

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Internment in Australia

Most of our readers in Britain will be broadly familiar with the topography of the internment camps on the Isle of Man, where 'enemy aliens', including many thousands of Jewish refugees from Hitler, were detained by the British government in 1940. The names of camps such as Central Promenade, Hutchinson, Sefton, Onchan, Ramsey (Mooragh), Rushen (the women's camp comprising Port Erin and Port St Mary) and Peveril have passed into the collective memory of the refugee community. Apart from Peveril, which was in Peel on the west coast of the island, Rushen in the south-west and Ramsey in the north, they were situated in or near Douglas, on the east coast, and still conjure up images of groups of boarding houses hastily requisitioned for wartime duties. The family camp, set up later within the women's camp, was located in Port St Erin and included the resplendently named Ballaqueeny, the largest single boarding house on the island.

Not content with interning Jewish refugees as potential German agents, the British government also deported several thousand entirely blameless refugees overseas. The largest contingent was sent to Canada. Four ships carrying them left Britain for Canada: the *Duchess of York*, which sailed from Liverpool on 21 June 1940, the *Arandora Star*, which left on 1 July and achieved a sad fame when it was sunk the next day by a German submarine with the loss of several hundred lives, the *Ettrick*, which left a few days later, carrying internees who ended up in Sherbrooke Camp in southern Quebec, and the *Sobieski*, whose internees were accommodated at Fredericton in New Brunswick.

The sinking of the *Arandora Star* sparked a public revulsion against the internment of refugees from Nazism and contributed to a change in government policy towards the refugees and the ending of both their internment and their deportation overseas. By then, some

4,400 'enemy aliens', all men, had been transported to Canada. Frederick G. Cohn's novel *A Lucid Interval* (1999), a work of fiction based on actual experience, tells the story of two young brothers, Jews from Germany, who made a perilous escape to Britain via Lithuania and were reunited with their parents in 1940, only to be arrested and deported to Canada. It is one of a number of books that convey



Cover of *An Illustrated Diary of Australian Internment* by Edmond Samuels (NAA: A1336, 7597)

vividly the conditions prevailing in the Canadian camps and the emotional and psychological effects on the inmates of confinement under harsh conditions at a remote location in an unfamiliar land.

Though there was only one ship that took internees from Britain to Australia, the notorious troopship *Dunera*, which left Liverpool on 10 July 1940 with some 2,500 men on board, the story of those deported to Australia has attracted more attention than its Canadian counterpart. The wartime deportees arguably made less of an impact on the existing Jewish community in Canada and on Canadian society in general than was the case in

Australia; the influx of a group of highly cultured, skilled and educated immigrants had a disproportionately large effect on Australian society, which was in 1940 still developing a sense of its own independent, post-colonial culture.

In Canada, there are few reminders of the deportees. By contrast, the prominent Australian writer and journalist Cyril Pearl, a Jew, wrote a book about the deportees,

The Dunera Scandal (1983), and in 1985 the film *The Dunera Boys*, starring the big-name actor Bob Hoskins, was broadcast on Australian television. Though the disaster that struck the Canada-bound *Arandora Star* has ensured that its name has remained alive in the memory of the community of Jewish refugees from Hitler in Britain and beyond – the Austrian author Norbert Gstrein used it in his novel *Die englischen Jahre* (*The English Years*) (1999) – it is the *Dunera* whose name is most commonly associated with the deportations of 1940. That is probably on account of the appalling conditions that prevailed on board ship and the scandalous mistreatment to which the refugee deportees were subjected by the British troops guarding them. Anton Walter Freud, a grandson of Sigmund Freud who later joined the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and was dropped by parachute into Austria in the last phase of the war,

and Ken Ambrose, founder of the AJR's South London group, left vivid accounts of their time on the *Dunera* for the *Continental Britons* exhibition (2002, funded by the AJR).

Less well known in Britain are the details of the internment camps to which the deportees on the *Dunera* were sent after their bedraggled arrival in Australia following eight long weeks at sea. However, since the 1970s the Melbourne-based Dunera Association has been dedicated to preserving the memory of the deportees, to researching and recording their history and to maintaining contact

↶ Internment in Australia *cont*

between the surviving former deportees as well as their descendants. Since 1984 the Association has published the *Dunera News*, which in March 2013 reached its 87th number and which contains a great deal of information about the two principal camps to which the deportees were sent. I am indebted for much of the following detail to this publication and to the Austrian scholar Professor Elisabeth Lebensaft, who recently visited Australia to research the Austrians among the 'Dunera Boys'; the resulting paper, written with Christine Kanzler, is entitled "It's a Story You Will Never Forget": Auf den Spuren österreichischer Dunera Boys in Australien' (On the Trail of Austrian Dunera Boys in Australia).

The *Dunera* reached Sydney on 6 September 1940. From there, most of the deportees were taken by train to Hay, in the Riverina district of New South Wales, deep in the remote Australian outback, where they were housed in two camps (the third held Italian internees). Conditions in the isolated, semi-desert location were primitive and debilitating and the detainees suffered from heat, insect parasites and the sand that was continually blown into the huts accommodating them. The artist Johannes Matthäus Koelz, a political refugee from Hitler, recorded their arrival at Hay station:

A cloud of dust appeared on the horizon, approaching at some speed. As it came nearer, it turned out to be a cloud of flies enveloping half a dozen skinny horses and their riders – our escort to camp. We took up whatever luggage was left to us, and trudging over sandy soil in a landscape much flatter than a pancake could ever be we quickly reached a double line of huge posts of fantastic shape and enormous thickness, connected by rows of barbed wire. A door opened, in we went, and the door closed again. We had arrived. No huts, no tents ... A square mile of sand, surrounded by these knobly, surrealistically unreal silhouettes of massive eucalyptus trunks. (Quoted from the biography of Koelz, *Three Point Perspective*, by his daughter Ava M. Farrington)

Despite the conditions, under which the only occupation seemed to be swimming in the turgid waters of the Murrumbidgee River, the detainees contrived to create a rich cultural and intellectual life, remarkable in particular for the musical activities organised by the Viennese musician and musicologist Peter Stadlen, which included his adaptation for male voices of Handel's oratorio *Israel in Egypt*.

In 1941, as official attitudes to the Jewish refugees softened, the detainees

Claims Conference reaches agreement with German Government

The Claims Conference has successfully negotiated an agreement with the German Government which, taken together with the amount previously agreed upon, will provide approximately \$1 billion over the four-year-period 2014-17 for homecare for Jewish Nazi victims, with the annual amount increasing each year through 2017.

The amount the German Government will provide in 2015 – €205 million (\$266 million) – is an increase of 45 per cent over 2014. It will also provide €210 million (\$273 million) for 2016 and €215 million (\$280 million) for 2017. The previously agreed amount for 2014 is approximately €142 million (\$185 million), an increase of €12 million (\$15 million) over 2013 funding. Thus, taken together, this historic agreement is a commitment of €772 million or approximately \$1 billion for the years 2014-17. The German Government also committed to review annually the adequacy of these funding levels.

This unprecedented amount of funding means that victims of the Nazis around the world can obtain the aid they desperately need as they grow more frail. Further, the fact that the agreement encompasses

funding through 2017 underscores the German Government's ongoing commitment to Holocaust survivors. It is all the more impressive as it comes at a time of budget austerity in Germany.

As well as these successes, the Claims Conference reached several other significant agreements with the German Government. Resulting from the negotiations, the German Government agreed to expand the eligibility criteria of the Article 2 Fund as of 1 January 2014 for those Jews who lived under the conditions noted above. A list of 300 'open ghettos' was agreed upon. The Claims Conference estimates that, as result, an additional 2,000-3,000 Holocaust survivors will become eligible for a compensation pension. This will mean increased funding by the German Government of some 7 to 11 million Euros per year. Applicants for monthly pensions from the Article 2 Fund are allowed a higher annual income (\$25,000, previously \$16,000) as of 1 July 2013 to meet the income eligibility requirement. This figure had not been changed since 1995 and will make many more people eligible for Article 2 Fund pensions.

at Hay were transferred to the more comfortable surroundings of Tatura, about 100 miles north of Melbourne, in the Goulburn Valley region of Victoria, where they joined a smaller group that had been taken there after disembarking from the *Dunera* at Melbourne. The refugees were held in Camp 2, one of two camps erected some 15 kilometres south of Tatura, and in Camps 3 and 4, known as the Rushworth Camps, some 11 kilometres to the west. A little-known group of Jewish refugees held at Tatura was composed of Germans and Austrians who had sought refuge in Singapore but who were arrested in September 1940 and transported – aboard the *Queen Mary*, no less – to Australia, where they

were dismayed by the basic nature of the facilities at Tatura. (They would have encountered far worse conditions had they remained in Singapore and endured internment by the Japanese.)

The Tatura camps, writes Rebecca Silk, President of the Dunera Association, 'operated as communities and incorporated canteens, hospitals, dental and recreational facilities, schools, music, theatre and artistic activities'; one hut was converted into a synagogue. The detainees also established the 'Collegium Taturensis', a camp university on the lines of those set up on the Isle of Man. Life in the Tatura camps is recorded in the Tatura Wartime Camps Museum, the counterpart to the Dunera Museum at Hay railway station. After the British government had despatched Major Julian Layton to Australia in 1941 to reclassify the deportees, the Jewish refugees were released, most of them to join the forces or to perform war work. Some 1,300 opted to return to Britain, initially to serve in the Pioneer Corps. However, two of the ships transporting these men back to their original country of refuge were torpedoed, one by a German and one by a Japanese submarine, adding a final cruel twist to a sombre story.

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AJR plaque unveiled in honour of Sir Hans Krebs

The first AJR plaque, commemorating the life of Professor Sir Hans Krebs, has been unveiled at a ceremony at the Department of Biochemistry in Oxford.

Members of the Krebs family were joined by guests from various science departments in Oxford, representatives of the AJR, and members of the Oxford Jewish community.

Barred by the Nazis from practising medicine, Sir Hans fled from Germany to Britain in 1933. In 1953 he was awarded, jointly with another German-Jewish refugee, Fritz Lipmann, a Nobel Prize for his work on what is now known as the 'Krebs cycle', a cycle of biochemical reactions that converts harmful ammonia to urea. In 1958 he was knighted.

In 1965 Sir Hans had the honour of handing over to Lord Robbins, President of the British Academy, the proceeds of the Thank-You Britain Fund, an

endowment collected by the refugees in gratitude to their adopted homeland.

