreement. This cross-party pressure group proved highly successful as a parliamentary lobby campaigning to secure the entry of larger numbers of refugees into Britain and to alleviate the conditions they encountered once they had been admitted.

The PCR's campaign on behalf of the predominantly Jewish refugees was the more effective for the fact that most of its members were Christian and not open to accusations of religious or racial bias: its chairman was Victor Cazalet and its vice-chairmen Lord Marley and H. Graham White, while Rathbone was the honorary secretary and the moving force behind the undertaking. By July 1939, according to Susan Cohen, the PCR numbered over 200 MPs and was meeting almost daily. Rathbone was also involved with a large number of other refugee-related organisations, including those trying to assist young refugees, those that dispensed government grants and those trying to obtain visas for Czech Jews living under the shadow of the Nazi menace.

Her denunciations of Nazi Germany, her determined pressuring of officials and her impassioned pleas to ministers, fired by her conviction that Britain had a moral obligation to the refugees, earned her the admiration of the refugees and the exasperation of the government machine in approximately equal proportions.

Rathbone was at her best during the mass internment of refugees in summer 1940. She undertook a number of visits to the internment camps, including the memorable occasion on 20 July 1940 when she rallied the despondent inmates of Huyton Camp, Liverpool, by convincing them that the processes of democracy had not totally overlooked them. She regularly took a leading part in parliamentary debates on refugee matters. According to Hansard, she spoke or intervened no fewer than 20 times in the six-hour debate on internment on 10 July 1940. 'We shall be told that national security must come first', she stated. 'Of course it must, but the question we ask the Government to consider seriously is: Cannot the method and machinery be improved, not only in the interests of humanity and of the refugees, but in the interests of security itself?' She was able to combine her general criticism of internment with detailed knowledge of individual cases, like that of the refugee artist John Heartfield (Helmut Herzfeld), famous for developing photomontage, who was released from internment on medical grounds in August 1940 after a parliamentary question from Rathbone.

Sadly, her subsequent efforts to rescue Jews from territories under Nazi control met with less success. Appalled by the fate that was befalling European Jewry and dismayed by the British

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of THE ASSOCIATION OF
JEWISH REFUGEES
THURSDAY 17 JUNE 2010
AT 11.00 AM
at The Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road London NW6**

**For further details, please
telephone 020 8385 3070**

The three members retiring by
rotation and being proposed
for re-election are
Mrs E. S. Angel,
Mr C. W. Dunston
and Mrs G. R. Glassman

Biennial Kindertransport Conference, 2010

The Kindertransport Association will be hosting its
Biennial Conference in Arlington, Virginia, USA,
on **15-17 October 2010**

at the Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport Hotel
The event is expected to draw hundreds of members
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First, second and third generations welcome

Please contact Programme Co-ordinator

Margaret Goldberger

on tel 001 516 938 6084 or at

infokindertransport.org for further information

government's apparent inactivity, she played a leading part in the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror, founded in March 1943 to do what could be done to save Jews from the death camps. Though she fought tenaciously for this cause, she was unable to effect any change in government policy, which was to subordinate all initiatives on behalf of the Jews to the overriding objective of winning the war. This largely meant leaving the Jews to their fate. Home Secretary Herbert Morrison and his junior minister Osbert Peake, in particular, were guilty of a disgraceful display of stonewalling that condemned initiatives to rescue Jews – assuming that the Nazis would have allowed them to leave – to remain unrealised.

Eleanor Rathbone died on 2 January 1946. The following month, *AJR Information*, mindful of her dedication to the refugees' cause, published an eloquent tribute to her by the publisher Victor Gollancz. A school that still bears her name, at Magdiel, near Tel Aviv, was opened by Chaim Weizmann's wife in October 1949.

Anthony Grenville

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From refugee to 'call girl'

In 1938, as a 15-year-old Jewish girl studying in one of Vienna's high schools, I was determined to become a surgeon. The *Anschluss* meant that I was thrown out of my school. Thus, instead of continuing my studies, I was catapulted into adulthood and had to concentrate on trying to find ways in which I could get my family and myself out of the threatening Nazi environment. This was, of course, extremely difficult. However, my effective planning and fortunate circumstances made it possible that by July 1938 my parents, brothers and myself all managed to be out of Hitler-controlled Austria. Yet this was only the beginning of an eventful odyssey that took us to Yugoslavia and Albania, arriving in London in April 1939 after a horrific flight from Milan via Germany. (For a more detailed account of my refugee experiences, see my autobiography, *Swimming Upstream – a Jewish Refugee from Vienna* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005)).

As I had no skills, I had to start my working life as a machinist in one of London's East End sweatshops. The fact that my studies had failed to equip me with a skill so that I could claim a better job made me think that studying was useless. It was only in 1945, by which time I was working as a wages and costing clerk in a munitions factory, that I began to realise that studying might after all provide the stepping stone for a more interesting life. Thus, I began a four-year evening-class course that led to a diploma in Industrial Administration. As the best student, I not only received the Sir Murdoch MacDonald Award but also obtained a scholarship

to Ruskin College, Oxford, where, being endowed with the puritanical ethic, I insisted on taking the two-year PPE diploma in one year. However, Oxford's scholarly environment rekindled my earlier desire for a professional career. Another scholarship enabled me to start a three-year BA Hon. Economics degree course at Manchester University. As an adult student committed to learning, I was expected to get a top degree, which meant that I received attractive job offers from numerous large British corporations.

A serious burn accident one week before I was due to take my final degree examinations changed my career plans as the professors of Economics and Anthropology jointly offered me a job as a research assistant. A Rockefeller Research Fellowship provided me with the funds that enabled me to do the research for my doctorate by living one year in each of two south Indian villages. The experience I gained in those two years provided the basis for my becoming an expert in India's rural development in particular and that of less developed countries in general. It was this expertise that made me into a 'call girl'. As a Research Professor at Sussex University, I was phoned by numerous development agencies and invited to help relieve the poverty that existed in the Third World and this has continued until now. Though I retired from my university professorship more than 25 years ago and am now 87 years old, I still enjoy being a 'call girl' and travelling to wherever I am required to help.

T. Scarlett Epstein OBE

'Celebration of Volunteering'

The AJR's Volunteers Department hosted its annual 'Celebration of Volunteering' event at the Jewish Museum. The over 70 volunteers present had an opportunity to look around the newly opened museum. Eve Pollard gave thanks to the volunteers and entertained guests with stories of her days working in the media and as a social commentator.

As well as presenting volunteers, including Ellen Singer, who has served for more than 50 years, with certificates

in recognition of their long service, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman paid tribute to those present: 'I would like to thank all our amazing volunteers for giving your



Andrew Kaufman, Carol Hart (Head of Volunteer Services), Barbara Steiner (daughter of Ellen Singer), Ellen Singer, Eve Pollard

Photo by volunteer Hela Shamash

time, energy and enthusiasm and for the compassion you so readily show to members of the AJR. The care, warmth, support and friendship you provide our members is immeasurable.

You are often the person they confide in and you are certainly the person who brings a little sunshine into their lives.'

Liverpool Limmud



(from left) Social worker Barbara Dresner Dorrity, Liverpool Group member Sonia Strong, AJR northern co-ordinator Susanne Green. There was a great deal of interest in the AJR stand at Liverpool Limmud

European Association of Jewish Survivors to meet in London

This year's Annual Conference of the European Association of Jewish Survivors (EUAS) is being organised by the Child Survivors Association-AJR. It will take place from 13 to 16 August at Roehampton University, overlooking Richmond Park. Further details can be found on the EUAS website www.eu-as.org. Anyone interested should contact CSA-AJR secretary Henri Obstfeld on 020 8954 5298.

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY JUNE

Tues 1 Dr Ariane Huml, 'Nelly Sachs: German-Jewish Poetry at the Beginning of the 21st Century' University of Sussex, Arts B127, 4.00 pm. Tel 01273 678771 or email d.franklin@sussex.ac.uk

Mon 7 Hall not available Club 43

Wed 9 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. Raymond Sturgess, 'The Travesty of Justice of the Dreyfus Affair' At Kenton Synagogue Hall, 2.15 pm

Mon 14 Ken Baldry, 'Haydn, the Father of So Much' Club 43

Thur 17 Prof Erica Carter, 'Marlene Dietrich: The Prodigal Daughter Returns. A Foreign Affair (Billy Wilder 1948)' FilmTalk Lecture Series in partnership with Leo Baeck Institute. At Wiener Library. Tel 020 7636 7247 or email info@leobaeck

Mon 21 Prof Leon Yudkin, 'Not with a Bang but a Shriek: German Poetry of the Post-WW1 Period' Club 43

Wed-Thur 23-24 Conference on 'The Hole in Time: German-Jewish Political Philosophy and the Archive' 9 am-6 pm at Portland Hall, University of Westminster, 4-16 Little Titchfield Street, London W1. Email theholeintime@life.com before 17 June

Mon 28 Dr Anthony Grenville, 'My Research into the Jewish Refugees from Hitler in Britain (My Recent Book)' Club 43

Mon 28-1 July Second Global Conference on Genocide, University of Sussex Panel on 'Holocaust and Volkstumspolitik'. Time and venue tba

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Ernst Flesch on 020 7624 7740 or Leni Ehrenberg on 020 7286 9698

1940-2010: The Individual and Family Legacy of WW2 Internment as it Relates to the Isle of Man

A Guide to Aid Personal Research

by Alan Franklin

Librarian, Manx National Heritage Library, Manx Museum, Douglas

My previous article, 'Second World War internee records for the Isle of Man',¹ was published in the February and March 2008 issues of the *AJR Journal*. This led to around 130 responses from former internees and their family members, who contacted me with information about their experiences. The resulting exchange of information has led to a significant increase in the Manx Museum's resources on this topic.

