

British politicians misuse the Holocaust

Sometimes it almost seems as if the centre of gravity in current exchanges about anti-Semitism and Nazism has moved to the Middle East, allowing such sentiments in Britain to pass unchallenged. While heated accusations of anti-Semitism are regularly levelled at those who criticise Israeli policies towards the Arabs, provoking the equally contentious counter-argument that it is possible to be anti-Zionist without being anti-Semitic, some recent, thoroughly reprehensible actions and statements by British politicians have passed without attracting the condemnation they deserve.

The worst of these was the attendance of Aidan Burley, Conservative MP for Cannock Chase, at a stag party held on 3 December 2011 in a restaurant in the French Alpine resort of Val Thorens, where the bridegroom, Mark Fournier, chose to wear SS uniform. According to the *Mail on Sunday* of 22 December 2011, guests chanted the names of Hitler, Himmler and Eichmann. One of the guests was quoted as having raised a toast to the organiser of the party 'and if we're perfectly honest, to the thought process and ideology of the Third Reich'.

Readers with a strong stomach can view images of this deplorable incident on the internet, on *MailOnline*, where Burley can be seen alongside the SS-clad Fournier, grinning cheesily. Both men are Oxford graduates, professionals in their thirties, and quite unlike the uneducated young louts from whom such behaviour might be expected. On the contrary, to judge by the evidence on the internet, it looks as if Fournier and his cronies understood perfectly well what they were doing and saying.

The reaction of the Conservative Party has left much to be desired. When the scandal broke, David Cameron sacked Burley from his junior ministerial post as Parliamentary Private Secretary at the Department of Transport and announced

an investigation into the incident. This has yet to report, several months later, while Burley remains a backbench MP. One can reasonably assume that the Prime Minister has adopted the trusted tactic of using an investigation to kick an unwelcome issue into the long grass, hoping that the media will lose interest and that Burley's resignation, which would force a by-election that the Tories could easily lose, can be avoided.

As a result, Burley continues to enjoy



Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial

the Conservative whip, living to smirk another day and no doubt hoping to resume his ministerial career. In the 1950s, *AJR Information* reported that a man who had raised a Nazi flag on a building on Finchley Road had had to be protected by the police from angry passers-by. Now, it would appear that those participating in Nazi-styled events enjoy the protection of the Conservative Party. Speaking personally, I would not vote for a party which boasts an individual like Burley as one of its parliamentary representatives. I would regard it as a betrayal of my murdered relatives to do so.

This is not to suggest that a right-wing Tory like Burley genuinely harbours Nazi sympathies, even if he enjoys participating in tasteless pranks in Nazi uniform. If there is any ideological underpinning to this kind of escapade, it is to be found

instead in the knee-jerk hostility to Europeans widespread on the Tory right. By dressing as he did, Mark Fournier evidently aimed to provoke the French: 'We wanted to see how a Nazi uniform in the middle of France would go down,' he is reported as saying. 'The answer is not that well at all.' His intention would seem to have been to taunt the French with their defeat in 1940 and the subsequent years of occupation – conveniently forgetting that the British Expeditionary Force retreated just as fast as the French in face of the Nazi onslaught and was only saved from destruction by escaping across the Channel, protected by a largely French rearguard.

The image of France regularly promoted by the right-wing media in Britain is based on this historically truncated view, which focuses entirely on the French surrender in 1940, in apparent ignorance of the long record of French military prowess, not least the mass heroism that the French forces displayed in repelling the initial German thrust into France in summer 1914. The same media peddle an equally distorted image of Germany, seen almost exclusively through the lens of the Nazi period and ignoring the thorough-going re-education of the German people in democracy and anti-militarism over six decades.

That very welcome development does not prevent papers like the *Daily Express* (Jewish-owned, alas) from resorting routinely to the stereotype of the jackbooted Nazi in its reporting of German affairs – the kind of national stereotyping familiar from the conservative-nationalist press in Germany either side of the First World War. Branding all Germans as Nazis, actual or potential, is of course highly offensive, as people like Fournier well appreciate. Why would any upright British citizen, they seek to suggest, want to have anything to do with nations whose historical record consists primarily in supporting Nazism (the Germans) or in

continued overleaf ➔

British politicians misuse the Holocaust *cont. from p1*

kowtowing to it in defeat (the French)? We British may have come down in the world since 1945, but we were on the right side in the war, weren't we?

A similar sense of inflamed nationalism inspired by unthinking anti-European feeling was exhibited in the House of Lords by Lord Willoughby de Broke (UKIP). Speaking in a debate on the European Union on 16 February 2012, the peer did not scruple to compare the EU's policy on Greece to the Holocaust. Characteristically describing the economic policy as German – those jackbooted Nazis lording it over the Continent again – Lord Willoughby made the remarkable statement that 'austerity macht frei seems to be the remedy prescribed by the Germans' to Greece. Readers may well recoil in shock and disgust from this casual abuse of the notorious phrase 'Arbeit macht frei' ('work sets you free'), which was inscribed above the gates to Auschwitz. The reference was plainly deliberate: blithely insensitive to the distress likely to be caused to Holocaust survivors and their descendants by his grossly inappropriate invocation of Auschwitz, the noble lord proceeded, when challenged, to repeat the comparison.