One of Sir Hans Krebs's sons, Lord John Krebs, unveiled the plaque and spoke about his father's gratitude to those who had helped him settle in

England. Lord Krebs, who is a zoologist and Principal of

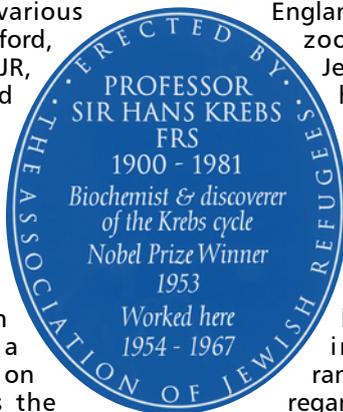
Jesus College Oxford, said he was honoured to be asked to unveil the plaque recognising his father's contribution to science.

Frank Harding, a Trustee of the AJR, told those present that Sir Hans and other refugees had made a tremendous impact across a wide range of fields in the UK. He regarded the commemorative

plaque as a follow-up from the Thank-You Britain Fund.

The AJR is hopeful that its next plaque will be in honour of 'the father of the Paralympics', Sir Ludwig Guttmann, and will be situated at the entrance to the National Spinal Injury Centre

next to Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The possibility of placing a plaque on what was the Cosmo restaurant, now the Eriki, near Swiss Cottage in London, is also being discussed.



'Ode to Finchleystrasse'

The half-hour programme 'Ode to Finchleystrasse' was recently broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in the series *Journeys Down my Street*. In the programme, a group of refugees shared their memories of London's Swiss Cottage area with the historian Mike Berlin, reflecting on their desire to recreate the best of Vienna whilst assimilating into British society. Following are reactions to the programme by AJR members:

Thank you for telling me about the 'Ode to Finchleystrasse', which I have just listened to with much enjoyment. I don't think I ever heard a conductor call out 'Finchleystrasse', but in my family there was a wonderful story about the refugee lady who tried to explain to the bus conductor that her husband, who had gone upstairs to smoke, would pay for their fares. Unfortunately, she said 'The Lord above will pay' and was puzzled when the conductor didn't seem very pleased with that explanation!

Thena Kendall

The version of the anecdote I heard was that bus conductors at Swiss Cottage shouted out 'Schweizer Haeuserl'. I can't vouch for the truth of this – I never heard it myself!

Francis Wahle

Thanks for letting us know about the programme 'Ode to Finchleystrasse'. Great that Dr [Anthony] Grenville is mentioned – that doesn't surprise us! All I can say is 'I Remember It Well', as Maurice Chevalier sang in *Gigi*. So thanks for some happy memories.

Kitty Schafer

My husband and I, ex-Berliners, plus young family members, also loved imbibing the special atmosphere of the Cosmo, apart from enjoying the food. Going there was

always a special treat, quite different from other restaurants. My Auntie Elsie, only surviving member of our family, arranged many of her birthdays and other joyous occasions at the Cosmo.

I also enjoyed the recent *AJR Journal* correspondence about the special atmosphere around the Dorice, John Barnes, etc, including the marvellous smell of the coffee.

Laura Selo

I heard this programme – very nostalgic, very evocative and very interesting. As far as I heard, they never mentioned the Dorice restaurant, which was also a hub for refugees. Or the black Persian lamb coats one saw, which my mother and many others managed to bring out with them – even if very little else!

Gaby Marks

So many thanks. How fascinating. We lived, I think, in Clissold Crescent N16 but I was only 3 or 4 years old so remember little, and was told nothing, about our escape from Vienna in late 1939.

Peter Gildener

Thank you for passing on the information about the 'Ode'. I happened to hear it by chance but will enjoy hearing it again.

Hana Kleiner



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Jean Barbour: A remarkable lady and my saviour

I have long felt that not enough recognition has been given to the British families that took us into their homes in 1939. Although it is very late, I am hoping that Matej Minac, the film director, will be able to publish, first in Czech and then in English, a book(let) of tributes, probably under the title 'Chain of Goodness'. I have written a very inadequate piece about Jean Barbour, who saved my life, and the AJR Journal has agreed to publish a cut version of it. I hope it will encourage readers to send in tributes to those who saved them or one of their family which could be published in the Journal and/or a book(let). (Tom Schrecker)

The chain of goodness which saved my life from the Nazis began with my parents, continued with my Uncle Frank, then Nicholas Winton and his helpers, then the British authorities that agreed to accept refugee children and, finally, my Scottish guardian, Jean Barbour.

I was born in Prague on 7 January 1932. Although both my parents were Jewish, they were not religious. The Nazi threat reached crisis point with the Munich Agreement in September 1938 and my father asked his brother Frank, who had left Prague for London after Munich, to try to find a family which would take me.

My uncle was struggling to establish himself in London yet he made time to queue up at the refugee centre. After some days and little success, he bought an attaché case and walked into the building as if he worked there. He knocked on a door, entered to see two surprised ladies, showed them my photo and begged for their help to find a family. One of the ladies, who turned out to be the head of the centre, told him she had a friend who had already adopted two boys but was prepared to take a refugee child.

This friend turned out to be Jean Barbour. She paid the 50 pound guarantee (a lot of money at the time) and I got out of Prague on the fifth 'Winton train' on 2 June 1939. Jean Barbour – we called her Marnie – and my uncle met the train at Liverpool Street Station and we drove to Oxford, where she was living. Only three more 'Winton trains' left before war was declared so it is quite possible that I wouldn't have got out had she not taken me. Later, she also helped to save my father's life by paying for his boat ticket from Genoa to Shanghai.

Marnie was born in 1897 in Edinburgh

of a very distinguished Scottish family. Among her ancestors were Robert the Bruce and the Royal Stuarts. Her father was president of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh (there's a splendid portrait of him by Philip de Laszlo in the College hall) and co-author of the famous *Manual of Gynaecology*, the first scientific, modern textbook on women's medicine. Her grandmother, a member of the Nelson publishing family, was married to George Brown, who is known as the 'father' of the Canadian parliament. Her cousins' estate, near Pitlochry, includes a waterfall that Queen Victoria liked to visit. The current 'head of the family' is a former moderator of



Jean Barbour (Marnie), Uncle Frank and the author (aged about 8) with dog

the Church of Scotland.

Marnie studied at Oxford University. All her life she was interested in religion and in her search, which led from Presbyterianism to Catholicism, she was adventurous and determined. On one occasion, in the 1920s, she took a ship to Bombay and back just to discuss some philosophical question with an Indian guru! Also she was involved in social issues. She supported the Grail Society, an organisation for Catholic women social workers. She knew Maria Montessori, the Italian doctor who developed a special system of education for young children. She never married but adopted three boys. This was made possible by a legacy from her father: she wasn't wealthy but there was enough, though not a lot left when she died.

It is sometimes said that you can judge people by their friends. Marnie certainly knew some very interesting people. In Oxford I remember meeting J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of*

the Rings. She also knew the Pakenham/Longford family and I occasionally played with the children, particularly Antonia (later Antonia Fraser the author), who was my age, and Thomas (a year younger), who was later in my class at Ampleforth and at Merton while I was at University College Oxford. Their father, Frank, the 7th Earl of Longford, converted to Catholicism in 1940 at the time that Marnie was living near him. I wonder whether she played any part in this? There are so many questions. For example, did she know G. K. Chesterton, who was a convert? We used to visit Caldey Island, where Chesterton bred rabbits. Later, in Scotland, she used to see Peter Scott, the ornithologist son of Scott of the Antarctic. She was also a friend of Kurt Hahn, the founder of Gordonstoun and the Outward Bound organisation.

As mentioned, the most important thing in Marnie's life was her religious faith. I'm an agnostic and critic of religions because of their frequent intolerance and the hypocrisy of many religious people. Marnie was a shining exception to this. She not only had faith but lived by it. I'll cite just one anecdote. At Easter 1947 she took one of her adopted boys and myself for our first post-war visit to Italy. On our way back from Pompeii, at Naples railway station, Marnie discovered she had lost our tickets, passports and money. Calmly she asked us to kneel down with her and pray. Almost immediately a gentleman asked if we needed help. It turned out that he was working at the British embassy in Rome and he arranged everything!

Marnie was the most selfless person I have ever met. Her first reaction was always to think of others in matters large or small. As an anecdote on one of the small matters, there was no television in those days but we went to the cinema. Due to our early bedtime, we couldn't see many films to their end so the main problem was to decide which film to see. Marnie always suggested one she thought we children would like. This made us get into the act and suggest films we thought *she* might like. The result was that we often went to a film that none of us really wanted to see!

All this may suggest that I'm trying to depict Marnie as some kind of saint, which is not so. I remember her as very human, down-to-earth and great fun. Rules were strict but fair. Punishment fitted the crime and,

continued opposite ➔

HISTORY OF A TEA SERVICE

The city museum of Appingedam in Groningen, the northern-most province of the Netherlands, put on an exhibition earlier this year entitled 'The Return: The Jewish History of North-East Groningen'. The word 'return' may be interpreted on various levels: the city's revisiting of its Jewish history, which until recently had received little attention; the return of Jewish survivors to the area in search of their past; or perhaps the return of photographs or possessions of Holocaust victims to surviving relatives.

I was born in Appingedam on 7 April 1941. Following the deportation of my father, Meijer Nieweg, to Auschwitz-Birkenau on the first transport out of the Netherlands on 15 July 1942, my mother and I went into hiding, separately for safety's sake.

On our return to Appingedam in 1945 at the end of the war, it became clear that of the former Jewish community of 82 members only six had survived. I was the sole surviving member of my father's family, the Niewegs.

In 1946 my mother and I moved in with her sister's family in the neighbouring province of Friesland, where I grew up. I returned to Appingedam only in 1984 and 1985 for the unveiling of a plaque and a monument commemorating the 76 Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

I am now the only Jewish survivor there and have returned several times in the last few years, searching for people

who knew and still remember my relatives and to collect stories and photographs before it's too late. It's an emotional search but an enriching one. I have learned that the deportation was, and still is, a traumatic experience for most of the deportees' former friends and neighbours



Tangible evidence that the family once existed: Sara Kirby-Nieweg brought the tea service to a recent meeting of the Cambridge AJR Group to which members had been asked to bring a 'significant object'

and that offers of help were sometimes not accepted due to the family's wish to stay together. In the town, where previously I knew nobody, I have gained a close circle of friends who have shared their memories with me. Sadly some of these friends have since died.