It is undoubtedly true that research into internment has greatly increased over the last couple of decades. It is almost a parallel to the interest shown in the last survivors of the First World War, who, as they passed away, received considerable media coverage. The youngest former internee will be 65 this year and the youngest known 'adult' will be 84.² This growth in interest has led to publications which include personal accounts and the availability of online material and catalogues.³ Primary material continues to come to light in family papers and to be deposited with archives and museums, where it can be made available to researchers.

On 27 May 2010 it was 70 years since the first internees arrived at Ramsey on the Belgian cross-Channel steamer *Princess Josephine Charlotte*. This group, 823 men, landed on Ramsey Pier and marched to the camp on Mooragh Promenade.⁴

This seems therefore to be an appropriate opportunity to provide some general guidance for those trying to reconstruct family experiences using examples of recently deposited items. Whilst records for the women and children have survived in significant numbers, those for the men have not.⁵ Therefore the process of locating names and personal details of internees relies on linking together a web of material from which individual pieces in isolation appear to provide little useful information. I have found over the years that there are either those who wished to wipe out all memories of the experience, and so deliberately destroyed any evidence, or those who diligently collected and retained any scraps from their arrival in Britain and life before, during and after internment. Former internees often have vivid memories which they have passed on to children and grandchildren who may not always realise how much further information can sometimes be gleaned from seemingly insignificant items.

In recent years, I have seen or been sent copies of a wide variety of documentation in addition to the records Manx National Heritage holds. These include both official and personal items and I have used some examples from these in the following text. The Library has two large summary guides to our holdings of internment material which can be emailed on request as our catalogue is not yet available online.

General comments

Caution – research may rattle some family skeletons!

There are examples of painful personal histories which relatives may not wish to be revealed and sensitivity is required in such cases. The stress and separation of internment could, and did, lead to divorce or affairs. That there were a number of women interned who had previously supported themselves by being 'of negotiable affection' is well known, as is the fact that a number of illegitimate children were born in the camps. Sometimes these women went on after the war to marry and have other children and I have seen cases where half-siblings did not know of each other's existence. Separation could lead to the breakdown of relationships and second wives or husbands sometimes deliberately concealed previous relationships from their families and some did their best to conceal any trace of internment experiences. This explains to some extent why many archives have long closure periods for personal information to help avoid potential distress.

Names and place names

Often enquirers forget that their grandfather changed his name or that their grandmother was unmarried at the time and ask us to check the wrong name! Some changes are quite subtle – e.g. Friedrich Goldschmidt to Fred Goldsmith – while others changed only a forename – e.g. Hans to Henry – or dropped a disliked first name although they still appear under the original name. Those who enlisted in the Pioneer Corps⁶ and later transferred to active service units usually changed their name to an English one to protect both themselves and relatives should they be captured. Many of these were retained after the war and appear to bear no relation to the original names.

Place names are often difficult to read and, due to the post-war shift in

international boundaries, many places no longer exist in modern atlases. However, lists of these do exist, for example for the former areas of Germany now in Poland or Russia.

Transcription errors are frequent: many people with poor English handed documents over to registration clerks who copied the unfamiliar handwritten names on to registration cards and other documents. Variations or mistakes in the spelling of both forenames and surnames are common. A large number of our 'Alien' registration cards and lists also have the middle names Sarah and Israel, added to the documents of Jews by the Nazis; this can cause upset with such entries regarded as offensive. Many entries have only initials or lack forenames, which means we cannot be sure multiple entries are not all for one person. This is where gathering together snippets from a variety of sources can sometimes help.

Some potential sources of information

Please note: The following includes examples illustrating what is available and is by necessity highly selective. Please do not be offended if your family item is not mentioned.

Correspondence

Many families have such information, ranging from the standard official postcard on which certain phrases were deleted, to an envelope, a letter or even a series of letters, often written in English to avoid delays while awaiting the censor's approval.

A sample postcard is printed as follows:

Nothing is to be written on this side except the date, signature and address of the sender. Erase words not required, IF ANYTHING ELSE IS ADDED THE POSTCARD WILL BE DESTROYED.

I am (not) well: I have been admitted into Hospital {sick For operation} and am going on well.

I am being transferred to another camp. I have [illegible] card dated

Signature
Camp Address

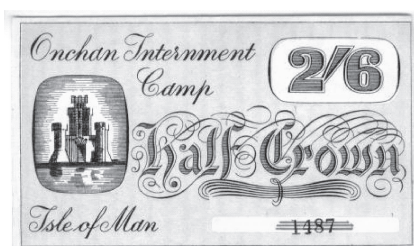
This example has an oval stamp stating 'Hutchinson Internment Camp Douglas IOM 13 Jul 1940'.⁷

A simple posted envelope will often have a legible censor stamp marked with a camp code letter⁸ and a date and may

indicate a house number. This will confirm where and when an internee was there. Increasingly, examples of these appear on eBay or similar sites marketed to collectors of postmarks. It is often possible to recognise the internee's name written on the reverse, although in many cases a scrawled name can be virtually illegible.

A fascinating example of this is found in the papers of William Steiner. He and his brother Francis, being of Jewish descent, were forced to leave Vienna and both ended up interned. William, as a student, was released after 6 months, while Francis was held for 15 months in 3 camps. Several other relations were also interned, including 2 cousins. Between them they were in 5 camps.

In 2008 Francis revisited the Island he had left in 1941 and stayed in a hotel a few yards from the site of the Central Camp. It was my pleasure to drive him around camp sites in Douglas and Onchan and stand with him where he had been nearly 70 years before. When his late brother's children realised he was visiting they told him to his surprise that the family still had a number of personal papers, including a large collection of letters Francis had written to him from the camps, and he kindly agreed to deposit these with us. These letters provide fascinating insight into camp life, with mentions of inter-camp activities such as football matches, and many refer to fellow internees. Some of these are written on the special-issue paper and envelopes which restricted the number of lines per message.⁹ One of my colleagues also conducted an oral history interview with him while he was here. Furthermore, he deposited examples of the camp bank notes and coins used in Onchan which he had kept in near-perfect condition all these years.¹⁰



Special bank notes were printed and coins minted. This is one of several values issued for Onchan Camp (2/6 = 12.5p).

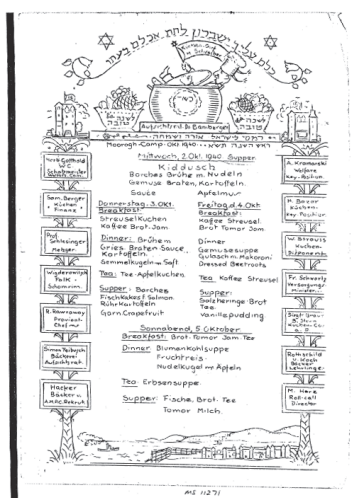
Artwork, camp newspapers and arts and crafts

Many individuals, including artists, sculptors and engravers, found themselves interned, particularly in the Hutchinson Camp. They kept themselves busy using any available material to produce artwork and would have accepted commissions. Such items regularly come to light and are worth checking for signatures or initials to identify the person depicted (if unknown) or the artist.

An example is a portrait of Simon Feibusch, 1891-1965, an internee in the Mooragh Camp, painted by Erich Wolfsfeld¹¹ and retained by his family, who also have other items



Another example is this illustrated menu for meals served in Mooragh Internment Camp on 2-5 October 1940, a period which includes Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year).¹³ You can see the named individuals, which may be the only positive indication where they were held.



Many internees made personal sketch books. One example is by Professor Oscar Fehr, an ophthalmic surgeon who was elected chief eye specialist for all IOM camps while interned in Hutchinson Camp in 1940 despite being 69 years old. It contains a number of sketches made in Hutchinson and a view across the square which can still be identified today.¹⁴



View from the top side of the square looking towards Douglas Bay (the square is on a slope and there is a three-tiered grass lawn garden in the centre)



Scene presumably inside one of the houses in the camp



from the camp, including an illustration of a room decorated for the Jewish festival of Succot.¹²

A number of camp magazines were produced. These include sketches by well-known individuals. Some are signed, others are initialled, and many have been identified by art historians. They include the *Onchan Pioneer*, *Sefton Review* and *Camp*. References to individuals have been extracted from them and entered into our internee database. Families may often have a copy of these, not realising that their relative contributed to it.

Artwork comes to light in a wide variety of forms – from painting on newspaper sheets to art paper or boards. Internees were resourceful in using any material they could lay their hands on and some could afford to purchase materials from local sources.