This is a clear case of the trivialisation of the Holocaust, and deeply reprehensible. By likening what happened at Auschwitz – the murder of at least a million defenceless, innocent human beings, mostly Jews – to the attempt by the EU and the International Monetary Fund to resolve Greece's financial crisis by a policy of debt reduction, Lord Willoughby provided a textbook case of Holocaust relativisation, and one that deserves much sharper refutation than it has received. For if the Nazi genocide was no worse than some historical commonplace like an austerity programme, then why, one might ask, do Jews get so worked up about it?

Lord Willoughby's outburst, apart from reinforcing the case for the abolition of the House of Lords in its current form, shows that some on the British right are prepared to disregard the aura of respect that normally surrounds the Holocaust by dragging iconic sites like Auschwitz down into the hurly-burly of political slanging matches and degrading them into terms of abuse aimed at 'Europe', their favoured target. There are European countries where such violations of the sanctity of the Holocaust would not be tolerated, but apparently Britain is no longer one of them.

Anthony Grenville

Erich Heller – a centenary tribute

Connoisseurs of German literature will regret that the centenary of the birth of the great literary scholar Erich Heller has passed largely unmarked. Heller was born in Komotau (now Chomutov in the Czech Republic) on 27 March 1911 and studied law in Prague. In 1939 he fled to Britain, where he was awarded his doctorate at Cambridge University in 1943 for a dissertation on Thomas Mann, the predecessor of his influential study *The Ironic German: A Study of Thomas Mann* (1958). Heller held lecturing posts at the London School of Economics, Cambridge and the University College of Swansea, where he was head of the Department of German, being promoted to the rank of professor in 1950. In 1959, he was appointed Professor of German at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where he lived until his death in 1990.

Heller was best known for *The Disinherited Mind* (1952), a brilliant series of studies of German literary figures from Goethe to Rilke and Kafka, including Nietzsche, Jacob Burkhardt, author of *The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy*, and Karl Kraus. The essays are case studies in 'the spiritually disinherited mind of Europe', examining the relation of poetry and truth 'in an age dispossessed of all spiritual certainties', a world where the moral and cultural certainties underlying the real order have ceased to obtain and where, in consequence, the artist has to create that order for himself, thereby inevitably distancing his art yet further from the world around him. At the book's heart is Hölderlin's lament, in his poem *Brot und Wein* (*Bread and Wine*), 'wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit?' ('why be a poet in a spiritless age?') – a fundamental question that Heller's dazzling erudition went some way to resolving.

Anthony Grenville

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Views expressed in the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

Dr Anthony Grenville's book *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970* has been reprinted. For copies (paperback), write to Anthony Grenville at the AJR, enclosing cheque for £22.50 (incl. postage and packing) made out to the author.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES THURSDAY 7 JUNE 2012, 11.00 AM

at the AJR Paul Balint Centre
Belsize Square Synagogue,
London NW3 4HX

Lunch, if required, £7. Must be ordered and paid for in advance – please telephone 020 7431 2744.

Agenda

Annual Report 2011
Hon. Treasurer's Report
Discussion

Election of Committee of Management

All questions for the chair should be submitted by Thursday 24 May to the Head of Administration at Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL.

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The following members will be proposed for election or re-election to the Committee at the AGM on Thursday 7 June 2012:

Mr A C Kaufman, Chairman, Mr W D Rothenberg, Vice Chairman & Hon. Treasurer, Mrs E S Angel*, Secretary, Mr C W Dunston*, Trustee, Mrs D Franklin, Trustee, Mrs G R Glassman, Trustee, Ms Karen Goodman, Mrs J Millan, Sir E Reich*, Mr A Spiro

*Committee members retiring by rotation and being proposed for re-election

Anyone wishing to propose any other member for election as Hon Officer, Trustee, or Committee member must submit to AJR's Head of Administration such a proposal signed by ten members qualified to vote at the meeting and with the signed agreement of the person being proposed no later than Thursday 24 May.

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY

Wed 6 June 'Target Heydrich: Laurent Binet on HHHH' Laurent Binet will discuss his novel *HHHH*, winner of the 2010 Prix Goncourt du premier roman and now published in English translation. At Wiener Library, 6.30 pm. Admission free but tel 020 7636 7247 to reserve a space

To 8 June 'Traces' Exhibition by photographer Julia Winckler about her great-uncle Hugo Hecker, who in 1939 escaped from Vienna to England and whose family perished in the Holocaust. At Austrian Cultural Forum, 28 Rutland Gate, London SW7, tel 020 7584 8653

Mon 2 July Baroness Deech, 'Restoring Our History: Poland and Jewish Property' Ben-Gurion University Foundation. 6.00 pm at a central London venue. Contact Hannah Allen on 020 7446 8558 or at hannah@bguf.uk

NEW LIGHT THROWN ON CAPTURE OF HOESS

Untold details about the tracking down and arrest of Rudolf Hoess, the notorious Kommandant of Auschwitz, were revealed when a Belsize Square Synagogue group travelled to Cracow just after Passover.

A quick search on Wikipedia gives the outlines of Hoess's final years. But there are no names, just the mention of his capture by 'British troops – some of whom were born in Germany – on 11 March 1946'.