Through this exhibition the former Jewish inhabitants were remembered by artefacts, photos and stories and people were encouraged via local newspapers and television to contribute further. As a result, Zus van Dijk-Nolden came

forward with a tea service which had been in her family for 70 years. It had been entrusted to her mother by their neighbour Gholina Nieweg before her deportation. It had never been used and had been kept in a cabinet behind closed doors as the Noldens felt it didn't belong to them. When Zus read in the newspaper about my return for the opening of the exhibition, she realised that a member of the Nieweg family had survived and spontaneously offered the tea service to me.

Gholina was my father's first cousin: her father, Herman Nieweg, was a brother of my grandfather Benjamin. Gholina was married to another Benjamin Nieweg, a second cousin of my father. Her mother, Klaartje Klein, was a first cousin of my grandfather Benjamin as their mothers were sisters.

Gholina and Benjamin had a 16-year-old son, Herman. They had a tobacconist's shop in Farmsum, a village close to Appingedam. Gholina's widowed mother Klaartje lived with them. Zus and her family lived above. Her father, who worked in a shipyard, had offered to help Herman get away to England, but he preferred to stay with his parents. The entire family perished on 20 March 1943 in Sobibor. Sadly there are no photos to remember them by, but this tea service is tangible proof that they once existed. It took pride of place in the exhibition.

Sara Kirby-Nieweg

Jean Barbour continued

once paid, the matter was put aside. She knew what made little boys tick and was genuinely interested in what young people thought. She had a clear, practical approach to everything. On the first day she served lunch, I remember, I said I wasn't hungry. I'd been spoilt in Prague and was used to everyone pleading with me to eat. Marnie simply removed my plate. When I asked for food in the afternoon she said I had to wait till dinner. At that meal I ate everything put in front of me and no one has had a problem in getting me to eat ever since!

When it came to birthday or Christmas gifts, Marnie thought we should create them ourselves – a poem, a drawing or painting, a wood-carving, etc. She also encouraged us to read good books. Once, when we were still in Oxford, these two things clashed. She had bought me a small forge to make lead soldiers. While she was away for a few days, I made a lot of these soldiers

using the lead lines from our tennis court. I then sold them to a shop and bought a huge pile of comics. Marnie found them and threw them out before I had time to read most of them. As punishment I had to paint the tennis court lines whenever anyone wanted to play and pay for the line machine out of my pocket money!

In 1942 we moved to a small farm near Elgin in the north of Scotland; Marnie thought it would be healthier, away from the bombing and better food. The holidays I spent there for five years were the most enjoyable times of my youth. It wasn't a luxury farm. There was no electricity or telephone and water came from an outside pump. We all had to work in the mornings. Among my chores were helping to milk the cows and doing the washing up after meals. But as compensation we had the entire top floor of a barn as our 'kingdom'. Access was by a rope ladder through a trapdoor and a secret password was required. When our beloved dog,

a Great Dane, died because he ate some chicken bones, Marnie gave me a Shetland pony. On his back, or on foot, I roamed the surrounding moors. Marnie always encouraged adventure and self-reliance.

I fear that these few, rather disjointed, recollections can't paint a complete or accurate portrait of this remarkable woman, but I hope they will give some indication of her character and beliefs. As I've said, her religious faith was at the centre. This in turn fuelled her selflessness, optimism and courage. She wrote me a wonderful long letter to school on 9 November 1950. She had had a breast cancer operation and, I think, knew she was dying but the letter is full of optimism and concern for others. There is not a hint of complaint or self-pity. I saw Marnie briefly over Christmas. Even then I didn't realise how seriously ill she was. I joined the British army to do my National Service a few weeks later. Marnie died on 28 February 1951.

Tom Schrecker



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

STOLPERSTEINE IN OSLO

Sir – I was particularly interested in last month's article on *Stolpersteine* in south-west Germany. My maiden name was Bernstein. My father, Richard, was the political editor of *Vorwaerts* in Berlin from 1923 to 1933. On coming to power, the Nazis banned this social democratic newspaper and most of the editors fled to neighbouring countries to avoid being taken to Dachau. We fled to Prague and were still there after March 1939 when the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia. My older brother had managed to get out in 1938 and I followed him to England in 1939. My parents were unable to leave the country as a permit to do so was required by the Gestapo and my father had, of course, been on their hit-list for years. He went into hiding in Prague. I last saw him heavily disguised on Wenzelsplatz when my mother met him there to discuss something; I was warned not to call him Papa, not to speak to him at all – and indeed I hardly recognised him.

On 30 June 1939 I left Prague on a 'Winton transport' and was taken to Cambridge, where my brother had secured a first foster family. It was possible to correspond with my parents until the outbreak of war, then nothing until, unexpectedly, I received a postcard in my father's handwriting from Oslo! This was in December 1939. It appears that the Red Cross or a Nansen organisation had been allowed to take a small group of anti-Nazis through Germany (by train) to Norway for safety.

We exchanged letters and postcards until Norway too was occupied by the Germans and my father and mother were trapped once again. We then exchanged five Red Cross letters but the last reply from them reached me in 1943 – more than a year since they had been murdered in Auschwitz at different times.

In Prague stands the famous Pinkas Synagogue, on the walls of which are recorded in alphabetical order the many thousands of names of Jews deported from Czechoslovakia direct, a moving memorial with dates of birth and death in concentration camps. When I returned to Prague from 1984 onwards I asked to have my parents' names recorded there but was told by the Jewish Museum that this was not possible as they had been deported

from Norway. I sadly accepted that no record was possible other than at Yad Vashem, which I had done years earlier.

In 2009, when my youngest son came to visit me, he looked at his mobile phone/computer and called out 'Mother, I've just seen the names of your parents, Richard and Gisela Bernstein – look!' I did so and saw two *Stolpersteine*, one for each of my parents, in front of the building adjacent to one of Oslo's three synagogues from which he and eleven other Jews – most of them also former refugees from Germany – had been deported to Auschwitz in 1941.

Amazed, I contacted the curator of Oslo's Jewish Museum, Bjarte Bruland. Bjarte was delighted to hear from the Bernsteins' daughter: he, of course, knew nothing of my existence. A diligent young researcher, he needed this information for their Jewish Yearbook published in 2011. That same year a symposium for curators of Jewish museums in Europe was held in London – we met and I was able to thank him in person.

Norway had a very small Jewish population, which was wiped out by the Germans. Bjarte and his team are not Jews and it is remarkable that *Stolpersteine* for my parents as well as a number of others were mounted there at the Museum's expense.

Susanne Medas, London W10

ONE OF THE BEST

Sir – I wanted to let you know how much I and everybody I spoke to enjoyed the exceptionally interesting and beautifully delivered talk by Antony Penrose about the life of his mother, Lee Miller, interwoven with that of his family and their illustrious friends.

I have been a member of the St John's Wood AJR Group for about a year and, prior to our move to London, my husband and I belonged to the Bristol Group, ably headed by Myrna Glass. We attended many great talks and events over the years, but this was really one of the best!

So I am writing to express my thanks to the AJR for sponsoring this event and to the London Jewish Cultural Centre for hosting it (as well as for the welcome sandwiches afterwards), and, of course, to Hazel Beiny for having organised it so well.

Kitty Balint-Kurti, London NW3
See also report on page 12 (Ed.).

KINDERTRANSPORT CONNECTION

Sir – Thank you so much for the *Journal*. I do appreciate your kindness. My only connection with the Kindertransport in this far-off land.

Eva Hayman, Auckland, New Zealand

SAYINGS FOR OCCASIONS

Sir – My mother had a pithy saying for almost every occasion. The following come to mind: Kommt Zeit kommt Rat (With time comes advice); Undank ist der Welt Lohn (Lack of gratitude is the way of the world); Ein blindes Huhn findet auch einmal ein Korn (Even a blind chicken has its day).

I remember many more sayings but perhaps members can offer their own contribution. It will be fun to compare notes.

(Mrs) Meta Roseneil
Buckhurst Hill, Essex

'SUPREMACY OF ENGLISH COMEDY'

Sir – Anthony Grenville shows himself ill-equipped to comment on comedy when he has to run down the English theatrical tradition ('"Oh Dahling" comedies') in order to exalt the German one. Those more sophisticated are well aware of the best of German humour from Goethe to the biting wit of the cabaret of the 'twenties. Zuckmayer is a bright but not a great light in this star-studded firmament.

Literary judgments are difficult – rankings more so – but I would make my case for the supremacy of the English stage starting with Shakespeare, Restoration comedy, Oscar Wilde and his true heir Noel Coward – not for nothing known as 'The Master'. Perhaps Dr Grenville should get out more and take in some Ayckbourn, Bennett, Frayn and Stoppard.

Victor Ross, London NW8

BRINGING ORDER

Sir – Anthony Grenville's review of Zuckmayer's play *Der Hauptmann von Köpenick* reminds me of a true story of German authoritarian bureaucracy told to me by my uncle, Erwin Seligmann.

Shortly before the First World War his father (my grandfather, Rabbi Seligmann of Frankfurt) gave him an urgent letter to post. Having missed the last collection from the local letterbox, he went to the main post office in Frankfurt, from where there was a later collection. Here there were two letterboxes, one labelled 'Frankfurt only', the second for all other places. For some reason (perhaps he was unable to read the address), Erwin entered the building to ask a Postbeamte for advice. Inside the building, he was surprised to see that these two separate letterboxes emptied into a single tray on the other side of the wall. Having asked what was the point of having separate letterboxes that emptied into a single tray, he was gruffly told 'Es bringt Ordnung' – it brings order!

Peter Seglow, Le Tignet, France

NON-KINDER REFUGEES

Sir – I think it is great that new names are coming through as contributors to the *AJR Journal* with their memories of life in early post-war north-west London.

I would like to suggest a regular page in the *Journal* recording the events of 75 years ago starting in mid-1938 together with a column featuring nostalgia from the more stable 1960s extracted from archival copies of *AJR Information*, i.e. 50 years ago.

I welcome all the commemorative events on behalf of Kinder and look forward to reading their stories. Nevertheless, why is no one organising an event for those who travelled the same route at the same time but with no support and on their own?

My mother, Stephanie Elias (formerly Fabian), travelled alone from Hamburg aged nineteen and a half with just her *Reisepass* marked 'J' and a few possessions. She landed at Harwich on 17 October 1938. Two days later she started domestic service in Tunbridge Wells.