This charming card was drawn by six-year-old William (Werner) Bergman while in Rushen Camp with his mother and sent to his father in Central Camp. William and family members revisited the Island in 2009. The card is reproduced with his permission, MS 11497.¹⁵

Examples of wooden sculptures¹⁶ and plaques have survived too and a photograph of sculptor Ernst Blensdorf working on one piece in his room in Hutchinson Camp has been published.¹⁷ There are also examples of postcards and greetings cards being sent by internees to friends or relatives such as one for 'Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year' produced by the Printing Office Mooragh Camp.¹⁸

In the women's camp, a large variety of toys, knitted and knotted items were produced and some examples have turned up, retained by the children for whom they were made. In 2008 we learned of the survival of a knitted cardigan and tie made by the parents of a child internee. Such items are rare as, apart from some gloves, little has survived, even though knitting was a popular activity.¹⁹

Registration books, Aliens Tribunal letters and Permits

Everyone was issued with an Aliens Registration book on arrival in Britain or on reaching the age of 16. They retained this until they emigrated, were naturalised or the system was cancelled around 1960. It was a requirement to register with the local police and, every time an Alien moved, the book was stamped and permissions for certain activities were sometimes recorded. They are similar to

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND REFUGEES

Sir – I was saddened to read in your May issue the mean-minded distinction made by Anita Lasker and Kitty Hart between camp survivors and child refugees – whose suffering was different but no less real. Some were wrenched from their families when hardly out of their infancy and left with no idea of their roots or personal identity. All of us had the trauma of being suddenly parted from our mothers, whom we never saw again. Anita Lasker *did* have sisters who stayed with her and Kitty Hart a mother. We had no such comfort – only strangeness and bewilderment.

The anguish of imagining what might be happening to our parents when information was patchy but devastating, and then finding ourselves in many cases the sole survivors of our families, was surely suffering too. Being physically starved is undeniably terrible – but so is emotional starvation, though it may show itself in more subtle forms. It is a pity when their own suffering makes people insensitive to the plight of others. It is unworthy to produce a hierarchy of suffering.

Martha Blend, London N10

See Martha Blend, 'A Hierarchy of Suffering?' on page 11 (Ed.).

Sir – It baffles me that a disproportionate number of Kindertransportees and refugees lean towards the ideological left – which in itself is innocuous enough – but why stand with those disseminating anti-Semitism packaged as anti-Zionism? If this is due to their experiences, then the anomaly should also afflict survivors, but it doesn't. In fact, the opposite is true.

As I outlined in an earlier letter, some 'Kinder' have gone as far as to join Galloway's cavalcade to Hamas-controlled Gaza. I recently came across 'Kinder' who stand with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) boycotting an Israeli-owned shop in Covent Garden. According to their website, the PSC are against a two-state solution – no different from Hamas, which, with Iran, is sworn to Israel's destruction. I pointed out to one of these ladies who displayed a Palestinian flag with an El Aksa scarf à la Mahmoud Abbas that it was reminiscent of Brownshirts picketing Jewish shops in Germany – and we know it didn't stop there!

What causes people to turn on their own kind – is it due to some inner desire for self-immolation? We now even have a Kindertransport rabbi who objected to the inclusion of the Hatikvah at the recent Yom Hashoah event in Hyde Park, where I was one of the candle lighters, but expressed no objection to the National Anthem, which was also sung.

This brings me to Ruth Barnett, who reproaches those who consider the Holocaust

'the property of the Jews' (February), but devotes an entire column (May) to the Armenian genocide that no one but Muslim Turks denies. And who has analysed me without as much as a cough in sight! I have no wish to be compared to, or lumped with, others: I feel I owe the world nothing and hardly need lecturing on this score. Mrs Barnett would do better to carry her message of understanding to the radical Islamic world, which denies the Holocaust and poses a threat to the entire world.

Rubin Katz, London NW11

SAYING KADDISH

Sir – When reading the *AJR Journal* I often come across something that strikes a chord. And so it was with the letters mentioning deportation to Maly Trostinec.

My dear mother, Irma Huppert, was deported to Minsk on 28 November 1941 and on arrival there was shot. A few days before, the Gestapo had come to her home and taken her to the Spersschule, a collection centre for Jews being deported to the East. While there, my mother smuggled out two postcards, which came into my possession at the end of the war. The first reads in part: 'As you can see, I've been in the Spersschule since Tuesday. You simply cannot imagine the comings and goings here – it's wild! Dear Poldi, be so kind – if you can spare anything eatable, send it to me. One is so very grateful here for everything ... My dear ones, I'm so sorry I couldn't see you again but, God willing, we *will* see each other again. The food here is scarce and one has to wait for it for a long time. Breakfast at 9 or 10 o'clock; for lunch, soup or vegetable at 2.30 pm. And I get up at 5.0 in the morning. We all sleep very crowded on only one mattress on the floor. Terrible'

The second card reads in part: 'Today much is going on here. Tomorrow we are supposed to leave. Where to, we don't know. It's said we're leaving at 11.00 am. When we arrive at our destination, and it's possible, I'll write to you. Hundreds of kisses to Mama and all the sisters'

Franziska Nunnally, Richmond, VA, USA

Sir – This is my personal take on saying the Kaddish – a tradition this atheist respects but cannot understand. Many – perhaps most – Jews know the Kaddish as the prayer for the dead. But it contains no reference to the deceased, the bereaved or death itself. It is, in fact, the speaker's repeated assertion of his faith in God, perhaps intended to prevent bereavement of a dear one leading to a loss of faith. And why is it reserved exclusively for male members of the congregation?

(Dr) Basil Lee, London SW15

RIGHTEOUS GENTILE

Sir – I am extremely glad that Anthony Grenville included Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson MP in his article 'Friends of the "enemy aliens"' (May) because our family owe him an immense debt of gratitude, if not our lives.

After Kristallnacht my father wrote to a number of prominent people in this country to ask them to act as a guarantor that we would not be a financial burden on the state as my father was applying for a 'working permit' in order to be able to support his family of five – himself, his wife, mother and two children. My father could confirm that he would be able to do so and Commander Locker-Lampson agreed to give the guarantee to the Home Office – the only one of those approached who had the human kindness to help. After lengthy correspondence with the Home Office, the visa with a working permit was granted in July 1939 and we finally arrived in London exactly one week before the outbreak of war. Truly a Righteous Gentile.

Norbert Cohn, London N3

'RENDEZVOUS' CARTOON

Sir – Anthony Grenville's salute to David Low (May) contains an interesting inaccuracy. Referring to Low's memorable 'Rendezvous' cartoon of Hitler and Stalin, he says 'Both men carry concealed weapons.' Not so. Dr Grenville is probably blending his recollection with that of another of Low's Hitler-Stalin depictions, actually far more prescient than 'Rendezvous'. It shows the two smiling dictators goose-stepping arm-in-arm along a line marked 'Eastern Frontier', each indeed carrying a revolver behind his back in the other hand. The title is 'Someone is taking someone for a walk.'

*Peter M. Oppenheimer
Christ Church, Oxford*

Not so. In the cartoon 'Rendezvous' both men wear holsters concealing guns (Anthony Grenville).

'IDEALS OF ISRAEL'S FOUNDERS SUPPLANTED'

Sir – Can Dorothea Shefer-Vanson (April) refer us to any discussions and writings that support her statement that awareness of the long-term advantages of capitalism has supplanted the ideals of Israel's founders?

No comparable activities have been discernable in Britain – rather an almost total lack of serious political argument and, indeed, of interest in the subject – one result of the breakdown of the industrial communities, the problems of which motivated left-wing activity.

Such factors have nothing to do with comparative benefits or the idea of competition between systems, which socialists do not contemplate – only succession, if and when.

Alan S. Kaye, Marlow, Bucks

KINDERTRANSPORT AND THE USA

Sir – Please be advised that the Kindertransport did *not* end in 1939 – it continued to the USA until 1941. Approximately 1,000 Kindertransport children came directly to the USA. I am one of those. Do not forget us.

*Henry Rosenthal
Boca Raton, FL, USA*

BRITISH ARMY INTERROGATORS

Sir – In your April issue, advertising a meeting about Herman Rothman's book *Hitler's Will*, you mention that he is the last surviving interrogator in the British army. I must respectfully suggest that this is not so. I too was a sergeant interpreter-interrogator in the army and am, thank God, still around. In October 1946, while I was a sergeant interpreter with the Intelligence Corps, I was sent to Flossenbürg (between Hanover and Celle), where the British army held some 20,000 German POWs in three camps (Wehrmacht soldiers, SS, SD and similar and women) for interrogation. I was there until spring 1947.

Incidentally, I was with Herman Rothman from August 1939 to May 1940, when I left for the Kindertransport camp in Gwrych Castle in North Wales. I wish Herman every success with his book.

Ossi Findling, London NW11

TODAY'S REFUGEES

Sir – As a relative of one of your earliest members, Marianne Kristeller, I read your journal regularly and find it interesting and relevant. A subject which should, to my mind, be discussed is the situation of present-day refugees in Britain.

I am a trustee of a charity that allocates small sums to, among others, 'unrecognised' or 'unsuccessful refugee-status claimants', from countries such as Sudan, Somalia or Afghanistan. Many of these persons cannot afford to buy food and survive only on donations. Their legal status, it would appear, often has little to do with the circumstances that brought them here – and more with missing paperwork and tight budgets.

As an immigrant to this country (from Israel), living safely and comfortably in Oxfordshire, I feel unease at my adopted country's attitude towards these poor people. I cannot help thinking of my aunt Marianne in 1939, a nanny in Kent without a word of English and viewed by many as 'the German enemy'.

Was this subject ever debated in your journal? Do you think it would merit a discussion?