Now, we have a name: the late Hanns Alexander. Members of Hanns's family were among the 35 Synagogue members on the trip, led by Rabbi Stuart Altshuler and Professor Antony Polonsky, who holds the chair of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University, Massachusetts. Hanns's daughter, Annette Hughes, made the journey, as did his nephew, Frank Harding, with his wife Belinda and son Thomas.

On the short coach trip from Cracow to the sombre guided tour of Auschwitz, several of the party explained their own personal links to the site: grandparents lost, a last-minute escape from Germany. Thomas Harding told the group about his research on his great-uncle, which began at Hanns's funeral in 2006.

Hanns Alexander was 19 when he left his native Berlin for Britain – he flew into Croydon airport in 1937. The rest of his family – twin brother, two older sisters and parents – came separately. As soon as war was declared he volunteered for the army and, like most German-Jewish

refugees, was accepted into the Pioneer Corps, mainly digging trenches.

But by the end of war he had been moved to Intelligence and, again like many other German-speaking Jewish refugee soldiers, he was sent to Germany to act as interpreter. Only in his case there was a very specific task.

In Germany he joined a group of British soldiers, Jewish and non-Jewish, intent on finding the ruthlessly efficient Hoess. As the Red Army approached from the east to liberate the 20,000-acre Auschwitz complex, Hoess had sent his wife and five children home from the comfortable villa they occupied on the edge of the site, and then quietly slipped away. The British team went to Hoess's wife and threatened her with handing over her oldest son to the Russians unless she revealed her husband's whereabouts.

Under pressure Hedwig Hoess gave the location where her husband was working as a farmer under the assumed name of Franz Lang. He was living in a barn. After he had been severely beaten and confessed to his true identity, Hanns Alexander arrested him and handed him over to the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, where he gave the first authoritative and detailed account of the entire camp operation. Senior Nazis on trial could no longer claim ignorance of the extermination policy and its implementation.

Hoess was then handed over to the Polish authorities, who tried him

in Warsaw for murder and hanged him on 16 April 1947 on the same spot in view of his villa (now occupied by a retired teacher) where prisoners of Auschwitz were publicly hanged.

After demobilisation, Mr Alexander went into a career in banking, mainly at S. G. Warburg and under successive takeovers. His story, intertwined with a study of Rudolf Hoess, is being written for publication by his great-nephew, Thomas Harding: 'There were rumours in the family about Hanns being a war crimes investigator but nobody really knew,' Thomas said:

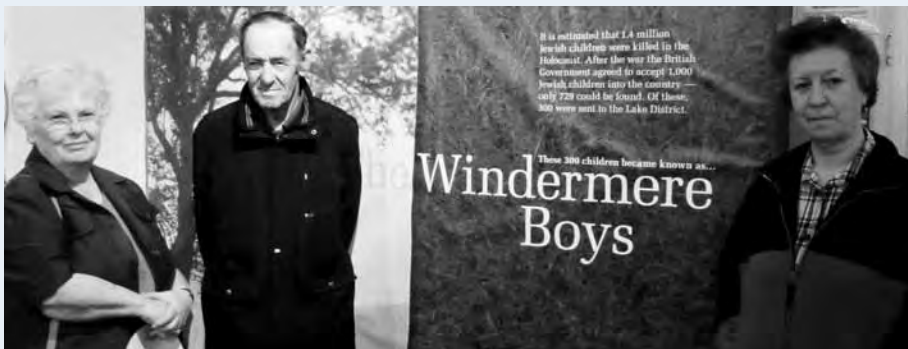
The first time I heard it mentioned was at his funeral in 2006. Most people doubted this was true and put it down to one of his tales. The search for the truth was what got me going on my book, and it was not until I started my research, and found confirmation in the British, American and Polish archives, including Hanns's field dispatches, that I was able to confirm that Hanns was indeed the man who arrested Rudolf Hoess.

He had backup, particularly Field Security Section 92, but Hanns had been charged by the War Crimes Group to arrest Hoess, and it was Hanns who carried out the arrest. He also delivered him to Camp Tomato, the interrogation centre, where Hoess made his first confession about Auschwitz and the millions who had been murdered there.

But, as his daughter confirmed: 'Dad was very reluctant to talk about his wartime activities. The past was the past. He was grateful to England for giving him another chance in life.'

Ruth Rothenberg

'Windermere Boys' share memories



(From left) Joanna Millan, Joseph Berger, Zdenka Husserl

The Child Survivors' Association (CSA) organised a visit to the 'Windermere Boys' exhibition at the Manchester Jewish Museum, where they were met by local members of the AJR.

In August 1945 300 children liberated from Theresienstadt were brought to England and settled at the Calgarth Estate in Windermere. Although the group included 40 girls, it became known as 'The Boys' after

Martin Gilbert's book of that name.

CSA Chair Joanna Millan was three years old when she arrived at Windermere. Together with fellow CSA member Zdenka Husserl and AJR members Josef Berger and Abraham Pawlowski, these four 'Boys' shared their memories of their experiences at the Calgarth Estate with the rest of the group.

Joan Salter

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Closure: A visit to Minsk

The following are notes made by the author during a visit to Minsk last October (Ed.).

It took more than 50 years before it became known what happened to the poor people who were deported from Cologne on 20 July 1942. This was the only transport – some 1,100 people – that went to Minsk.