Through determination she was able to secure guarantees for her parents, who arrived in 1939. Surely there is still time to honour *all* our refugees, now frail but worthy of our respect?

Eric Elias, London N3

BRAVERY AWARD



Photo taken in 1940 at Sutton, Surrey, hostel for Kindertransport boys: Fritz Becker is in the front row at left

Sir – I recently discovered that a friend at the Sutton, Surrey, refugee hostel, who I knew had died serving with the British Army's Intelligence Corps and had been awarded posthumously the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct, had his award gazetted on 18 April 1946, together with other members of the Intelligence Corps, all of them presumably Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria.

The names are: Sergeant (local) Frederick Benson, Sergeant (local) Peter John Morton, Corporal August Jacques Warndorfer, and Sergeant (local) Peter Weisz.

Benson's real name is given as Fritz Becker, which is the name I knew him by. My Tatura (Victoria, Australia) Internment Camp diary shows that we were in correspondence in 1941. I am a 'Dunera Boy'.

Warndorfer was born in Austria and lived in Inverness. Weisz, like Becker a Jewish refugee, came from Middlesex. Morton's real name was Meyer.

I have been unable to obtain information about the circumstances leading to the award for bravery of Fritz Becker from either the Imperial War Museum or the

British Archives in Kew. Most of the personal files of people serving on special missions with the Intelligence Corps were destroyed by fire after the war.

Having just discovered that Fritz Becker was given his award together with the three other members of the army's Intelligence Corps mentioned above, I wonder if readers know whether any of them had offspring, friends or relatives who are aware of the circumstances leading to their awards.

*Bern Brent, Canberra, Australia,
beegeeb@bigbond.com*

JEWIS IN FIRE SERVICE DURING SECOND WORLD WAR

Sir – I am finally writing a book about Jews in the fire service during the Second World War (including fire watchers). If readers have any stories, anecdotes and photos on this theme and have not already sent them to me in the past few years, could they please to do so as soon as possible?

At the same time, I am seeking information about Carl and Madelain Goldschmidt, who lost a son in the Fire Service by the name of George Eric. They lived at 15 Beechwood Avenue, Finchley. Should readers have any information about them, I would be grateful if they would contact me at the address below.

*Martin Sugarman, AJEX Archivist,
Shield House, Harmony Way, London NW4 2BZ,
tel 07758 821561 or 0208 986 4868*

PRE-WAR PRECEDENT

Sir – The Chief Rabbi of Vienna, Paul Chaim Eisenberg, has been awarded the highest decoration of the City of Vienna: the Grand Insignia of Honour in Gold of the Land of Wien. He was invested by Mayor Michael Häupl in the presence of a large gathering of notables, Jewish and Gentile, with a tremendous address about what he has done for Vienna and its people.

There is a curious pre-war precedent for this, when the chairman of the Linz *Kultusgemeinde* was decorated with the federal *Grosses Ehrenzeichen* at a ceremony at the Linz Synagogue attended by many of the local Great and the Good, including the father of Adolf Eichmann.

F. M. M. Steiner, Deddington, Oxon

TOTAL AGREEMENT – ALMOST

Sir – I hope this letter won't upset Margarete Stern but I agree with almost everything she said about me in her last posting (June). I have often basked in Austrian *Gemütlichkeit* (the last time as recently as April) and I have indulged in Viennese (non-kosher) cuisine. What's wrong with not being kosher, Mrs Stern? I am Progressive and I wish you'd leave the past behind and progress a little too!

I am, however, somewhat surprised at Mrs Stern's dismissal of my article on Israel. I am strongly against the religious parties and she too should be. As a woman, does she not want to enjoy the same freedom to worship that men

have? Or is this progressing too far? I am a British Progressive Jew who happens to have been born in Austria. My views on Austria are clear. I like being a tourist there but feel nothing for my birthplace. My views on Israel are equally clear. It is a vital homeland for all Jews but, for me, the religious parties have played too important a part recently. Herzl saw Israel as a secular state. This is what it should be.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

Berlin judges remembered

Last November a ceremony took place at the Arbeitsgericht in Berlin in remembrance of 14 Jewish judges who were dismissed when the Nazi regime came to power in 1933.

A memorial plaque was unveiled in the lobby of the Arbeitsgericht building for the 14 judges. For four of these judges, who lost their lives due to the terror, *Stolpersteine* (stumbling stones) were laid in the ground in front of the building. One of these *Stolpersteine* is in the name of my and my sister Eva's father, Dr Martin Matzdorf. Neither of us was able to attend the ceremony due to illness.

In April this year, on the 80th anniversary of the Nazi law which called for the debarment of Jewish professionals and professionals of Jewish descent from the civil service, my daughter Lydia and I attended a crowded ceremony at the Arbeitsgericht for the launch of *Jüdische Richter in der Berliner Arbeitsgerichtsbarkeit 1933* (Jewish Judges in the Berlin Labour Court in 1933) (Berlin: Hentrich & Hentrich Verlag).

The book provides biographical details on, and traces the fate of, each of the 14 Jewish judges: Ernst Aschauer, Berthold Auerbach, Wolfgang Gaston Friedmann, Ernst Heinitz, Fritz Herrmann, Otto Kahn-Freund, Kurt Kronheim, Martin Landsberger, Hans Lehmann, Martin Matzdorf, Friedrich Oppler, Ernst Ruben, Arthur Sello and Kurt Tuchler.

Hilda Tichauer



RIVER THAMES BOAT TRIP FROM WINDSOR

Thursday 25 July 2013

Join us for a 2-hour cruise on the River Thames

Coach will leave Finchley Road Station (side of Waitrose, corner of Canfield Gardens) at 11.00 am and Stanmore (outside AJR Head Office, Merrion Avenue) at 11.30 am prompt.

Estimated return times:

Stanmore 5.15; Finchley Road 5.45

£17.50 per person; non-AJR members £25 per person
Includes coach, boat trip, packed lunch and cream tea

To reserve your place, please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

Places are limited so please book early
Please note that this trip is heavily subsidised by a generous donation

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

'Saints Alive and Kicking' might be an alternative title to the **National Gallery's Michael Landy: Saints Alive** (until 24 November 2013). This exhibition challenges the holier-than-thou images of saints in the Renaissance paintings Landy trawled as a newcomer to the National Gallery to present us with the awfulness they actually experienced. He also trawled junkyards, car boot sales and flea markets for the ironmongery needed to build massive, three-dimensional images of the sublime paintings he had seen.

So, as you enter the room, you are confronted by the skyscraper-tall legendary figure of St Apollonia based on a painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder. The blonde and beatific saint in her red corrugated dress shudders like a haulage truck as you pass – as well she might, having had all her teeth pulled out!

Next – to the scholarly hermit St Jerome, whose appetite for pain led him to beat himself with a rock to banish 'impure' sexual thoughts. Landy has based him on three fifteenth-century paintings in the main galleries to create a headless figure whose torso ends in a mass of ironmongery above a single leg; with a gigantic thud a disembodied hand throws a rock at him. There's a wooden St Catherine's wheel – on which Catherine didn't die because it was destroyed by an angel – but Landy lets you crank it into noisy action yourself. When she was finally executed with a sword it's said that milk, not blood, flowed from her body. Ironically for its subject matter, this show is entirely bloodless.

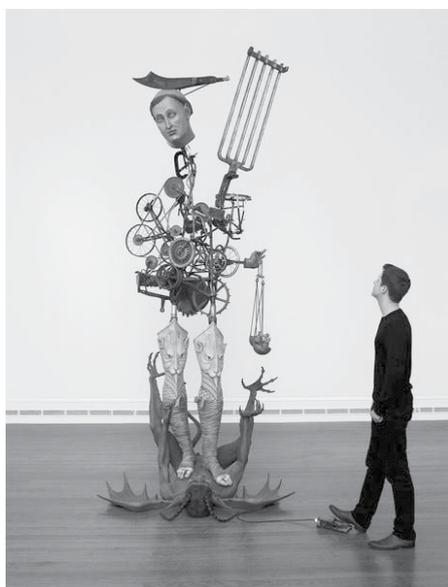
The *pièce de résistance* is the *Multi-Saint*, based on four fifteenth-century martyrs who all died in horrific ways. This

saintly amalgam stands with a pitchfork trampling on a green devil with webbed hands. I didn't wait to hear the noise it emitted. I was reminded of Jacob Epstein's poignant *Rock Drill*, in which the figure stands astride a mechanical drill mounted on a tripod. It was meant to convey fears of a dehumanised, mechanised society. Epstein said the piece possessed no humanity. The problem with this show – amusing and innovative in its way – is that by rendering his saints so large, Michael Landy has actually diminished them. There is no humanity here at all.

But **R. B. Kitaj – Obsessions at the Jewish Museum** is awash with humanity and sensitivity. The American modernist Kitaj spent 40 years in Britain describing himself as a diasporist, which defines his obsession with Jewish identity and the Holocaust. Kitaj uses primary colours

to convey both the bustle and the quiet spaces in human existence. In *The Wedding*, the bridal couple are profiled facing the ceremony but you think the quiet, tiny figure in white left of centre is the bride. She is actually his adopted daughter Dominie. Less garishly, *The Listener* (charcoal and pastel) conveys the narrative of the Holocaust, crouching underground fearing discovery, while his *alter ego* reads in the sunlight. Kitaj depicts

Holocaust refugees as alienated, crazy characters and victims as disembodied Jewish heads bounded with crosses and chimney shapes.



Multi-Saint 2013 by Michael Landy: 'The noise is appalling.' Photograph courtesy the Thomas Dane Gallery/National Gallery

Émigré Artists, Graphic Designers, Curators, Art Historians, Conservators

Any recollections of wartime émigré artists, graphic designers, curators, art historians, conservators etc working in the UK from 1933 onwards sought by curators at Ben Uri/The London Jewish Museum of Art, who are compiling a database of such information.

Please contact Rachel Rotrand on
020 7604 3991

or email émigré@benuri.org.uk
or write to Ben Uri,

108a Boundary Road, London NW8 0RH,
marking the envelope ÉMIGRÉ

REVIEWS

An act of painstaking research

A SILENCE THAT SPEAKS: A FAMILY STORY THROUGH AND BEYOND THE HOLOCAUST

by Susan Soyinka

Eliora Books 2013, 208 pp. paperback
ISBN 978-0-9575614-0-3

Although many books have been written about the lives of people affected by the Holocaust, each one records a different story and there are distinct circumstances and reasons for embarking on the writing. In this remarkable book, Susan Soyinka initially places the emphasis on why she felt obliged to write the story of her family and on how she spent some 18 years delving into records and painstakingly piecing it together.