Amatsia Kashti, Abingdon

'TWEEDLEDEE v TWEEDLEDUM'

Sir – Mr Stern is suggesting (May) that we 'exercise [our] democratic right' by staying at home and not voting. There are countries in which people risk their lives for the right to vote. Has he learnt nothing from history? When the decent majority do nothing, the extremists seize power.

So some of our MPs have been revealed to have fiddled their expenses! As reprehensible as their behaviour has been, I believe their fiddling was peanuts compared with what has been going on for a long time in other sectors of society – not to mention other countries, where even heads of government are corrupt on a massive scale. This does not excuse anyone and, yes, he is right, 'The country has changed beyond recognition' and a lot of things that should be aired are swept under the carpet, and our democracy and freedom of speech are being whittled away at an alarming rate – but we do not improve matters by abstaining from voting.

Mr Stern grudgingly expresses gratitude

to England for saving his life. No, we did not '[choose] to come to this country' – we are here because no other country would have us. I thank England for opening its doors to me and showing me how a decent and tolerant society behaves. Otherwise I – and no doubt Mr Stern – would have shared the fate of the rest of our families.

Bronia Snow, Esher

Sir – The reply to Fred Stern's lament can be given in the single sentence spoken by a University of Sussex student after her visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau: 'How lucky I am to live in a free country, where I do not have to fear for my life because of my religion, the colour of my skin or even my heritage' (Centre for German-Jewish Studies Newsletter 30).

Eric Bourne, Milldale, Alstonefield, Ashbourne

Sir – I am surprised to find that you gave house room in your May issue – for the third month running at least – to the politically illiterate outpourings from Fred Stern.

Ernie Manson, Chelmsford

'A JEW IS A JEW IS A JEW'

Sir – Frank Bright may hold (April) that 'A Jew is a Jew is a Jew' because 'Dr Mengele did not ask [him] which branch of Judaism, if any, [he] belonged to and neither do the present hordes of anti-Semites,' but this attitude allows the Nazis a partial victory by accepting their definition of who is a Jew.

Just as other words have different meanings in different contexts, so does the word 'Jew' and it is extremely intolerant to demand that others accept one's own definition for their purposes as is done by many of the non-Orthodox with regard to the Orthodox definition based on traditional Jewish law.

There even existed people, like the convert von Manstein – whom the latter regard as fully Jewish yet whom the Nazis refused to deport for 'resettlement in the East' despite his wish to share the fate of his Jewish brethren.

Martin D. Stern, Salford

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Sir – No matter how many people of all ages in the Greek islands and Egypt were incinerated, maimed or drowned by the eruption of the Santorini volcano and its aftermath, these events are miraculous for Martin D. Stern (April) because they were unusual and were timed in a way that led to outcomes which he likes. In 1944 Himmler regained his faith in God because 'miraculous' last-minute changes allowed his Führer to survive so many assassination attempts.

George Landers, Crete, Greece

LIFT STORIES

Sir – Like your recent correspondents Peter Fraenkel, Peter Briess and L. Paget, I have a lift story. When my parents packed our lift in Halle an der Saale, they carefully itemised each item of furniture, linen, crystal, cutlery, silver and more. My father then left Germany as required when he was released from Buchenwald.

So in February 1939 it was my mother who was ordered to appear at the ware-

continued on page 16

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The majesty of **Henry Moore's** sculptures is beyond dispute, but their cavernous quality reveals something anguished and fragile. Some were made to grace England's bland, reconstructed post-war cities, but were often stolen or defaced, as though their very refinement made them unfit for purpose. Now, over 150 works by this twentieth-century master, the first in over two decades, are shown in **Tate Britain's** comprehensive new exhibition until 8 August.

Moore's oeuvre reflects his concern with maternal relationships, war and nature. His vivid drawings of skeletal Londoners sleeping in Tube stations during the Blitz became official war art,



Old head: a copper bust dating from the late-14th to early-16th century Karin L. Wills/Museum for African Art/National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria

a response to his experiences on the western front as well as the trauma of the Second World War.

In the 1920s, Henry Moore was drawn to early non-Western cultures, particularly Egyptian, Peruvian, African and Oceanic art. He was attracted to its innate vitality, evident in his maternal pieces, which demonstrate a raw tenderness. Often the mother is depicted looking away but the two shapes are always integral, created with a primitive robustness. He worked in marble, alabaster, English stone and, later, in elm, especially for his famous

recumbent figures, allowing the rough grain of the wood to symbolise a return to the earth. The darkness of the 1930s began to invade his work, generating less literal, erotic figures sometimes constricted by strings. He returned to mother-child subjects in some of his Blitz drawings.

African masks and primitive sculptures which so influenced the young Henry Moore, as they did Matisse, Picasso and Epstein, barely convey the true provenance of African art. **Kingdom of Ife: Sculptures from West Africa** (**British Museum** until 6 June) features nearly 100 naturalistic local sculptures of exceptional quality, rarely seen in the UK. Loaned from Nigerian museums in part celebration of this year's 50th anniversary of African independence, the work invalidates the fond Western myth of African primitivism. The talents of these west African artists have been favourably compared to – and often exceed – those of Western artists and are considered to rank among the most sophisticated in the world.

Since the late fifteenth century, when Portuguese explorers discovered local art by the indigenous Yoruba people of west Africa, these found their way into European collections and Parisian antique shops. But between 1910 and 1938, life-like sculptures were discovered in Ife, signifying not just a highly developed artistic culture, but a flourishing and cosmopolitan city-state. Its tradition dates back to 800 AD, flourishing between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.

Ife was an influential trading nation, refining its naturalistic sculpture in stone, terracotta, brass and copper-alloy to create a unique African style. Terracotta heads depicting royalty betray facial striations, made in copper, bronze, terracotta, and a process called lost wax. Its culture was an oral tradition based on myths and worship. Old age and sickness were shown alongside youth and beauty. Excavations have revealed many shrines and white quartz pebble pots used for liquid libations. The crowned heads, or Olokun, remain iconic symbols of Nigerian national identity and appear everywhere.

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**CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE**

REVIEW

Written with wit and style

A DAUGHTER OF HER CENTURY

by Vera Forster

Southampton: Cluckett Press, 2009,
190 pp. paperback

This is the only survivor testament that has made me laugh. Not that it is without its share of horrors, but the narrative is written with wit and style. The narrator, a teenager when the story begins, is old enough to have an acute awareness of her situation. The setting is Hungary before the Nazi invasion.

The author's description of her family is perceptive, funny and without a trace of the more usual idealised *schmaltz*: 'What were they like, my family? They lived in their present. They were enlightened, having learnt about germs and vitamins; fur coats had to be put in camphor for the summer and children had to be controlled; if you prevented a girl from curling up in sleep she would grow nice and tall. You could have two scrambled eggs, but never three. What they never talked about was sex. Instead of sex they talked about money. Love and hate, exploitation and dependence masqueraded as matters of money.'

Describing the lowly origins of Jews who later made it as film directors and financial geniuses, Forster writes: 'Some were so poor that they couldn't even afford a christening and remained Jews for the rest of their lives.'

During this time they hear rumours of atrocities abroad, but refuse to believe them.

Their insulation from reality is compounded by the notorious promise of the Judenrat to the Nazis not to reveal the truth about the concentration camps in return for their own families' survival. Hence the shock of the German invasion with its prompt imposition of restrictions for Jews.

Vera joins a resistance movement which produces forged papers to enable Jews to evade deportation. Betrayed by her landlady, she ends up in Auschwitz, where she escapes death by speaking to Mengele in German. There she suffers like all the inmates starvation, drudgery and bodily infections. To their Lithuanian guards the women in the camp are 'not women at all. They were filthy and ridden with lice, and would stare at you uncomprehendingly when you said something. They were, of course, an inferior race.'

Finally, the prisoners are taken on

continued on page 15

Isle of Man Internment *cont from p5*

a modern passport. Some families have kept them and they will tell you in which district an individual lived.



Cover of a typical book with the page showing release from Central Camp.

The Aliens Tribunals were appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the position of all Germans and Austrians aged over 16. An example letter²⁰ from a London Tribunal gives the addressee, issuing police station, location and date of tribunal and has the following wording:

Metropolitan Police.

Tribunals have been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the position of all Germans and Austrians over the age of 16 in this country, and to consider which of them can properly be exempted from internment and which of those exempted from internment can be exempted also from the special restrictions which are imposed by the Aliens Order on enemy aliens, i.e., the restrictions on traveling without a travel permit, on change of residence without the permission of the police, and of the possession without a police permit of certain articles including motor cars, cameras, etc.

If you are well-known to a British subject or to someone who has lived here a long time or are in employment of such person, you should ask such person to state in writing what he or she knows about you, and should bring the statement with you. You can also invite such a person to attend in case the tribunal wants to put any questions to him or her.

Legal; representatives (solicitors or barristers) will not be allowed to act as advocates before the tribunal.

M.P. – 18923/20,000 Sept./1939
w116 (2)

The movement of Aliens from the Island

either on release or when returning from visits to internees was controlled by the issue from IOM Government Office of 'A permit for Alien to leave the Island'. They give the full name and address of the internee, where they are travelling, date of issue, and date of travel.²¹

Travel was usually by means of the IOM Steam Packet Company vessels, initially from Liverpool. After the *Victoria* hit a mine in the Mersey on 27 December 1940, services were diverted to Fleetwood. Initially, large numbers were shipped in 1940, as noted in the official record book of the *Rushen Castle*,²² one of the two steamers used during the war. This records that between 11 and 22 June over 4,000 internees were shipped to the Island. Conditions were cramped and basic and some crossings are remembered as extremely rough, this being in addition to the worry of encountering a U-boat.