A book was published by Dieter Corbach (*6:00 Uhr ab Messe Köln-Deutz: Deportationen 1938-1945* (Scriba, 1999)) following the discovery of an archive with all the gruesome details of that time. Groups of Jewish people were instructed to report at the local railway station with enough food and provisions for 24 hours to be sent to the east to work. They were convinced this was the fact. They had to pay 50 marks per person for the rail fare.

My mother and father were on this transport with many of my friends and acquaintances, as were my old headmaster and his family who had been instrumental in saving my life by getting me and some 130 other Jawne pupils to England on the Kindertransport.

For me, this visit to Minsk was one I had to make. I had made a number of attempts to join a party but hadn't been successful. A friend in Germany finally enabled me to join a tour. It's not easy to enter Belarus and the area of Maly Trostinec just outside Minsk.

We now know what happened when the deportation took place. The journey took some three days. The train was diverted to Maly Trostinec, where all the passengers disembarked, were taken by lorry to a prepared site and murdered.

At some time during their journey they were moved from the passenger train to cattle trucks. One cannot imagine what went through their minds at that time.

From Gatwick on Friday to Cologne, where Wolfgang Freier collected me to take me to his home in Reifferscheid in the Eifel, a pretty village of 300 people. Wolfgang and his wife Gisela couldn't do enough for me. On Saturday we were very busy. We looked at the cemetery in Vernich, where a number of the original Marx family are buried. Karolina Marx, whom we met in 1992 and was almost 100 when she died, was buried next to her parents 15 years ago.

Then we went to Cologne, where they took me to my old home in Wittekindstrasse. We managed to visit

my old home. A lad of 15 or 16 allowed us to come into the apartment. It's not as I remember it. It was rebuilt and a family of six now live there. They each have their own room with all their things and it's full of all their stuff – quite a mess. It was sad: not the lovely home we had. We also visited our previous home, still in the same place where we had lived when I was about five years old.

After that we dropped by the Roonstrasse Synagogue. Too late to have lunch. Every Shabbat they have



(From left) Kurt Marx, Wolfgang Freier, Kuma Kosak

a communal lunch. There must have been 50 or 60 people there. The rabbi asked us to join them. There are around 5,000 Jewish people living there now, mostly from Eastern Europe. To think I was Bar Mitzvah there in 1938! We then drove to a place called Vogelsang in the Eifel. Vogelsang was built by the Nazis in 1936 to educate an elite who would become a civilian force to govern all the captured territory in the east. There



Memorial to Jewish victims at Maly Trostinec

was accommodation for 1,000 men. It was intended to destroy it after the war but it was so solidly built that it is now going to be used as an educational establishment. On Sunday morning we drove to Frankfurt for Belarus and arrived in Minsk in the evening.

This morning, Monday, an early start. We were collected by our guide, a nice young woman who showed us many of the memorials and places of remembrance to the Holocaust victims. Minsk has almost 200,000 inhabitants and is a large modern city with a lot of building works.

Then we visited the Holocaust Research Centre. On one wall were all the names of the transport from Cologne in July 1942. I saw the names of my mother and father and all the other names of the people who had been on that transport from Cologne in 1942. We had a long interview with the director of the Centre, who is creating an archive of all that took place at Maly Trostinec. After lunch we had a guided tour of the town. It was a long day. Tomorrow we will be taken to the actual site of Maly Trostinec. We were told there are about 15,000 Jewish people currently living in Minsk, possibly more as they are not required to mention their religion in the census now.

Tuesday up early, first stop the Holocaust History Society. They want to know all about me and the family history. They are trying to create a record of all who were transported to Maly Trostinec. The most complete record is the one I came here for. The record in our book is the most complete. They have the names of all the people who came in July 1942. They have all the names on the wall of their centre similar to the ones in Prague. After the interview, we went on to Maly Trostinec, a few miles from Minsk. We saw the various sites of the camp. When my parents arrived they were taken from the then existing goods station by lorry to the area in the woods, walked to the pits and, as far as we know, were murdered together with the 1,100 other women, men and children.

As the weather was fine, the walk wasn't bad. The car we were in got quite close to the site; in wet weather it would be very difficult. The authorities have left the approach to the site in a very bad condition as if to make it

continued opposite ➔

AJR representatives at Buckingham Palace for Diamond Jubilee celebrations

AJR Co-Director Michael Newman and AJR member Clemens Nathan had the honour of attending a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Both are members of the Board of the Anglo-Jewish Association (Clemens is a former President and Michael is the current Deputy President), which, together with the Board of Deputies, has enjoyed since Victorian times the status of one of Her Majesty's Privileged Bodies of the Crown.

It is a great privilege to be able to pay homage to the reigning monarch at special and historically important times. On this occasion, 27 delegations ranging from the churches, various town mayors and royal boroughs, the Chairman of the Bank of England as well as Mayor Boris Johnson representing London and the Knights of the Garter, were present.

Representatives of each delegation made a short speech and presented a scroll to Her Majesty. His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh sat next to her at the front of the magnificent Throne Room. This was followed by a reception in the Queen's Gallery, where the Royal Couple mingled with the distinguished guests. There the Queen asked Michael whether the wishes of our delegation that she should live to 120 years included mental as well as physical health. He assured her that this was the case!