Susan's mother, Lucy Fowler née Smetana, was born in Vienna in 1919 and came to England in 1938. She was very reluctant to talk to her daughter about her family and said there were almost no surviving relatives who could provide further information. It was only in 1995 that Susan discovered that her mother had uncles in America and Australia but had no contact with them. So the search began for people with the surname Smetana in both countries. With amazing perseverance and some luck, she managed to trace several family members including cousins, one of whom she actually met in London. Having been shown photographs from Vienna, her mother slowly began to reminisce about her childhood and early life in the city. Armed only with anecdotes and a few documents she had obtained, Susan Soyinka and her young daughter went to Vienna, where she obtained considerable information through the Jewish community offices as well as the Austrian State Archives. This enabled her to trace her paternal family history back to 1858, the year her great-grandfather, Josef Smetana, was born. She also followed up some interesting but inconclusive leads which suggested the possibility of a link with the Czech composer of the same name.

Further research gave her information about her mother's other grandparents, Heinrich and Cäcilia Weinberger. The available documentation also provided information about the careers, properties and individual circumstances of family members. On a personal note, I was interested to see that Cäcilia's father, born in Wishnitz in 1830, was Leopold Klausner; my grandfather, Elias Klausner, was also born in Wishnitz in 1858. Any connection?

As late as 2011 further information came to light through the Austrian State Archives and other sources about the many family members who became victims of the *Shoah*. This also recorded the documentation of the Nazi takeover of businesses and homes in 1938 and

continued opposite ➔

provided copies of the numerous forms required by Jews wanting to emigrate. The book contains many photographs, often including translations, showing these documents.

Having explained how much of the information was obtained, the author used the information to build up pictures of the lives of her ancestors ranging from the mid-nineteenth century to the *Shoah*. Separate chapters describe the lives of her great-grandparents and each of her maternal grandparents.

The early reluctance of the author's mother to speak about her life in Vienna could be explained partly by having had an unhappy childhood. Her parents were divorced after her mother had an affair resulting in an illegitimate child. There was also considerable tension between her mother and herself. Susan Soyinka was much closer to her father, Fritz, who was not only a successful businessman but also acted as consul general for San Marino and was editor of the diplomatic newspaper in Austria. In May 1938, fearing imminent arrest by the Nazis, he committed suicide. This had a devastating effect on Susan's mother, Lucy. On Holocaust Memorial Day In 2008 Susan and her brother visited San Marino, where they were presented with a plaque in honour of their grandfather.

In August 1938 Mrs Lucy Fowler, as she later became, made the decision to come to England and, after initially working in domestic service, obtained a job in a Nottingham hospital. Meanwhile, her mother, Susan's grandmother, emigrated to France. Sadly, there the Germans eventually caught up with her and she was deported to her death in Auschwitz.

Neither Mrs Fowler, nor later Susan her daughter, had easy lives in England and the author frankly describes their marital and other problems. Susan herself scarcely knew she was Jewish and describes her search for a meaningful spirituality. After she had travelled and worked in Africa for some years, her desire to find her roots eventually led her to the great task which culminated in the writing of this book. She also rediscovered her Judaism and has become increasingly involved in Jewish genealogy.

Readers, especially members of the AJR, may find that the book serves as an encouragement to them to delve into their own family histories before it's too late. The material is often there but to find it requires dedication and patience. There are in the book three family trees going back to the early nineteenth century and most readers will find these essential to remind them of family connections. The text is very well illustrated with 178 photos and depictions of documents. It also contains 14 appendices and a useful list of information sources.

In summary, Susan Soyinka's book is not only a family history but also a well-referenced document about the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

It may be of interest to readers that the author will be giving two lectures at the Jewish Genealogical Society Family History

Fair on 7 July in Elstree (see also Arts and Events Diary, page 13).

George Vulkan

A once prosperous Jewish community

THE JEWS AND GERMANS OF HAMBURG: THE DESTRUCTION OF A CIVILIZATION 1790-1945

by J. A. S. Grenville

London and New York: Routledge, 2012, 330 pp., available at amazon.co.uk

This thorough study of the history of the city-state of Hamburg, a thriving Hanseatic port in north Germany, describes in almost unbearable detail the sequence of events that led to the annihilation of what was once a prosperous Jewish community, the second largest in Germany, before the Second World War and Hitler's 'Final Solution'.

Using a vast array of contemporary and historical sources, the city's archives, personal documents, diaries and memoranda, Professor Grenville, who was Professor of Modern History at the University of Birmingham and is himself originally from Hamburg, has put together a blow-by-blow account, as it were, of the events leading to Hitler's accession to power in Germany and the series of laws and restrictions affecting Jews that followed. He is at pains to point out that there was no difference in adherence to the official Nazi line between Hamburg and any other city or town in Germany, even if there may have been one or two individuals who were prepared to bend the rules a little, at least for a while.

Professor Grenville analyses the series of events that caused Hitler and the Nazi Party to gain popularity in Germany, focusing on individual stories and recollections as well as on the cold, bureaucratic processes that were subsequently set in motion. The reader is introduced to individuals who recorded their emotions and their reactions to developments as they unfolded. These personal accounts were written by Jews and Gentiles alike and tend to reveal the agony on one side and the indifference on the other.

The Jewish community of Hamburg, together with those of its neighbouring towns, Altona and Wandsbek, was first established by Spanish and Portuguese Jews expelled from the Spanish peninsula in the fifteenth century. They were gradually joined by co-religionists from other parts of Europe and Jews were officially granted permission to become citizens of Hamburg in 1848, the year of revolution throughout Europe.

Initially, most of the Jews who settled in Hamburg were street traders or small shopkeepers who, as they prospered, established Jewish schools and provided their children with education, the key to social and economic advancement. Eventually Jews were permitted to enter the professions. Hamburg was a major

international trading hub and many Jews made a living from the import and export of goods. Their ties with Jews elsewhere in the world naturally helped them to further their business interests.

Among the most prominent Jewish families of Hamburg were the Warburgs, whose bank served to finance many public and private undertakings. Solomon Heine, the wealthy uncle of Heinrich Heine, the poet, donated the funds for the Jewish Hospital in 1842 when his banking house helped to rebuild Hamburg after a great fire destroyed large parts of the city. Another prominent Hamburg Jew was Albert Ballin, head of the Hamburg-America shipping line, and a friend of the Kaiser in the pre-First World War era. In the nineteenth century, the Jewish community provided accommodation for both Jews and non-Jews and set up a wide-ranging network of schools as well as religious, cultural and welfare institutions.

Starting in 1933, the Nazis imposed ever-increasing restrictions on Jews, preventing them from engaging freely in commerce, depriving them of freedom of movement, stripping them of their possessions, and confining them to crowded conditions in designated 'Jew-houses'.

The once prosperous Jewish community of Hamburg exists no more. Its synagogues were burned during the pogrom of 9-10 November 1938, an event which served to trigger the emigration of those Jews, mainly young people, who could gain entry to another country. Those who were left – mainly the elderly, the infirm and young families – knew their fate was sealed. The remaining number, almost 8,000 Jews, were deported to concentration camps in 1942. Several hundred *Stolpersteine* mark their last place of abode.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

An engaging read

CRUEL CROSSING: ESCAPING HITLER ACROSS THE PYRENEES

by Edward Stourton

Doubleday 2013, 352 pp. hardback, ISBN-13 9780857520517, available from amazon.co.uk

Edward Stourton, the well-known BBC journalist, explains in his introduction how he became involved in writing this book: it is his contribution to the history of the *Chemin de la Liberté* – the Freedom Road taken by both civilians and military personnel during the Second World War. The civilians were a mixture of inhabitants of the German-occupied countries of Western Europe, all seeking to escape from the Nazis and their collaborators; the military were mainly Allied air men shot down over occupied territory. The *Chemin* is some 40 miles long, starting in Saint-Girons (*Département* of Ariège), crossing the Central Pyrenees and ending in Esterri d'Àneu in Spain. Don't think it is a road – much of it requires

Reviews continued overleaf ➔


REVIEWS *cont. from page 9*

mountain walking, climbing steep inclines followed by descents. A full description of what is involved in this 'walk' is given in the appendix. Read this section at the first reference to such a crossing. What it was like during the winter months doesn't bear thinking about

A member of the British Expeditionary Force, trapped in the Pas de Calais area, was an early escapist making for the *Chemin*. There were several 'lines' of escape passing through the Vichy 'Free Zone', where there were no Germans.

There are some personal accounts, two of them involving AJR members. Stourton provides much background detail, some of it very harrowing.

De Gaulle's appeal to the French people in 1940 did not produce a resistance organisation overnight – this developed gradually. Mountain guides, smugglers and Spanish Republican refugees were actively involved in the escape routes. These refugees had been housed by the French in a few camps during the Spanish Civil War. Even the most basic facilities were rudimentary. Foreign Jews sent south from as far as the Palatinate ended up in these camps.

Note that 8,000 Spanish Republican refugees were deported to Mauthausen labour camp and that German 'Legions' consisting of anti-Soviet Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis had also been sent to France. Several Vichy semi-military and police organisations were involved in a *guerre franco-française*, a sort of civil war.

The Swiss Red Cross (in France) took financial responsibility for a diverse group

of Jewish children who originated in Germany and Belgium. They spent four years in the sixteenth-century castle Le Château de la Hille. Some of them tried to slip into Switzerland; some were arrested by the French police; others sought to make their way across the Pyrenees only to be betrayed by their guide.

A number of well-known names, such as Arthur Koestler and Alois Brunner, Himmler's right-hand man in France, get a mention. President Mitterand's involvement with the Vichy government is not overlooked.

The number of Frenchmen who escaped over the Pyrenees in order to join the French forces in Britain or North Africa is estimated to be many times greater than the number of Allied servicemen and women, and Jews.

In the final chapter, the author comments on those he interviewed for this book and for the BBC radio series about the *Chemin de la Liberté* which was broadcast in 2012. He revisits many aspects of the subject.

I gleaned a great deal about the Second World War of which I had been unaware. This well-written and carefully researched book is an engaging read.

Henri Obstfeld

The Jewish Museum is holding an event with Edward Stourton and AJR member Joan Salter to mark the publication of Cruel Crossing on 23 July, 6.30 – 8.30 pm – telephone 020 7284 7384.