Military records

Once the initial panic of internment had settled, internees were allowed to apply for their release if they met certain categories on an official list. One way of speeding this up was to volunteer for the Pioneer Corps. A register of enlistments has survived and a copy was kindly provided by Helen Fry. This register can potentially provide the crucial service number and note a transfer later in the war to active service units. Those who joined regular service units (especially if commissioned) will appear in military records and in an increasing number of online databases. Service records, particularly those of the Pioneer Corps, often note changes of name, which may be the only way in some cases to verify any change.

Personal diaries and papers

These can contain invaluable information about camps and conditions therein. Henry Mendel,²³ held in Central Camp, wrote an account in which he included a sketch map showing the house numbers. Many will have seen the 'Who Do You Think You Are' BBC TV episode a few years ago about David Baddiel, whose grandfather, Ernst Fabian from Königsberg, was held on the Island. David had numerous letters but at the time we were unable to identify the house his relative was in. Thanks to this diary, we can now do so.

We have also received the papers of Cyril R. Cuthbert, the commandant at Rushen Camp, which include greetings from internees on special occasions.²⁴ In contrast, we also have the papers of a camp supervisor at Onchan, Hans Beermann, some of his items having been lent for use in the 'Living with the Wire' exhibition in 1994.²⁵

Reminiscences and biographies

Sometimes families publish details on the internet, a good example being the

site for the Austrian composer Hans Gal, who, while interned, composed music for the revue 'What a Life' (<http://hansgal.com/>). Such accounts can potentially link into other families or expand on events obliquely mentioned in notes and letters. Hans Gal also recorded an interview which is in the Imperial War Museum collection, of which the Manx Museum Library has a transcript.²⁶

Whenever I see a new or second-hand book concerning internment, I look at the references and bibliography, if any, to see if there is anything else we should add to the collections. It is amazing how many times an apparently slight reference in one account links to another and then makes far more sense.

Photographs

These are generally rare. Examples have survived of a few individuals, including lovely ones of activities in the women's camp, from the papers of Methodist Minister Rev Harry Johnson.²⁷ There are also official photographs published in the contemporary press and in official reports. In addition, there are a number of identifiable pictures in the report produced by John Barwick in 1941.²⁸ If any reader has photographs taken in the camps, we would be very interested to see them, especially if individuals can be identified.



Performance of 'Everyman', Easter 1941



Darmstadt Sisters with internee children

Oral history

A number of internees have recorded their experiences for the Imperial War Museum and individuals, including members of the AJR, continue to give talks to groups such as schoolchildren. One of the most common remarks anyone working in family history hears is 'I wish I had asked

continued overleaf

Isle of Man Internment *cont from p9*

them before they died.' Film and oral testimonies are very important and every encouragement should be given to make such a record while you can.

As an example, in a recent interview by researcher Amanda Sebestyen with AJR Life President Ludwig Spiro, he was able to recollect the general arrangement of houses in Onchan Camp and mark these on a map of the camp. Such memories enable us to identify exactly where an individual was in a camp. For example, he mentions individuals such as the artist Jack Bilbo and the writer Leo Kahn.²⁹

The BBC has recorded some oral testimonies such as that given by Ruth Lansley (née Kormes) in 2005 as part of the 'Hometruths' series.³⁰ There are also testimonies in the archive of 'WW2 Peoples War' pages by former internees.³¹

Exhibitions and re-enactments

Since the Manx Museum staged 'Living with the Wire' in 1994 and produced an accompanying booklet, interest in internment has continued unabated. The 'Two Sisters' exhibition in 2002 at the Manx Museum by Julia Winckler focused on her grandmother and great-aunt and also generated much interest.³² We have since lent material to various exhibitions, including 'Forced Journeys' at the Ben Uri Gallery/London Jewish Museum of Art in 2009. Also, an exhibition is provisionally planned for 2015 to mark the 75th anniversary of the opening of the camps.

The IOM Arts Council sponsored a re-enactment of women's experiences called 'Wire and Wool' in 2005. This stimulated interest both among local residents who experienced the events of the time and former internees.³³

National Archives in London

Some records relating to individuals survive, but a recent podcast by Roger Kershaw regarding internment mentioned the fact that certain records are closed for 85 years and can be accessed only on request under the Freedom of Information Act (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/podcasts/39061-play.htm).

Many of those who remained in Britain after the war eventually naturalised to become British citizens and these records may provide additional details. An official certificate was issued and an example from 1947 gives the full name, place and date of birth, previous nationality, marital status, name of wife or husband, and the names and nationality of parents.³⁴ A series of these from 1949-86 is in HO 334; an information sheet on how to locate them is available on the National Archives site.³⁵

A series of camp nominal rolls for 1943-45 exists in the National Archives as part of TNA 215 and copies of these are held in

the Manx Museum.³⁶ They do not include the Peveril Camp in Peel (probably closed for 85 years) and were compiled after the release of most Jewish internees so are of no help for the peak years 1940-41.

Isle of Man Government official records and publications

These include the records of the Isle of Man Constabulary, but a researcher also pointed out to me the wealth of background information about the administration of the camps available in the 1940-45 IOM Government Circulars. Recently, a set of plans for the original areas requisitioned for the camps linked to these circulars came to light in the IOM PRO.³⁷ These circulars include the setting up and closure of camps, the food (including kosher food) supplied to internees, medical and dental provision, aid for destitute internees, payment for work on farms and clerical duties. These are a mine of information to help flesh out the internee experience.

The media

During the war there were reports of activities in camps both for and against the internees. It is sometimes possible to find references to individuals, especially if they came to public notice for any particular reason.

Many of the UK nationals are rolling out online access to their back issues including:

The Times www.archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/

The Guardian www.archive.guardian.co.uk

Daily Express www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/?sf=express

All Isle of Man newspapers up to December 1960 except the *Isle of Man Daily Times* are currently being digitised. Once they are completed, it will be possible to search them for events and individuals. The method for public access to this resource has not yet been confirmed.

There is also film footage of internees and snippets continue to be shown on historical programmes. These are probably sourced from the Imperial War Museum or organisations such as Pathé Archive.

The work of researchers

The scope for research into internment is wide and sometimes a new angle brings to light fresh material. The current research of Jan Buresova into Czech refugees³⁸ turned up in our collections a copy of a journal produced in Rushen Camp and a copy of *Hamacabbi*, a Czech-language news sheet. In this was an article by Lucy Borchardt, who managed to move to the Island, although not as an internee, whilst her daughter Ruth was interned. Ruth started the service exchange scheme in the women's camp and is quite well known. We found a registration card for Lucy in a separate non-internee aliens sequence.

Reports into camps produced by other agencies

The International Committee of the Red Cross commissioned reports into conditions in Manx internment camps during the Second World War. The Library has copies of 13 of these.³⁹

I do hope this guide will encourage some of you to look again at your family history. MNH Library would be pleased to hear from you or assist you in any way we can.

Alan Franklin, Librarian

Manx National Heritage Library

Manx Museum, Douglas IOM IM1 3LY

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¹ A summary version is available on the AJR website.

² Henry Wuga was interned at the age of 14 in 1940 though the minimum age was 16.

³ One of the most important is that of the National Archives at Kew: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/

⁴ 'Arrival of the Aliens – first batch to land on the Island', *Ramsey Courier*, 28 May 1940, p. 2. The *IOM Examiner* of 1 June 1940, p. 4 notes that '3,671 Enemy Aliens arrive – 823 men for Mooragh Camp and nearly 3,000 women and children for Port Erin'.

⁵ In Archives of the IOM Constabulary, MS 09310.

⁶ A copy of the Pioneer Corps enrolment list has been deposited as MS 11791 by Helen Fry.

⁷ From a card sent by Kurt Treitel, MS 11497.

⁸ MS 11293. The printed booklet *Home Office Orders for Internment Camps up to 30 June 1943* includes the following codes: Ballaquane Hospital ZR; Falcon Cliff Hospital ZM; Hutchinson P; Mooragh Germans L; Port Erin (Women) W; Port Erin (Married couples) Y.

⁹ Papers of W. A. Steiner, MS 11882

¹⁰ Interview with Nicola Tooms, 23 July 2008; notes and coins 2008-0245/1-3 and 2008-0246/1-2.

¹¹ Erich Wolfsberg, 1884-1956, exhibited at the Royal Academy.

¹² The portrait was done on newsprint and is preserved by his son Morris along with a presentation booklet given to him on his release and other mementos of his time in Ramsey. Morris, born in Douglas in 1940 while his mother was interned, visited the Island with his daughter from the US in 2009. Illustrations reproduced by kind permission of the family.

¹³ MS 11271.

¹⁴ DVD in MS 11497. Oscar Fehr 1871-1959.

¹⁵ The card is reproduced with his permission, MS 11497.

¹⁶ An example is a carved wooden female figurine inscribed 'Hutchinson Camp Nov 40 J. Schreiner', which is in private hands.