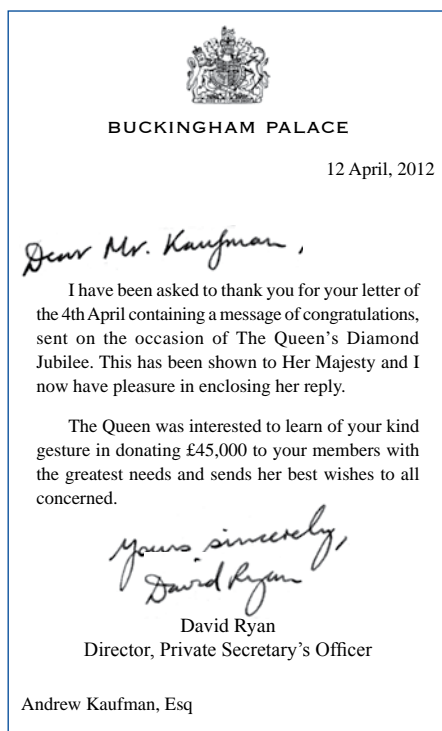
Clemens Nathan

A visit to Minsk cont. from p4

difficult to get there. On the way are a number of memorials to the people taken there. It is estimated that 250,000 people lost their lives in this place alone. In the woods, which were planted after the war, previous visitors, mostly from Vienna, had placed plaques on the trees in memory of their dear ones. The place shows no evidence of what happened there in 1942-43. It was destroyed by the Germans at the end of 1943 before the Russians came. I have taken a number of photos. I finally managed to say Kaddish for them. It was necessary. There are quite a number of memorials in and around the town.

On the way back, we visited Katyn, another memorial to the villages destroyed by the Germans in 1941-43. These were burned to the ground and completely destroyed, including most of the inhabitants.

Before the war Minsk had about 150,000 inhabitants, almost half of them Jewish. Today it has almost



In response to the AJR's letter of congratulations to Her Majesty on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee, we were delighted to receive the above reply. In his letter to the Queen, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman informed Her Majesty of the decision of the AJR Charitable Trust to make an additional payment from our Self-Aid fund to those of our members with the greatest need.

2 million, with many good roads and modern cars. We were told the unemployment rate is very low.

Tomorrow, before we leave, we will visit the Jewish Museum. We were told Minsk has three synagogues that are functioning. The Jewish Museum had a history of the community in pictures and some artefacts. The Jewish lady who showed us the exhibits spoke only Russian – not a word of Yiddish. We met one old gentleman who had been with the partisans. He showed us the book he had written, again only Russian. We also met at the Holocaust Research Centre the director, the historian Dr Kusma Kosak. As I mentioned above, they have very little detailed information on those deported by the Germans to Minsk.

This was a journey I had wanted to make for many years. At last I was able to say Kaddish close to the place where my mother and father and some 1,100 poor people lost their lives in July 1942.

Kurt Marx

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

REFUGEES IN SOUTH WALES

Sir – Your journal is a veritable treasure trove, with articles of personal interest in practically every issue. The April issue was no exception.

The letter headed 'Refugees in South Wales' by Anne Marx (née Kohnstamm) gave me an opportunity to hear in a sort of roundabout way from a friend of some 70 years ago. And yet, how clearly I remember it all!

Anne's paternal grandparents were staying in Boarding House Sachs ('Pension Sachs', as it was known in refugee circles) at 4 Adamson Road, London NW3, where my grandmother was living till her death in November 1955 and where my parents and I were staying for many months towards the end of the war.

Anne Marx, then known as Anne Marie Kohnstamm, was the middle one of three sisters. The oldest of them was Hannelore, and their grandmother – a real character – used to refer to her as 'die Hannelore der Soldat' – though I never saw her in uniform. The youngest she would refer to as 'das Gretele'.

Whenever she spoke of the family's stay in South Wales, she never put it simply as 'in Abergavenny', but invariably as 'in Abergavenny, da wo wir waren' (where we were), which she pronounced in her Franconian accent 'da wo wir waan.' Even now, after all these years, I might still call it that!

We all came from the same region in Germany. In fact, it transpired that in her youth she had lived in the same house in Nuremberg as my father's maternal grandparents and known the family intimately well, thus being able to provide us with lots of interesting background information.

I recall moreover that Anne Marie was working at a London insurance company where she was expected to do all her calculations twice over, ie both with and without a calculator.

I would also like to refer to the letter, also in the April issue, by Gerald Leyens about the Jawne in Cologne. This would have been of interest to my late husband, a former pupil there.

(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3

KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

Sir – May I congratulate you and your team on the April issue of the *AJR Journal*, which

once again contained many interesting articles.

I was particularly moved by Monica Lowenberg's account of her search for her uncle Paul Loewenberg in Latvia and I am indebted to her for quoting the inscription to be found on a plaque in the Venice ghetto – the oldest ghetto in the world – which reads 'Perche le nostre memorie sono la vostra unica tomba' (For our memories are your only grave).

It is the duty of those of us who have survived to keep alive the memory of the six million who were murdered and have no known graves, among whom was my own beloved father z.l., and to pass their memory on to the next generations whenever and wherever we can.