Holocaust educator honoured by German Embassy

Holocaust survivor Margot Barnard has been awarded the Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in recognition of her extraordinary dedication to educating young people about the Holocaust.



Photo: Marion Koebner

The award was conferred on her by Ambassador Georg Boomgaarden at a ceremony at the German Ambassador's residence in London.

Margot, an AJR member born in Bonn, was one of the first persons to engage in Holocaust education in Germany, when her husband, a British soldier, was stationed there in the 1950s.

At the age of 92, Margot still continues her work in Germany – her main focus – and elsewhere, including the UK. Her autobiography *I'll Never See You Again* was reviewed in the *AJR Journal* last October.

OUTING TO SISSINGHURST CASTLE

(near Tunbridge Wells, Kent)
WEDNESDAY 14 AUGUST 2013



The legendary poet and writer Vita Sackville-West and her diplomat and author husband Harold Nicolson began the transformation of the land at Sissinghurst Castle in the 1930s. Harold's architectural planning of the garden rooms and Vita's vibrant planting reflect the romance and intimacy of her poems and writings.

We will arrive at 10 am for a private tour of the gardens. This will be followed by an early lunch. We intend to finish by 1 pm.

Transport will be available from Kent and Brighton. Members from London can take the train and meet the coach at Tunbridge Wells.

£20.00 pp, including entrance, tour, lunch and transport

For further details, please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk



EDWARE GROUP

Open to all

TUESDAY 23 JULY 2013 at 2.00 PM

Edware Masorti Synagogue,
Stream Lane, Edware, Middx HA7 7YA

PROFESSOR TANYA BYRON

Professor Byron's career has developed in a number of directions – most notably as a writer and broadcaster. Her role as presenter and on-screen expert in the BBC TV series *Little Angels*, *Teen Angels* and *The House of Tiny Tearaways* gave audiences an appreciation of the treatment of children's behaviour problems. Professor Byron also writes for *The Times* and *Good Housekeeping*.

For further details, please contact Hazel on 07966 887434 or at hazel@ajr.org.uk



Buying a computer? Curious about the internet?

If you're thinking about buying a computer or just curious about the internet, this might be the event for you!

JFS are inviting AJR members for an exciting afternoon at the school. Find out all you wanted to know about the internet and computers! Discover with JFS students how to email, play computer chess and bridge, view pictures and art galleries, watch videos from around the world and much much more!

No previous computer experience required; limited spaces
Free event – includes refreshments
Dates: 8 or 24 July
Times: 1.30 – 3.30 pm

To sign up or find out more, contact Jonathan on 020 8385 3070 or at jonathan@ajr.org.uk

THE LAKE DISTRICT WINDERMERE MANOR HOTEL

Sunday 29 September to Sunday 6 October 2013

Come and enjoy the beautiful landscape and picturesque views across Lake Windermere
Meet old friends and make new ones
Comprehensive programme of excursions and entertainment

20 rooms available, some with Disability Bathrooms

£550 per person, including Bed and Breakfast and Evening Meal

For further details, please telephone Christine Jones on 020 8385 3070



I WAS WRONG!

Twice before I had been invited back to Vienna by the Jewish Welcome Service (JWS). Twice before I had turned the invitation down.

Although the Service is run by Jews, much of its funding comes from the Austrian government. Founded in 1980, it is there to help 'build bridges' between Austrians and Jews, particularly former citizens. I didn't want to 'build bridges': I wanted the Austrians to admit their guilt, as the Germans did, and pay us the compensation they owed – not hide under the phoney claim that Austria was invaded! Anyway, all this is history. We were given a ridiculously small amount in compensation: we were let down by both the World Jewish Congress and the Claims Conference and accepted the offer in full and final settlement.

This year, the JWS invited me back to Vienna a third time. I wasn't going to look a gift horse in the mouth this time. They were willing to pay my air fare, though not my wife's. The room at the Hotel Stefanie, a 4-star hotel in Leopoldstadt, the old Jewish area, cost us only 41 Euros a night. I decided to take my four older grandsons with us to show them my roots and help them understand my obsession with Austria and its anti-Semitism. Sadly, only two of them could make the trip but this did save me some money as the hotel charged them 163 Euros per night. (One of my sons came along too but stayed at a cheaper hotel nearby.) Frighteningly, our hotel was in the Taborstrasse, where old Jews had been pictured scrubbing the pavements with toothbrushes.

The programme arranged by our guides, Herr and Frau Mariotti, was a good one: a city tour, receptions at the City Hall and Austrian Chancellery, a visit

to ESRA, a trip to a *Heuriger*, a visit to the Jewish cemetery, and a Friday-night service at the City Temple, the only synagogue not destroyed by the Nazis. You could go to all these events or none. We chose the *Heuriger*, the cemetery, where my grandfather and sister lay, and the City Temple. The *Heuriger* was excellent; at the cemetery, I was glad to see our



Peter Phillips outside Forstergasse 5

tombstones were in good condition (I pay to have them cleaned every two years); and the City Temple service was amazing: the *chazan* was as good as any opera singer, the choir magnificent.

My main mission was to show my family where I was born – Forstergasse 5 – and the Hakoah Sportverein (the Jewish sports club), where my father had been

one of the doctors. Our house had been demolished when the Russians entered Vienna and rebuilt in Russian style. It looked rather boring but was a part of my life. In the Sportverein, entirely rebuilt after the war by the Haber family, I found a plaque to my father, Dr Marcus Pfeffer, which made us feel proud. The rest of the time was spent sight-seeing and eating food cooked just as my mother used to cook it. We listened to Mozart and Strauss at the Kursalon. We visited the Hofburg, Schönbrunn, the Belvedere, and the Jewish Museum. The Prater disappointed, even with its renowned Riesenrad. The *Torte* at the Hotel Sacher was delicious. We ate at the Griechenbeisl, one of Vienna's oldest restaurants, and drank coffee at the Hawelka, one of the city's oldest coffee houses. Fascinating too was an exhibition at the Central Library on the *Anschluss* (seeing this, can anyone still doubt how welcome the Austrians made the 'invading' Germans feel!).

Two incidents soured what was beginning to have a sweet taste. In a house in Forstergasse, very near our old house, was a placard telling us that five Jews had been in hiding there until about ten days before the Russians arrived; the Gestapo found them and had them shot just before liberation. The other incident was when I was called a 'silly Jew' because I wouldn't pay the exorbitant fee a taxi driver wanted for taking us 200 metres.

Next October will be the last time you might receive an invitation from the JWS. If you haven't been to one of their reunions, and don't receive an invitation to this last one, call them and ask to be included. We had Viennese Jews from all over the world with us. Go! Enjoy!

Peter Phillips

'Servitengasse 1938'

Remembering the Holocaust in a Vienna street

In 2003 the residents of an apartment house in Vienna's 9th district asked themselves who had lived in their house in 1938. Research revealed that half the flats had been inhabited by Jewish families and in 2005 a commemorative plaque was unveiled to the 27 victims of Nazi persecution from this one house. But what about the street – the Servitengasse – as a whole? Who had lived there in 1938 and what had happened to them under National Socialism?

The citizens' initiative grew and a two-year research project revealed that 462 people – residents, business and property owners – had been persecuted as Jews. In 2008 a memorial to them was unveiled in the street. The project has also produced a book on its findings, put on an exhibition, and been the subject of a documentary film. This April six members of 'Servitengasse 1938' spoke about their work at the Austrian Cultural Forum in

London. They were joined by George Vulkan, a London resident and AJR member who lived near the street until 1938, when his family were forced to flee.

The event began by tracing the memorial landscape in Austria since 1945. Joanna White, a doctoral student at the University of Vienna, explained that the Servitengasse project was one of a number of grass-roots initiatives which had emerged since 2000 that are dedicated to researching and remembering the lives of ordinary citizens across Vienna. Peter Koppe, a founding member of the group, then spoke about how the project began and developed over time – who became involved, how it was funded, and their experiences of working with local politicians. Next, Birgit Jöhler, who headed the research project, gave an overview of the findings of archival research and spoke about the importance to the group of meeting former residents. Barbara Sauer, a historian who also lives

in the street, talked about the process of choosing a design for the memorial and how it is used today as a site for commemoration. Katharina Kober, another of the project's historians, outlined the project's current research into synagogues and other Jewish religious sites in the 9th district. Finally, George Vulkan's memories of the area helped bring it to life and he shared his feelings about the work being done by this kind of project.

The evening ended with a lively discussion on topics such as the street's non-Jewish residents, 'aryanisation' and restitution, and similar European memorial projects. The members of 'Servitengasse 1938' are very grateful to the Austrian Cultural Forum for the chance to present their work and hope it will encourage other forms of remembrance of the victims of National Socialist persecution.

Joanna White

www.servitengasse1938.at

INSIDE the AJR

Glasgow CF A Perfect Outing

We attended a performance of the Mel Brooks musical *The Producers* at our local Eastwood Theatre and enjoyed it very much despite its rather excessive loudness and length. The acting was excellent, the costumes and sets lavish, the choreography imaginative, and the dancers talented and well rehearsed. A perfect outing. Thank you, Agnes, for organising it. *Halina Moss*

Ilford Cinema Tricks of the Trade

Howard Lanning provided insight into finding the right location for making a film. What we see on the screen is rarely the truth. A snow shot from *Dr Zhivago* was filmed at 19 degrees in Spain. Crowd scenes depicting hundreds are switched after each shot to show new faces. All these tricks of the trade are used to dupe the public – but we do get superb films so it's all worthwhile. *Meta Roseneil*

Café Imperial

Sunshine Day to Remember

Our lunch snack at the Rinkoffs corner emporium was delish and we motored home armed with our purchases of apple and cheese cake and that famous rye bread. A sunshine day to remember. *Vera Mayer*

Manchester Refugee from Chile

Professor Benny Pollack's story was that of a refugee – not from Nazi tyranny but from Chile, where he was active in the national press. Fortunate to be out of the country when Pinochet took over, he found refuge in many countries and was for a time Chilean ambassador to China. *Werner Lachs*

Pinner Hard Life of Tchaikovsky

Herbie Goldberg told us Tchaikovsky had a hard struggle to make his way in the musical world at a time when 'proper music' was not considered to originate in Russia. Tchaikovsky was depressed that many of his great compositions that we now love at first attracted poor reviews. *Walter Weg*

Ealing Life in Nigeria in the Fifties and Sixties

Helen Aronson gave an excellent talk about life in Nigeria in 1956-63 with her husband and new baby. Using photos and a DVD, she gave us glimpses of different parts of Nigeria and the people she met. A most enjoyable occasion. *Leslie Sommer*

St John's Wood Plans for Nightingale Hammerson

Andrew Leigh, Chief Executive of Nightingale Hammerson, told us about plans for

these homes. In a lively Q&A session, he advised all of us to think now about what we want to do when we get older.