¹⁷ In Ernst Blensdorf (1896-1976): A Retrospective Exhibition at King's School, Bruton, 4 July-1 August 2008: Catalogue. It shows him carving the panel 'The Lovers' seated in a dormer window in Hutchinson Square.

¹⁸ MS 11018 sent by Eugen Winckler and stamped 24.12.1940.

¹⁹ Correspondence in MS 11497.

²⁰ An example on file is a letter sent to the mother of Werner Martin Bergman in 1939.

²¹ An example issued to Lisbeth Brainin to return to London in August 1940 was copied to us by Jussi Brainin in 2008.

²² MS 09692/23/4.

²³ MS 12140, originally written in German and transcribed by his daughter, deposited in 2009.

²⁴ MS 11196.

²⁵ MS 11716.

²⁶ MNH SA 0274.

²⁷ MS 09378. Papers of Harry Johnson, Methodist Minister Port St Mary, relating to his involvement with the Rushen Internment Camp, 1940-45.

²⁸ M 23044. Report on Alien Internment Camps in the UK April 1941.

²⁹ MS 12144.

³⁰ www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/hometruths/20050905_ruth.shtml

³¹ Under subheading internment www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/

³² See MS 10688 for a summary of the project.

³³ MS 11289. The papers of the IOM Arts Council community worker Peggy Riley who wrote and directed the re-enactment.

³⁴ Issued to A. Lorch and daughter. National Archives HO 334/232 contains 500 duplicate certificates of naturalisation issued in 1947-48.

³⁵ www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/citizenship-and-naturalisation.htm

³⁶ MS 11551. Six camps: Hutchinson, Metropole, Mooragh, Onchan, Women's, Married.

³⁷ Examples of these are included in the second article.

³⁸ MS 12174.

³⁹ MS 12105.

'A Hierarchy of Suffering?'

by Martha Blend

How do you calibrate suffering?
Is there a hierarchy of woe?

Can you measure
The terror of Anne Frank
Listening with indrawn breath
For the crunch of jackboots
And the Or the distress

Of the bewildered infant
Snatched from its doomed mother
(Lucky to be alive, they say)
Who must forever seek to know
'Who am I? What is my parentage?'
An empty vessel
Brittle as eggshell
Robbed of kinship
And its sustaining memories
Bearing the imprint
Of every culture but its own?

Or the child
Left with the anguish of a last embrace
Never to be repeated

Not daring to turn the pages
Of that grisly book
Where the full outrage is recorded
Lest it tip a balance so delicate –
That way madness lies –
When the very names
Of the obscene graveyards of her family –
Auschwitz, Buchenwald –
Knot the stomach and blur the sight
From this there is no liberation?

Or those who were in hell itself
And took the full heat of its flames
On their starved bellies
And skinny frames?

Must we find a scale
That will weigh one against another?
And has there been so little gain
From all that we have suffered
That seeking to divide our ranks
We hand to our tormentors
The final cup of victory?

LEEDS WOMAN, 104, WHO MET HITLER

Marguerite Simmons has never forgotten the day she met Hitler. Today, she is 104 and lives quietly in Leeds.

Marguerite abandoned her life in Germany before the outbreak of the Second World War when she was recognised as a Jew in a photograph with her son, John Muller, and the Nazi dictator.

Marguerite said: 'When the Nazis came I had to get out of Germany. It was very scary growing up in Germany as a Jew. Hitler addressed my little boy when he was only a few years old. He was a famous man and I knew he was hated. I was very scared.'

Marguerite and six-year-old John were staying in a hotel in Cologne in 1934 and were told that Hitler and propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels were also guests. They were told to line the stairs to greet him but Hitler noticed blond-haired, blue-eyed John, who was wearing a Bavarian outfit, and approached him.

Marguerite's granddaughter, Katy Muller, said: 'Hitler loved children so he came up to my father, patted him on the head and asked him where he was from. My father told him he was from Cologne and he walked



off. My grandmother was very nervous about meeting him and she knew he wasn't well liked but she was still excited.'

A photograph was taken of the two with Hitler and, when it was published, someone recognised Marguerite as being Jewish and it caused an outcry. The negatives and copies of the photograph were

destroyed. Fearing for her life, Marguerite fled to England in 1936, leaving her son and then husband behind. On arrival in England, she was interned on the Isle of Man and soon remarried Erwin Simmons, a German-Jewish refugee serving as an officer in the British army.

When John Muller turned 17 he came to Britain to trace his mother and spent most of his life working as a senior lecturer at Leeds University. Marguerite spent most of her life in Middlesex, but moved to Leeds when she reached 100 to be closer to her granddaughter.

Marguerite joked 'Being 104 just feels no different from being 103!'

This is an edited version of an article which appeared in the Yorkshire Evening Post on 24 March 2010.

MARCH OF THE LIVING 2011

On Yom Hashoah, each year since 1988, people from all over the world have commemorated the Holocaust by taking part in a 3km 'March of the Living' from Auschwitz to Birkenau. During the March, loudspeakers continuously call out the names of the one and a half million children who were murdered by the Nazis.

About 10,000 people took part in this most impressive gathering this year. I was invited to join the Austrian contingent as an ex-Austrian survivor. A total of 450 Austrian students, most of them Christians, took part in the March. Flags from every Western country preceded each group. The largest groups came from Israel and the USA, many South American countries were represented,

and, naturally, groups from most European countries took part. England had a small contingent of about 13 led by my friend Scott Saunders.

Scott and I have decided that we will organise a large group of students and adults for next year's March. It would be wonderful if members of the AJR would join us. We are planning to visit Warsaw, Maidanek, Cracow and Auschwitz. The plans are not yet finalised, but will those wishing to join us please contact me at f.knoller@googlemail.com or Scott Saunders at scottasaunders@hotmail.com

Freddie Knoller

Please note that the AJR is playing no direct role in this event (Ed.).

YOM HASHOAH 2010



A moving service at Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation was attended by both Synagogue and AJR members. The TV documentary 'Churchill's German Army' was shown and introduced by Dr Helen Fry and co-author James Hamilton. Rabbi Bar said the memorial prayer for the 6 million who perished and led the communal Kaddish.

Larry Lisner



AJR members attended a moving service in Liverpool. Memorial candles were lit, including one by Kay Fyne on behalf of Liverpool AJR.

Photo: Guido Alis



Some 500 people attended Pinner Synagogue's Yom Hashoah memorial service, which this year focused on the 70th anniversary of the Nazi occupation of France. Guest keynote speakers were survivors Freda Wineman and Marcel Ladenheim (pictured here), who were joined by embassy dignitaries, including Jean-Claude Poimboeuf, a representative of the French Embassy in London, and numerous other survivors.

Photo: Stephen Gee

INSIDE the AJR

Sheffield The ill-fated *St Louis*

Gisela Feldman recalled her journey on the *SS St Louis*, a German liner bound for Cuba in May 1939 carrying over 900 Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany with a view to their entering the US. However, a new government in Cuba refused to allow the refugees to enter the country; the USA similarly refused; appeals to other countries by Jewish relief organisations failed too. For the Nazis, this was a stunning victory, proving the Allies didn't want the Jews in their countries any more than he wanted them in his. The German captain had no choice but to return to Germany. At the eleventh hour, Britain, France, Belgium and Holland agreed to admit the refugees. Gisela was among the fortunate ones to land in Britain. Few of the original passengers survived.

Steve Mendelsson

Next meeting: 13 June

Norfolk Renewing auld acquaintance

We gathered for lunch to renew auld acquaintance, see Frank's photos of schools using his Prague class photo to study the Shoah, and hear Myrna talking about Purim, one of the few pogroms ever to be averted.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: 14 June. Lunchtime Social Get-together

Wessex 'Is This Great Art?'

Around 30 of us heard Myra Sampson speak on 'Abstract Expressionism – Is This Great Art?' Even if she didn't convince us all, we had a thoroughly entertaining talk.

Pat Cravitz

Next meeting: 15 June. Outing to Athelhampton House and gardens plus tea

Bradford CF Reluctant to leave

Many people were present, discussing various topics. We heard Rudi's non-denominational prayer. Thea asked whether Jewish communities abroad should be contacted to see if they have groups with which we could liaise (undecided). Followed by tea and chat with Susanne's superb cakes. Everyone was reluctant to leave.

Anna Greenwood

Next meeting: 10 June

Welwyn 'Children and the Third Reich'

The Wiener Library's Howard Falksohn spoke on 'Children and the Third Reich'. Howard had also invited several students along – perhaps other groups might consider inviting students or schoolchildren to meetings devoted to suitable subjects.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 17 June. Siobhan Mellon, Projects and Volunteers' Co-ordinator, Cambridge Carbon Footprint

Temple Fortune 'Women in the Bible'

An appropriate time – just after Pesach – to hear and see Alan Cohen's portrayal

of these fine strong women put to music. Purely *his* interpretation but one that left us all humming.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 10 June. Judy Kelner, 'Desert Island Discs'

Essex The Jews of Ostrava

David Lawson gave a very interesting talk on how Kingston Synagogue acquired a Sefer Torah from the town of Ostrava in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, from which several members' families came.

Larry Lisner

Next meeting: 8 June (tba)

Café Imperial Social Get-together

As always, a diverse range of topics was covered. New member Peter Wayne travelled from Holland Park to join us and reminisce.