Betty Bloom, London NW3

GERMAN-JEWISH VETERANS, 1914-18

Sir – My grandfather, Max Behr, served (rank unknown) in the Imperial field artillery. I was only about five when my parents fled after the *Machtergreifung* by the Nazis so I did not realise until much later that his habit of washing his hair every single day must have derived from the trenches!

The noteworthy thing is that in September 1935, over two years later, he was notified (in a citation printed on very flimsy paper) that he had been awarded an *Ehrenkreuz* medal for his service.

Fortunately, grandfather died not long after of natural causes and did not witness the degradation of what he had fought for.

Michael Feld, London N3

GERMAN-SPEAKING REFUGEES

Sir – Your correspondent Dr Frank is (almost) right when he writes that 'the journal is entirely about German-speaking refugees from Hitler.'

What about the Danish, Dutch, Flemish, Walloon, French, Polish and Russian speakers? Also note that not all AJR members are refugees and that some belong to the Second Generation.

Henri Obstfeld, Stanmore

AT HOME IN ISRAEL

Sir – I've been absent from your columns for some time – this is partly due to health problems and also because no one raised my ire sufficiently as to make me want to put pen to paper. Lo and behold,

up pops my favourite adversary, Peter Phillips, with his long list of pet dislikes, mainly about Israel but also about Jews generally!

He doesn't think we integrate sufficiently into British society. It obviously hasn't occurred to him that as hard as he tries to assimilate and act the Engländer, to those around him we will always remain Jews – and foreigners to boot. Anyway, I thought that multiculturalism is now celebrated in this country. He also doesn't approve of Jewish faith schools, never mind that other faiths have their schools too. And before he dismisses me as what he calls a 'frummer', I would point out that I never sent my children to a Jewish school, nor do my grandchildren attend one, though they all went to good private schools – perhaps he is against that too. To me, what really matters after the Shoah is to uphold our Jewish heritage, imbued with a love of Zion – that's how I was raised.

I am pleased to see that Peter felt 'curiously' at home in Israel, but he has nothing positive to add about the place. He also has it wrong about Tzipi Livni. He would not approve of her if only he knew her pedigree: her father was high up in the Irgun! This helped her climb the political ladder. When the horse-trading began after the election, Tzipi would not consider joining a coalition with the Likud – which would have been natural as Kadima is a breakaway from the Likud – unless she got the No.1 slot, ie Bibi's job no less. Displaying her usual pouting frown, she would not settle for the No. 2 foreign ministry slot. Had she been more amenable and thought of her country first, it would have kept the 'frummers' out of government and made Peter Phillips happy! She might even have been a successful foreign minister, but she miscalculated. The fact is, Tzipi was a failure as leader of Kadima. She ran a negative campaign and the electorate realised this. She has since been ousted as leader by her own party. Sad really.

Rubin Katz, London NW11

Sir – I share Peter Phillips's concern with the stranglehold the Orthodox parties in Israel have on the formation of governments due to the system of proportional representation. Small extremist parties can subvert the will of the majority. A constituency-based system would be quite feasible. The often advanced argument that it would not be feasible in a small country is mistaken. Greater London, with about the same population, is divided into council constituencies for elections to the London Assembly.

As to the majority of Hasidim not doing their military service, their stand should be accepted on one condition: in an emergency they would have no right to be

defended by those who perform military service. Those who refuse to stand by Israel cannot expect its protection.

Music of the future? We can but hope.

Frederick Hirsch, Pinner, Middx

PS The news from Israel on the formation of a new coalition government – especially its purported programme – is very welcome.

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

Sir – Peter Phillips writes that the Christian religions have moved with the times and that I should too. But the Catholics have not moved from their dogma – only adopted the vernacular instead of Latin. Among Protestants, the Amish are even stricter than the Hasidim.

Several great nations of 2,000 years ago have disappeared. But, despite severe persecution, the Jews have survived because they did not abandon their faith and are now the modernity.

Henry Schragenheim, London N15

SECOND FRONT

Sir – Regarding Anthony Grenville's recent article on Club 1943, whatever the right answer, the question of the timing of a 'second front' can hardly be regarded as 'no business' of refugees, themselves part of European society and of the world, in 1942.

There were those who believed that a defeat by Hitler of Soviet Communism would be preferable to the reverse – and probably some who hoped both might, if left to themselves, fight to mutual exhaustion and collapse. You tell us only Alfred Unger's negative thinking.

In retrospect, and apparently at the time, attacking the European underbelly after victory in north Africa was no bad strategy. The USA had its own Far Eastern problem, in 1942 and thereafter. What do military historians have to say?

Alan S. Kaye, Marlow, Bucks

DARK SIDE TO BAEDEKER

Sir – I possess a fascinating collection of over 70 Baedeker guide books, some in German, some in English, and one or two even in French. They interest me as a mine of outdated information and geographical knowledge. I am also a keen student of maps and town plans.

However, there is a dark side to Baedeker; after the Nazis came to power, Baedeker was a staunch supporter of the regime. I also have a volume on the 'Generalgouvernement' (mainly Poland), in which Baedeker seeks to give the impression that life is running its normal course. The date is 1943. *Baedekers Autoführer Deutsches Reich (Grossdeutschland) 1939* has an introductory page in praise of Hitler.