David Lang

Harrogate/York

Sharing Memories and Pastries

Meeting at Rosl and Marc Schatzberger's lovely home in Skelton near York, we shared childhood memories and had delicious cakes and pastries. A most enjoyable afternoon.

Edith Jayne

Anthony Penrose's Extraordinary Parents

The packed audience at the LJCC was enraptured by Antony Penrose's talk about his extraordinary parents, the photographer Lee Miller and the surrealist Roland Penrose. He told of their lives and myriad friendships in Europe and beyond, including with Man Ray, Roger Fry, Max Ernst and Joan Miro. He highlighted the influence of war on their work in Paris and Catalonia and of his mother's pictures of death camps, which affected her catastrophically. She was also famously photographed in Hitler's bath.

Janet Weston

Welwyn GC Visit to Wallace Collection

We were given fascinating insight into the history, exhibits and artefacts at the Wallace Collection. Under the gentle and humorous guidance of Catherine Chastney, we discussed a number of paintings and felt better able to discover what clues are hidden within a work of art. *Marianne Linford*

Newcastle Warm Welcome

The meeting began with Agnes speaking about two forthcoming events: a regional meeting in Edinburgh and the KT Reunion in London. Then Judy Russel spoke eloquently about her background and her father's survival from Auschwitz and her involvement with the Holocaust Education Trust. I was warmly welcomed by the assembled members and would like to thank Agnes for inviting me to this informative meeting. I look forward to future meetings.

Gay Keenaghan

HGS History of Reuters

Greg Beitchman, Global News Editor at Reuters, told us that the company's founder, Paul Julius Reuter, a German Jew, was an enthusiastic technophile, using steam locomotives, steamships, telegraph and pigeons. Today, Reuters employs globally 3,000 journalists and 50,000 associates.

Tony Levi

Bradford CF 'A Good Old Natter'

We enjoyed lunch and 'a good old natter' at the Salts Mill Diner in Bradford. It was an opportunity to socialise in a most beautiful 'former mill' and made a lovely and refreshing change. *Wendy Bott*

Brighton-Sarid (Sussex) Boys Town Jerusalem

Laurence Stein, a member and fundraiser for Boys Town Jerusalem, spoke to us about

this educational institute for mostly poor and underprivileged children. The school was founded in 1948 to educate war orphans and it caters for boys of every denomination, Sephardi and Ashkenazi alike.

Ceska Abrahams

Bank of England Feedback

The Bank of England wanted our views on banknotes and security issues. Our two speakers from the Banknote Division gave us an interesting presentation on the history of banknotes, the type and style of banknotes over the centuries, and a preview of the Sir Winston Churchill £5 note to be issued in 2016. Later we filled in a Know Your Banknotes questionnaire as feedback for the Bank. *David Lang*

Hull CF Hobbies and Interests

Rose spoke about slogan writing and the weird and wonderful prizes she had won over the years. Others spoke about cross-stitch, embroidery, stained glass making, oil painting, collecting owls and knitting. Our thanks to Wendy for making all the arrangements. *Rose Abramson*

Edgware Needing Help

Andrew Leigh spoke to us most interestingly about the later stages in life, when or if one starts to need some help. He mentioned specifically some wonderful Jewish organisations which will help if help is needed. *Felix Winkler*

Café Imperial Variety of Topics

The usual banter among the troops. A variety of topics covered, from the Army Ski Association in Germany, where Peter Wayne learned to ski, to the rise of UKIP. Would our members be so warmly greeted in Britain today? *Esther Rinkoff*

Sheffield CF

'Freemasons and the Holocaust'

Anthony Kaddish, a past Master of the Hadassah Lodge, gave us a most interesting talk on 'Freemasons and the Holocaust'. None of us present had realised that the Masons were such a major target of elimination by the Nazis. *Renee Martin*

Bristol and Bath

From Ostrava to Kingston

We enjoyed a talk by David Lawson on how a *sefer torah* came from Ostrava in Czechoslovakia to Kingston Synagogue. When the town's six synagogues were burned in 1939 some artefacts were saved and taken to Prague, and then over 1,000 scrolls were brought to Westminster Synagogue by an art dealer. *Hazel Rank Broadley*

North West London Best of the Best

Edwina Mileham told us the Wallace Collection was originally built as a hunting lodge, before becoming the family town house of the first four Marquesses of Hertford; Sir Richard Wallace, son of the fourth Marquess, left it to the nation in 1900. As collectors of fine objects acquired mainly from European royalty, the family procured only the best of the best, ranging from furniture and porcelain to armour and Old Master paintings. *Shirley Rodwell*

ARTS AND EVENTS JULY

Until Sunday 14 July 'The Dresden Project' An exhibition of prints by Monica Petzal about her maternal family and the city of Dresden, which they fled in 1936. At the Printroom, 98 Highgate Hill, London N6, tel 07775 676 185

Fri 5 'A Small Town Near Auschwitz' Mary Fulbrook, Professor of German History at UCL, speaks about her book on ordinary Nazis during the war. At Lewes Speakers Festival, 8.15 to 9.30 pm. Ticket hotline 0844 8700 887 or www.lewesspeakersfestival.com

Sun 7 Rev Bernd Koschland, 'An Unfinished Suit – A Promise to a Kindertransportee' Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, First Family History Fair. At De Vere Village Urban Resort Hotel, Centennial Avenue, Elstree, Herts, 12.00 to 1.00 pm. <http://familyhistoryfair.eventbrite.co.uk>



Leeds CF: Discussing hobbies and bringing (funny) things to show – Henry Sanders, Liesel Carter (centre), Greta Broch

Glasgow Book Club Hot Debate

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows was hotly debated. We even managed to spend a bit of time in the sun in the back garden, together with afternoon tea and entertainment by Fourth Generation visitors Yoni and Zehava. *Agnes Isaacs*

Bromley CF Return to Carpathians

We listened enthralled to Rachel Levy's moving account of her return for the first time to her home village in the Carpathian Mountains from which she had been forcibly removed during the war. Rachel shared with us images and memories of past and present, people and places lost and found. *Dorothea Lipton*

North London Intriguing Stories

We heard stories about, *inter alia*, a family photo album, a campaign medal from Cyprus, a document issued to a Kindertransport child, and tribal pottery figures from South Africa. Each story was totally different – each important to the teller and all most intriguing to hear. *Hanne R. Freedman*

Theatrical Lives from Vienna to London

An Exhibition of Treasures from the Miller Archive
19 June-30 August 2013, Monday to Saturday, 9 am-6 pm
Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1 – Admission free

Seventy-five years since the German annexation of Austria in March 1938, the exhibition at the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London, illustrates the lives of two Jewish refugee actors from Vienna, Martin Miller and Hannah Norbert-Miller. Scripts, photographs, letters, theatre programmes and other items from the Miller Archive trace the Millers' lives from their theatrical successes in pre-war Vienna, through the challenges of exile theatre in wartime London, to their achievements in radio and theatre in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of the items in the collection are only now being systematically identified and contextualised, and this is the first time that they will be displayed.



Myrna Glass

JULY GROUP EVENTS

Kingston	1 July	Lunchtime Social
Ealing	2 July	JFS students to visit, talk about projects
Didsbury CF	3 July	Social
Ilford	3 July	Tba
Yorkshire/Harrogate	3 July	'Israel Inside'
Glasgow Book Club	4 July	Social
Pinner	4 July	'The Coburg Conspiracy – Is the Royal Family Jewish?'
Hull and Sheffield	7 July	Visit to Beth Shalom
Manchester	7 July	Speaker: Chava Rosenzweig
HGS	8 July	Francesca Segal, author <i>The Innocents</i>
Leeds	8 July	Garden Party
Bromley CF	9 July	Social at home of Lianne Segal
Essex (Westcliff)	9 July	Social Get-together: 'Someone who has had an influence on your life'
Midlands W (Birmingham)	9 July	Annual Garden Party
Bradford	10 July	Talk on 'Calligraphy'
Liverpool	10 July	Annual Lunch
St John's Wood	10 July	Return of popular speaker Myra Sampson
Liverpool	14 July	Visit to Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre
Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)	15 July	David Barnett: 'The Story of Joseph Nathan and SmithKline Beecham'
Café Imperial	16 July	Social get-together
Radlett	17 July	Herts Community Project
Edgware	23 July (one week late)	Professor Tanya Byron – Psychologist
Glasgow CF	23 July	Visit to BBC
Edinburgh CF	24 July	Social
Wembley	24 July	Social get-together
North London	25 July	Tba
Nightingale	29 July	Social
Northern Get-together in Leeds	30 July	All Northern Groups
North West London	30 July	Tba

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Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298
H.obstfeld@talk21.com

Wembley Buzzing with Conversation

We were delighted to welcome back Feo Kahn (103), who had been unable to attend recently. As always, the room buzzed with lively conversation, including a report on the recent Anthony Penrose talk and the forthcoming visit to JFS to learn more about computers. *Myrna Glass*

Myrna Glass

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For further details, please call
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or
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Activities July 2013

Lunch is served at 12.30 unless otherwise stated

Tuesday 2 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 11.00 Seated Exercises
- 12.00 **KT LUNCH – Speaker Rolf Penzias, 'The Kindertransport Reunion'**

Thursday 4 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10.30 Art Class – all welcome
- 11-12 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Frank Crocker**

Tuesday 9 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 11.30 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Douglas Poster**

Thursday 11 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.30 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.15 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Margaret Opdahl**

Tuesday 16 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 11.00 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 **HAPPY DAYS – Bring in your wedding or holiday photos for all to see (staff included)**

Thursday 18 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10.30 Art Class
- 11.15 Seated Exercises
- 11.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Will Smith**

Tuesday 23 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 11.00 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Geoff Strum, light opera**

Thursday 25 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.30 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.15 Seated Exercises
- 13.45 **Film show – 'Hello Dolly'**

Tuesday 30 July

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Cards/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 11.00 Seated Exercises
- 13.30 **Entertainer – Mike Marandi**



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FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS

Death

Hart, Lili (née Baumann) died 3 May 2013 at the age of 89. Born in Berlin on 25 June 1923, she fled Germany and finished her secondary education in England. She went to university in London and became an optician before marrying, in 1947, the late Peter Hart, with whom she set up 'Hotac', the first hotel booking service. Her greatest accomplishments, showing her inner life and talent, were in the short stories and poetry she published. Lili is deeply missed by her daughter Monica Loosley.