Esther Rinkoff

Wembley CF Stalwarts celebrate

A group of stalwarts, including 100-year-old Feo Kahn, celebrated our group's third anniversary. Everyone enjoyed the delicious birthday tea and the lively discussion.

Myrna Glass

Next meeting: 9 June. Social Get-together

Cambridge The Jewish community of Ostrava

David Lawson gave a vivid account of the important contribution the once large Jewish community of Ostrava made to the developing iron, coal and textile industries in that volatile region.

Keith Lawson

Next meeting: 10 June. Dr Helen Fry

REGIONAL GET-TOGETHER IN OXFORD

Wednesday 16 June

Speaker: Dr Anthony Grenville

Members from Birmingham, Oxford, Pinner, Radlett and South West Midlands have been invited. Anyone else interested please call Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator, on 020 8385 3070 for further details.

Manchester 'Fight or Flight'

Prof Eve Rosenhaft of Liverpool University, speaking on the topic 'Fight or Flight', provided insight into the dilemmas our parents faced after Hitler came to power. Members related their own experiences as remembered from their youth.

Werner Lachs

Brighton and Hove Sarid: The Bank explained

Andrew Holder gave a clear explanation of the workings of the Bank of England. Since its independence from the government, its duties have been to set the bank rate while keeping a watchful eye on the stability of the economy and helping the recovery from the recession.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 21 June (tba)

LIVERPOOL FELLOW KINDERTRANSPORTEES



(from left) Lady Milena, Hannah Eardley, Uta Klein

Naomi Brown, daughter of AJR member Kay Fyne, kindly made her home available for our meeting. Lady Milena Grenfell Baines, speaking about events 70 years ago, was on the last Kindertransport out of Czechoslovakia and met up with fellow passenger, Liverpool AJR member Hannah Eardley.

Guido Alis

Weald of Kent A Jewish Schindler?

Prof Ladislaus Löb told us how, in a controversial agreement between Hungarian Jewish leader Reszo Kasztner and the Nazis, he was one of a group of Jews who escaped the Holocaust.

Inge Ball

Next meeting: 29 June. John Holland, 'The Quakers'

AJR BOOK CLUB

The AJR in conjunction with Joseph's Bookstore, 2 Ashbourne Parade, Finchley Rd., London NW11, will be hosting a bi-monthly book group starting

Wednesday 30 June 3-5 pm
£5 entrance to include tea/coffee and cake

Places offered on a first-come first-served basis

Please contact Esther or Hazel on 020 8385 3077

Edgware In a 'gemütlich' atmosphere

Prof Leslie Brent spoke about his latest visits to Berlin, from where he came to this country on a Kindertransport. Some of us were reminded of our own experiences. Later we had the chance to talk to friends over coffee and cake in a 'gemütlich' atmosphere.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 15 June. 4th anniversary; Andrea Cameron, 'The Story of Pear's Soap'

Radlett Rewarding morning

David Lawson told us there had been an abundance of Jewish artists and bankers, industrialists and ambassadors in Ostrava – and the first mass deportation of a Jewish community in the war was from that town. An extremely rewarding morning.

Fritz Starer

Leeds CF Differences in outlook?

A full house for a very interesting meeting on the subject 'Is there a difference in outlook between those who came to the UK under school age and those over school age? Is there a difference in outlook and achievements between those brought up in a family and those who had no family in the UK?' Also, Trude Silman told us about her visit to the Isle of Man to see the exhibition 'Forced Journeys: Artists in Exile, 1933-1945'

Barbara Cammerman

Surrey Meeting up and catching up

Once again Edmée offered her home for a very pleasant, sociable morning. Amidst the coffee cups and tasty food, we met up, caught up, and enjoyed each other's company.

Eva Gold-Young

Hendon The story of Jack the Ripper

Myra Sampson told us about Jack the Ripper, the murderer of five young women in London's East End in the 1880s who was never caught. Some people think a group of three, including the artist Walter Sickert, who painted prostitutes, carried out the murders.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 28 June. 4th anniversary; Susannah Alexander, 'The Jews of England, Part 2'

Edinburgh Visit to exhibition in Germany

Vivien Anderson spoke about her recent visit to Germany to attend the opening

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Fausta Shelton 01273 734 648

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

Cambridge
Anne Bender 01223 276 999

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Dundee
Agnes Isaacs 0755 1968 593

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edgware
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3077

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Larry Lisner 01702 300812

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Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

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Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

SECOND GENERATION**BEAUTIFUL SENTENCE**

**Sunday 6 June, 2.50 for 3.00 pm
at the Wiener Library**

Poet Leah Thorn made her first film shortly after the death of her mother, Holocaust survivor Laura Thorn. Set among the beehives and high heels, fur stoles and Ford Zephyrs of 60s and 70s London Jewish suburbia, *My Amulet* delivers Leah's spin on assimilation, acculturation and 'other such aggravation'.

Leah will show this short film and talk about what it has meant to be an openly Jewish artist and how this relates to her Second Generation identity. She will also show clips from *Beautiful Sentence*, a film about her work as writer-in-residence in a woman's prison.

The AGM of the Second Generation Network starts at 2.00 pm

**For further details, please
tel 0781 357 4699**

of the touring exhibition 'Legalisierter Raub: Der Fiskus und die Ausplünderung der Juden in Hessen 1933-1945'. The exhibition, about the involvement of the tax authorities in the dispossession of the Jews, features the story of a local family in each new venue. At its current location, in Rotenburg a.d. Fulda, it features a large display devoted to members of Vivien's family.

Agnes Isaacs

Cleve Road Mid East update

The Israel Embassy's Jason Caplan, assisted by Samantha Colman, updated us on the current situation in Israel and the Middle East. A uniquely informative meeting.

David Lang

Next meeting: 22 (not 29) June. Bernard Ecker, 'Catering for a Laugh'

continued on page 15

Norfolk (Norwich)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London
Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

Oxford
Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Weald of Kent
Max and Jane Dickson
01892 541026

Wembley
Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Fred Austin 01384 252310

Paul Balint AJR Centre
15 Cleve Road, London NW6
Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 16 June 2010

Louise Heilbron
'Judaic Embroidery'

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the *AJR Journal*, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

KT-AJR

**Kindertransport special
interest group**

Monday 7 June 2010

Hermann Hirschberger
'The Kindertransport Survey'

**KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH
WILL BE SERVED AT
1.00 PM ON MONDAYS**

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

**Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
9.30 am – 3.30 pm**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS
CLOSED ON TUESDAYS**

June Afternoon Entertainment

Tue	1	CLOSED
Wed	2	Stefan & Arjan
Thur	3	William Smith
Mon	7	Kards & Games Klub – KT LUNCH
Tue	8	CLOSED
Wed	9	Chris Sausman
Thur	10	Annie's Quiz
Mon	14	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	15	CLOSED
Wed	16	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	17	Top Hat Entertainments
Mon	21	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Music Matinee
Tue	22	CLOSED
Wed	23	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur	24	Paul Coleman
Mon	28	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	29	CLOSED
Wed	30	Margaret Opdahl

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasimir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

**Myrna Glass, London South and Midlands
Groups Co-ordinator**
020 8385 3077

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

**Agnes Isaacs, Scotland and Newcastle
Co-ordinator**
0755 1968 593

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Gamsa, Leon died suddenly on 16 April 2010. Deeply mourned by his wife Rena and the Gamsa and Voss families.

Katz, Karl died on 9 April 2010 after a long illness just before his 87th birthday. He arrived on the Kindertransport from Vienna in December 1938. Mourned by his wife, family and friends. (Andrey Kodin)

Kelley, Frank (born Franz König) died on 21 April aged 90. Mourned by his wife Rosmarie and his many friends in various parts of the globe, especially the very few of his SOE comrades who are still alive. (An obituary will appear in a later issue of the Journal.)

Tai Chi Classes

Would you like to learn Tai Chi?

We have a new class starting at our Paul Balint Centre

On Monday 7 June 2010

at 10.00 am

Instructor: Steffi Sachsenmaier

Would you like to know more?

Please tel 020 7328 0208

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Clara Nehab House
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London NW11

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SUNDAY 13 June 2010

2.30 – 5.00 pm

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5-DAY TRIP TO BUDAPEST

THIS TRIP HAS BEEN CANCELLED

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sun 27 June – Sun 4 July 2010
at the INN ON THE PROM
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

The cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast, is £582.50 per person

For booking form contact
Ruth Finestone on (direct line)
020 8385 3082 or 07966 886535

OUTING TO KEW GARDENS MONDAY 7 JUNE 2010

The AJR Outreach Groups' Department is arranging an outing to Kew Gardens. This will be a whole day with lunch in the restaurant.

Explore glasshouses, landscapes and 250 years of history at the world's most famous garden. Climb to the treetops, delve into rainforest or discover more on a guided tour which will form part of our visit.

The land train is available for those who have difficulty walking long distances.

For further details, please call Susan Harrod, Regional Groups Administrator, on 020 8385 3070.

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The Manager, Clara Nehab House
13-19 Leaside Crescent,
London NW11 0DA
Telephone: 020 8455 2286

HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE

The AJR are doing another holiday at the **Lansdowne Hotel**
Friday 16 July to Friday 23 July

£520 per week dinner, bed and breakfast plus £40 per week single room supplement to include transport from Cleve Road, lunch on outward journey
Book early to avoid disappointment

Please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

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OBITUARY

Erica Marks (Koch), 1915-2010

Erica Marks (Koch), who was born in Frankfurt in 1915, died on 28 February this year.