These guides were produced at the time of the death camps. They look so civilised.

Hans Hammerschmidt, Oxford

Yom HaShoah, 2012

Statue unveiled in Glasgow

AJR members attended the unveiling of a specially commissioned statue. The bronze statue, by Lynn Wolfson, was dedicated by the Queen's Park Charitable Trust. Proposed by Martin Slater, son-in-law of the late Marion Grant, the memorial will serve as a permanent reminder of the six million who perished. Thanks are due to Eddy Mandel, Chairman of the Trust, for making it possible.

Rosa Sacharin and Henry Wuga unveiled the statue and candles were lit by First- and Second-Generation survivors Lore Lucas,

Sidney Mayer, Halina Moss, Michael Sankie, Susan Slater and Agnes Isaacs.

Halina Moss spoke of the significance of Yom HaShoah and paid tribute to those who perished in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

The statue is housed at Queen's Park Cemetery. The Scotland Memorial Book too is on display.

Rabbi Moshe Rubin of Giffnock Synagogue and Alex Mackie, East Renfrewshire Provost, spoke movingly. The Glasgow Jewish Singers, led by Eddie Binnie, also took part in the ceremony.

Agnes Isaacs

AJR member addresses US Air Force troops at RAF Lakenheath

This letter was written to AJR Southern Region Outreach Co-Ordinator Esther Rinkoff following an address by Geoffrey Perry at the US air base at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk.

Mr Perry was absolutely amazing in all regards. The day began with coffee with members of RAF Lakenheath and Mildenhall's Jewish faith. The exchanges were outstanding and the military members not only enjoyed the event but grew from the experience.

Mr Perry was the guest speaker for the Holocaust Remembrance luncheon. He spoke to about 200 military members and spouses. His words brought to life the importance of never forgetting and, I think, improved our military community's understanding of why

we are where we are today.

Mr Perry then spoke to two groups of High School (ages 13-18) students in a presentation and question-and-answer period. This included members of the High School staff. The students thoroughly enjoyed his words, as was evident from their thoughtful questions.

The members of RAF Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall have been honored to have Mr Perry as our guest. He made an impact on our community that will not be soon forgotten. I am hopeful that he would consider visiting our bases in the future.

**Zachary J. Capogna,
United States Air Force
Senior Master Sergeant,
RAF Lakenheath**

'The will to survive'

This year's Yom Hashoah remembrance evening at Pinner Synagogue was attended by some 450 people. Representatives from the embassies of the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Romania, as well as the mayor of Harrow, attended.

The theme of the evening's commemoration was 'The will to survive'. The event marked specifically the 70th anniversary of the

assassination by Czech freedom fighters of Reinhard Heydrich, one of the masterminds of the 'Final Solution'.

Sir Andrew Burns, former

UK Ambassador to Israel and UK Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, gave an address outlining the significant role of the British Government (cross-party) in building relationships across Europe, not only better to understand the issues related to the Holocaust but also to be vigilant regarding the threat of the rise of anti-Semitism.

Zdenka Fantlová, who today lives in the very building in London's Bayswater in which the British Special Operations Executive planned the assassination of Heydrich, grew up in the town of Rokycany and lost all members of her immediate family. She survived a number of concentration camps and is a well-known speaker nationally and

internationally.

Zdenka said how naive she had been initially in not believing what she was witnessing, yet she never lost the will to live. She related how, while travelling in a cattle truck from Terezin to Auschwitz, she shared a tin of sardines with Raphael Schaechter, the prime mover of musical activities in Terezin, where the inmates staged productions declaring the cynical message of the triumph of

good over evil. She told a tearful audience about the tin ring (the name of her book) her boyfriend had given her in anticipation of

their marriage should they survive – which he did not – and which inspired her throughout all her tribulations.

Victor Greenberg grew up in the city of Majdan (now in Slovakia). In 1941 he and his family were among the few to escape when almost the entire Jewish population of the village was massacred. Their 'reward' was to be put on a transport to Auschwitz, where Victor's family were murdered. He was finally liberated in Gunkirchen by the Americans and arrived in Britain in 1946. Victor, one of 'The Boys' in Martin Gilbert's book, held the audience spellbound with his account of his determination to overcome the odds against him.

Brian Eisenberg



Survivors (from left): Frank Fantl, Victor Greenberg, Zdenka Fantlová, Gerta Vrbova, Josi Knight, Zdenka Husserl

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Almost as many column inches have been spent on him as the insect life he has squandered in his quest for celebrity. I am talking about **Damien Hirst**. His latest fantasia of conceptualism at **Tate Modern** is about death staring you in the face. Dead cows and calves, splintered down the middle to reveal their sanitised innards. Butterflies flowering in their beauty only to flutter and die on the floor, or trapped in a virtual stained-glass window formed by their bodies. Maggots escaping from a rotting, bloody cow's head. A million flies turned into a deathly-black mandala on the wall.

Hirst has many detractors. Brian Sewell wrote in the *Evening Standard* three blistering pages of criticism. Others have pleaded vainly in the cause of animal and insect rights.

Is there anything left to say?