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Fred Dunston, born Vienna 29 May 1917 – died London 11 December 2012

Fred Dunston personified those qualities that were the hallmark of the Central European refugee community. In particular, he showed no bitterness despite the monumental losses he had suffered in the Holocaust, consistently aiming to build bridges for future generations rather than take the line of recrimination. His tolerance, pragmatism and inner contentment stand as a beacon for dealing with whatever life might have in store.

He was born Fritz Deutsch in Vienna, the son of religiously aware and culturally assimilated Jewish parents, in the final years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He had one set of grandparents in each of those countries and grew up speaking not only German but also some Hungarian. He had a happy childhood, experiencing little anti-Semitism at school, but, after a term studying chemistry at Vienna University, he was forced to leave following the Anschluss.

Fred had spent many years in scouting and his experience as a scoutmaster affected the direction of his life: straight after the Anschluss, with Jewish children prohibited from attending state schools, he was asked to help set up a new school for them.

This work came to an abrupt end after Kristallnacht. He found himself, ironically, under the protection of Eichmann, who was trying to get as many Jews out of Austria as possible and supported those working with Youth Aliyah to help them emigrate. Fred enabled 300 of these children to leave Vienna on the Kindertransport.

Fred came out in 1939, first to Kitchener Camp, then working again with Jewish refugee children in Bydown, before being interned on the Isle of Man in 1940. Even this he made into a positive experience, learning from and contributing to the mini-university there. After internment, he joined his uncle's small wholesale leather and watch strap business in London, living with relatives and a member of a family once again, neither his parents nor his sister having got out of Vienna in time.

He joined the AJR and the youth group the Hyphen, where he met his future wife, Liesl. They created a home full of love, culture and Viennese pastries. But this paradise was



shattered after 34 years of marriage when Liesl died of cancer at the age of 64 just as Fred was retiring. He picked up the threads of his earlier life and began writing, his extensive papers eventually lodged in the Wiener Library. He contributed to numerous books on the Continental refugees, including Helen Fry's *Jews in North Devon*, Barry Turner's ... *And the Policeman Smiled*, and *I Came Alone*, edited by Bertha Leverton.

Fred also resumed what was to become a long involvement with the AJR as a visitor to elderly members and as a volunteer in the office, a role he continued until the age of 90.

Fred exemplified the word *Kultur*, demonstrating interest in, and a knowledge and understanding of, history, music, literature, philosophy, religion, politics and economics, alongside his meticulously organised stamp collection, his outstanding photographic skills, and his love of family occasions. He had a sympathy for Israel but was no Zionist. He encouraged his children to learn German and to visit Germany, seeking a better future within a united Europe.

Even during his final years, as a resident at Hammerson House, he continued to take an interest in world affairs and exemplifying the virtues of Sarastro in his beloved *Magic Flute* – governed by the ideals of love and friendship, fulfilled and contented. He is survived by his sons John and Colin, his daughter-in-law Susie, and grandchildren Matthew and Naomi.

John Dunston

Evelyn Amalie Labi, born Vienna 11 June 1922 – died London 26 February 2013

Evi, who passed away suddenly, was an indomitable spirit, young at heart with incredible enthusiasm, humour and a zest for life that inspired young and old.

Born into a well-off middle-class family in Vienna, Evi (née Bechert) was expected to follow in the style of her parents Johanna (née Petschau) and Viktor Bechert, both from what was to become Czechoslovakia. Her childhood was immensely happy, living in her beloved Wieden, in Theresianumgasse by the Belvedere. But her life changed abruptly when she fled Vienna.

Evi's father, a supplier of uniforms and equipment to the Austrian army, was among those to be arrested immediately the Nazis took over. On 11 March 1938, having been held hostage in their home by Austrian SA members, Evi and her mother escaped when most of their captors joined a torchlight parade. In Czechoslovakia that night, they were re-united with Evi's father. They had virtually no possessions but, as Evi always said, they were much luckier than many other refugees as they had each other.

Arriving in Britain a few months later and soon living in Swiss Cottage, Evi and her mother had a succession of jobs, working as an au pair, cleaner – anything to provide an income. She spoke fondly of Woburn House,

recalling how Jews helped fellow Jews in whatever way they could. This experience made an already rebellious girl into a fighter for her family, friends and beliefs. In her first battle, she secured a visa for her former governess, Annie, and her husband to come to Britain.

As with many women, the war gave Evi opportunities she otherwise would not have had. She joined a workshop with less than ten employees and by 1945 helped run what had become a 300-plus workforce. She loved manufacturing and returned to it in the 1960s when she worked for Belsize Park garages. Subsequently, having studied Business Administration and computing, she was offered the chance to work on computer development in the US but turned it down as it would have meant leaving her parents behind.

Given Evi's love of technology, especially computers, the internet opened up tremendous opportunities. Not only was she able to discover long-lost, or unknown, relatives but it also gave her new weapons with which to



fight for compensation. In 2005 she and others formed the Austrian Restitution Group and she was in regular correspondence with activists in refugee, Jewish groups and Austrian government bodies. She was unhappy that the Claims Conference agreed to the payment of just 15 per cent of what had been lost. She also worked for many years as a Samaritans volunteer and was deeply involved in the local community.

Soon after the war Evi married Aldo, who died in 2003, and had two children, Robert and Doona. While she happily lived in London with her family, Vienna was always home and dominated her kitchen. Although her first return to Vienna, in 1964, was painful, she returned regularly, becoming increasingly at home there again. A talk she gave in 2011 to a school in Tulln led to her applying for Austrian citizenship.

Evi was the life and soul of a party or a pub. At the age of 88 she was onstage with Stevie Wonder in Hyde Park. She had a devilish sense of humour. One of a kind, she never lost a 'Kind's' enthusiasm and energy.

Robert and Doona Labi



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Yitzhak Rabin – a figure who towered over his generation

Yitzhak Rabin, who served as prime minister of Israel during two separate periods – 1974-77 and 1992-95 – was a figure who towered over his generation. The first native Israeli ('sabra') to serve in that office, he was assassinated by an extremist right-wing Jew in November 1995 at the conclusion of a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

But the bare facts of Rabin's life hold a deeper meaning because he seems to epitomise the history and ethos of modern Israel. Consequently, when I was invited to participate in a group visit to the Rabin Centre in Tel Aviv I agreed to go.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that behind the unassuming façade of the building that bears Rabin's name lies a treasure-trove of information about Israel's society and history that no other institution in Israel can match.

In my duties at the Information Desk of the Israel Museum I am sometimes asked by visitors from abroad whether there is any exhibition concerning the history of the State of Israel: I must admit that in the past I have found it difficult to come up with a satisfactory answer. But now I know where to send them – to the Rabin Centre.

Rabin, who grew up in Tel Aviv, was born in 1922 to parents who were

among the first Zionists to immigrate to Israel from Russia. In 1941 he joined the Palmach, rapidly rising to senior rank within the organisation that eventually formed the basis of the IDF. During the War of Independence, in 1948, Rabin fought valiantly as the commander of the Harel Brigade, leading his unit into battle and securing the road to Jerusalem. He also participated in the armistice talks with Egypt held on Rhodes.

His military career culminated in his appointment as chief of staff in 1964 and it was under his command that Israel's forces defeated the combined armies of Egypt, Jordan and Syria in 1967 in the Six Day War. Rabin was one of the first Israelis to visit Jerusalem's Old City and the liberated Mount Scopus campus of the Hebrew University.

Upon his retirement from the IDF in 1968, Rabin was appointed Israel's ambassador to the US and was instrumental in obtaining the sale to Israel of advanced weaponry. During the Yom Kippur War of 1973 he acted in an advisory capacity and was later elected to the Knesset for the Labour Party. Following the elections that unseated Golda Meir's government he became prime minister. During that term Israeli forces executed the spectacular

rescue of the passengers of a plane that had been hijacked by Palestinian terrorists and flown to Idi Amin's Uganda.

The exhibition at the Rabin Centre tracks all these historic events as well as showing aspects of contemporary life in Israel and the world, even displaying a pack of the cigarettes that Rabin chain-smoked all his life. Rabin's actual study is also on display and it is interesting to see his taste in literature and his considerable collection of art books.

Rabin resigned from office in 1977 as a result of the revelation that his wife had retained their dollar account in the US (this was illegal for Israeli citizens at the time). In the subsequent elections Menachem Begin's Likud Party came to power and Rabin remained a Knesset member and minister of defence from 1984 to 1990.

The longstanding rivalry between Rabin and Shimon Peres concluded with Rabin's election as leader of the Labour Party in 1992 and victory in the elections that year. Rabin became prime minister again and acted to attain the Oslo Accords recognising the Palestinian Authority. For that he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize but he also became the object of criticism and vilification within Israel by those who opposed him.

By a supreme irony it was at the mass rally held in Tel Aviv to express support for the Oslo Accords and condemn violence that Rabin was assassinated. The anniversary of his death, 4 November 1995, is commemorated in Israel. Many sites and monuments throughout the country bear his name but it is the Rabin Centre, also known as the Israeli Museum, that provides the most fitting memorial.

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75th Anniversary of Kristallnacht 9 November 2013

The **Liberal Jewish Synagogue** will be holding a special commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Kristallnacht on the evening of Saturday 9 November 2013.

AJR members are invited to join us for an evening of readings and music.

We are pleased to announce that the well-known cellist Andrea Hess, composer of the music for Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*, will participate.

Further details will appear in future issues of the Journal

Searching for Descendants of Families from Herborn (on the river Dill), Germany

I have campaigned over a number of years for a memorial to remember the Jews of Herborn who were murdered in the Holocaust.

This memorial is at last (most probably) going to be unveiled on 8 November 2013 and I would like to invite interested and affected parties to this important event as the town claims to have few records of descendants.

If you fall into this category, please contact me by email so that I can pass on your name, address and connection and add your family names to a list of invitees.
Gerald Stern – gerald@sternmail.co.uk

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