Having escaped the Nazis and come to England in 1936, Erica was interned as an 'enemy alien' on the Isle of Man. Her father was Ludwig Koch, the 'Birdman'. (When Ludwig was honoured at Buckingham Palace with an MBE, he said to The Queen: 'Now I am a member of the Bird Empire.') Erica's brother, Val Kennedy, played the bassoon in the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Having begun to train as a photographer in Berlin, Erica completed her training in London. She specialised in child portraits, but also took



photographs for the *Diplomat* magazine of politicians such as Harold Macmillan and Margaret Thatcher as well as of Margot Fonteyn, The Queen and Prince Philip. Alice Goldberger, whom she met on the Isle of Man, became a close friend.

I first met Erica in 1946 when she came to Weir Courtney in Lingfield, Surrey, to take photos of 24 children who had been in concentration camps and were starting a new life in England. She also took photos of us as we grew up as well as some wedding photos. I kept in touch with her for 64 years. She married Hilary Marks in 1958; there were no children. Erica is survived by two nieces. I will always think of her and miss her.

Zdenka Husserl

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

Harrogate CF discuss everything under the sun

On the agenda was 'Discussion'. And we discussed! Everything under the sun. Unable to solve the problems of the world, we enjoyed tea, coffee and cake.

Inge Little

Next meeting: 16 August

Contrasting meetings in North London

At our March meeting, our own Peter Sinclair, who has a most dry sense of humour, gave us a most interesting talk about his war-time experiences as well as his business travels in Eastern Europe in the following years. At our April meeting, in complete contrast, Andrea Cameron gave us a fascinating talk on the history of Pear's soap.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 24 June. Israel update (tbc)

HGS History of Thomas Cook

Thomas Cook's Joy Hopper gave us an enlightening history of the travel company together with a marvellous collage of photos showing, among other things, an early 1920s trip to Egypt.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 14 June. Edna Fernandez, 'The Jews of Kerala'

ALSO MEETING IN JUNE

Ealing 1 June. Roger Beales, 'The Bank of England'

West Midlands (Birmingham) 1 June. David Lawson, 'The Jews of Ostrava'

Ilford 2 June. Ladislaus Löb, 'A Jewish Schindler?'

Pinner 3 June. Rabbi Jonathan Romain, 'The Medieval Jews along the Thames'

REVIEW *cont from p8*

a death march where the weak are shot without mercy. There is a vivid description of the fight for sleeping space during their nightly stops. Liberated by the Russians, Vera cadges a lift on the roof of a train back to Budapest. It turns out that she is one of the lucky ones: her sister and aunt have survived, although her uncle has not. She describes the cold welcome other survivors got: 'They demanded to know who had been members of the murderous Arrow Cross, who had seen their parents, where their

belongings had gone. The neighbours denied having seen anything. 'Leave us alone! one of them shouted at my sister. More Jews came back from Germany than went there, more's the pity!'

Living under Communism, people find that one tyranny has been replaced by another.

After the Hungarian uprising, Vera makes her way to Vienna and, finally, England.

This book is unusual in that it spans both pre- and post-war Hungary, giving insight into life under Communism as

Claims Conference update

At their most recent round of negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference secured notable improvements in the eligibility criteria for reparation funds and significant increases in support for social and welfare programmes.

Although an initiative of the AJR, part of the Homecare programme is financed by the Claims Conference from money negotiated from the German government. Homecare helps with the costs of carers, cleaners and chores. In recent years, the German government has signalled its commitment to funding this cost-effective programme, which enables agencies like the AJR to maintain its members in their own homes for as long as possible.

As part of the increase from 30m to 55m euros in the overall funding of this programme by the German government, the UK will receive 810,000 euros, an increase of 368,000 euros.

Also agreed at the negotiations was a change in the criteria for entitlement to the Article II Fund, the equivalent of a monthly pension paid by the Claims Conference and financed by the German government. Until now, Holocaust survivors had to satisfy stringent conditions to be eligible for the 291 euros a month pension, including incarceration in a concentration camp for a minimum of six months.

Recognising the Claims Conference's assertion that even a short time in a Nazi camp resulted in unimaginable suffering and deprivation, the German government has now agreed to allow a special review of the cases of those who were in concentration camps, even for a short period of time. This change has been a long-sought goal in negotiations with Germany.

Consequently, anyone who has submitted a claim to the Article II Fund but did not meet the condition of having been interned in a concentration camp for a minimum of six months, or any other Holocaust survivor who does not receive a compensation pension but was interned in a concentration camp for any length of time, is encouraged to contact the AJR.

Written enquiries should be sent to the AJR, Jubilee House, Merriem Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL or to mnewman@ajr.org.uk

Michael Newman

an added interest. The intelligence and courage of the author shine through the narrative.

Martha Blend



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



A still growing membership

As a result of a chance encounter at Lod airport at the beginning of the year, I met Robi Damelin, spokesperson for the Parents Circle-Bereaved Families Forum, the group uniting Israeli and Palestinian bereaved families in an effort to attain peace, reconciliation and tolerance.

Robi was struggling with a huge poster advertising an exhibition of cartoons about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to be held in London the following week. We helped her with her package and, as we were also on our way to London, she invited us to attend the opening of the exhibition.

Robi is obviously a woman of character. Born in South Africa, where she was involved in the struggle against apartheid, she immigrated to Israel as a young woman. After her son was killed by a sniper while in the IDF reserves, she resolved not to let his death serve as a lever for stirring up calls for revenge and was instrumental in bringing together bereaved families from both sides. In the course of her campaign to spread the message of conciliation, she has travelled all over the world, speaking in synagogues, schools and even mosques, receiving a

warm welcome wherever she goes.

The exhibition, which was curated by leading Israeli cartoonist Michel Kishka, was hosted by St Martin in the Fields church. The cartoons, most of them sharply critical of the impasse in the Middle East and the toll it has taken on human life, came from all over the world, though they all refrained from simply blaming one side or the other.

The Bereaved Families Forum (www.theparentscircle.org), which now numbers some 500 families, engages in educational activities to promote dialogue and understanding between the two communities through outreach to high schools on both sides, bi-national youth leaders' seminars, an internet reconciliation programme and workshops, and a phone line through which individuals can talk to someone on 'the other side'. Since 2002 it has facilitated over one million phone calls between Palestinians and Israelis.

In addition, a group of Israeli and Palestinian bereaved women was established in 2006. It meets several times a year, bringing into the Forum many new female members who feel more at ease with 'women only' activities. The

women cook and travel together, hold empowerment workshops and visit one another's homes.

About 150 people attended the opening of the exhibition, which was sponsored by the UK Friends of the Forum, World Vision and Christian Aid, and has been displayed in New York, Spain, Italy, Israel and elsewhere. Moving speeches were made by Robi and her Palestinian counterpart, Seham Abu Awad, as well as addresses by the vicar of St Martin in the Fields and a rabbi. The vicar read out a message of support from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the rabbi passed on the good wishes of the Chief Rabbi.

My favourite cartoon was one by South African cartoonist Jonathan Zapiro. It showed terrorists wearing face-masks and *keffiyas*, Israeli soldiers in tanks, and soldiers from India and Pakistan beneath missiles, all stopping whatever militant or military action they were engaged in to focus on a TV set and raise their arms as they all stood side by side shouting 'Goooooal!'

The throng at the opening night inspected the cartoons, smiled at some and shook their heads at others. Everyone there was united in regretting the terrible waste of human life and resources that the conflict has produced. A calendar containing a selection of the cartoons as well as other literature went on sale and business was brisk, but the tragic bottom line is that the organisation's membership is still growing.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

house that was holding lifts of Jewish families prior to their dispatch, in our case to Palestine. The Nazis were verifying the contents and making sure nothing was being smuggled. There were limitations to what could be included. For example, as we were a family of five, only five sets of silverware were permitted.

An SS officer stood by as a clerk prised open the lift. The first item he picked up was a velvet jewellery box that contained three small silver bracelets, gifts my father had bought for us, his young daughters, during a trip to Palestine. The SS could not find the bracelets on our list. My mother protested that they were trinkets thrown in at the

last minute when we children decided not to wear them. Mother stood for hours as every single item was removed from the lift. All were listed.

Two days later, my mother was served with a summons, not at her Halle residence but at our grandfather's house in Leipzig. Accused of attempting to smuggle silver out of Germany, she was ordered to appear at the court in Magdeburg. Believing the Nazis would find her wherever she hid, she went. She was convinced she would be imprisoned, but in fact the judge only ordered her to pay a fine of 2,000 Deutschmarks. She was free to follow my father to Paris with my sisters and me.

Because our lift was stored in a damp warehouse in Tel Aviv throughout the war, all our furniture was ruined and unusable. Unlike the furniture, we all survived, my parents despite their confinement in French concentration camps and my father's months of forced labour.

Eve R. Kugler, London N3

Sir – When a customs officer inspected our lift as it was being packed in November 1937 in Berlin, he gave a very low valuation of my father's stamp collection and said later 'Wenn ick [i.e. ich] Jude wäre, würde ick auch auswandern' (If I were a Jew, I would emigrate as well). *Rudi Leavor, Bradford*