Yes. Because Hirst poses the question: is it art or nihilism? The splayed mother and calf or the shark in formaldehyde are touched by the cold hand of death. Nothing here breathes. And that suggests that neither the beauty nor the pathos of art is relevant – burned out like the cigarette butts you passively inhale from Hirst's massive white ashtray. It implies that the richness of our artistic inheritance, from the Byzantine to the Baroque, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, from Expressionism to post-Modernism, has drifted away like smoke through our fingers. Conceptual art cannot be criticised because it is in the head – perhaps better it stays there.

Of course Hirst the businessman may

be laughing all the way to the bank with his diamantine wallpaper, his gleaming, bejewelled skulls, his sculptures exposing organs (derived from the artist Gunther von Hagens, who flayed and plasticised dead bodies). In the midst of recession, war, Euro-mania and unemployment, he is throwing his wealth and his anarchism in our faces.

Great artists may portray death, but they usually hint at the meaning of life and its ultimate ending, whether they describe the Crucifixion or the Holocaust. Hirst's subject matter, and his vast apothecary of coloured bottles, suggest we cling to immortality, but that everything dies. We know that. But art should celebrate life.

There is something to celebrate in the **Ben Uri's** successful Josef Herman exhibition moving to Bristol's **Royal West of England Academy** for the artist's centenary. **Josef Herman: Warsaw, Brussels, Glasgow, London, 1938-44** examines the six years in which the artist fled across these cities leaving his



Damien Hirst in front of one of his butterfly canvases, part of his retrospective at Tate Modern. Photograph: Ray Tang/Rex Features

indelible mark. We see his experimental period and his brilliant colours in oil, gouache and tempera, including works on paper from his series *Memories of Memories*. The Expressionist artist paints his many losses – loss of his family in the Warsaw Ghetto, loss of religion – but there are also gains: those of political awareness and a dark, mystical sense of his connection to the common man. The intense muscularity of *The Cobbler (My Father)*, the anguish of Warsaw and the plaintive portrayal of his grandmother in heavy sepia tint – hinting at her grace and power – were the crucible in which his gifts were honed and solidified. Herman's remembered childhood is a dream-like procession of people, of animals 'radiant with an inner light'.

REVIEWS

On the side of the underdog: From Kindertransport child to renowned DDR writer

**IM FLUSS DER ZEIT – AUF DREI
KONTINENTEN (In the Flux of Time –
on Three Continents)**
by Walter Kaufmann

Berlin: Dittrich Verlag, 2010, 288 pp.
hardback, illustrated,
ISBN 978-3-937717-45-6

The cover of this autobiography quotes from a speech by Professor P. G. Klusmann at the award to Walter Kaufmann of the 1993 Literature Prize of the Ruhr Region, linking his travel journals with those of Goethe, Chamisso, Heine and Fontane. A big claim I am unable to verify, but Kaufmann's writing here is certainly vivid, compelling and engaging.

Kaufmann was born in Duisburg in 1924 and brought up by a Jewish couple, the father a respected lawyer, leader of the Jewish community and recipient of the Iron Cross during the First World War. Like so many Jewish men, he was interned for some weeks in Dachau – a traumatic experience about which he never spoke. But things were not what they seemed. After the war, when Kaufmann reclaimed a few of his father's belongings from a former secretary, he discovered adoption papers showing he was born to an unmarried and impoverished 17-year-old Jewish woman by the name of Rachela Schmeidler, who had felt unable to bring her son Jizchak up and had had him adopted at the age of three. One of the most poignant stories in the book is how Kaufmann, by then a well-known writer, tried to discover his birth mother's history and how he managed to speak to a woman who had known her and had minded the little Jizchak while his mother was at work.

The three continents of the title are Europe, Australia and the USA. Kaufmann was sent to England early in 1939 on a Kindertransport, with a well-to-do uncle in London who failed to turn up at Liverpool Street Station to meet him, having expected him a day later. Uncle Hugo soon washed his hands of him and dispatched him by railway with a label stating his destination, 'Faversham', to join Bunce Court School – the progressive Jewish boarding school evacuated from south Germany to the North Downs of Kent in 1933. Kaufmann was happy with

the relaxed way the school was run, though his memories here are, in some respects, suspect! Having arrived at the school at roughly the same time, I cannot recall some of the teachers and pupils he names and there certainly was no woman teaching maths After a year his school life was terminated by internment as an 'enemy alien', a fate that befell many Jewish males over the age of 16 in 1940.

Worse was to come. With hundreds of others he was sent to Australia on the *Dunera* of ill repute, though strangely he doesn't mention the presence of several other Bunce Court boys, and especially one of the teachers, Hans Meyer, who elected to accompany 'his' boys to Australia. Despite the trauma this entailed, Australia proved to be his making. It was there that he met his first wife, Barbara, published his first novel, *Voices in the Storm*, and became involved with left-wing politics and trades unions, leading to membership of the Communist Party. He gave many readings from his novel to seamen and dockyard workers in Sydney harbour and this led him into an exciting life as stoker and working on deck on freighters sailing in the Pacific. This provided him with rich material for some of his later, much acclaimed travel books. One photo of that period shows him as a debonair seaman, with prominent black moustache and sailor's cap. No wonder women found him attractive.

This autobiography is not written in chronological order, has no chapter headings and no index, and is written in a wildly free kaleidoscopic manner and interspersed with extracts from his novels. Perhaps it is not surprising that I failed to establish exactly how and when the author returned to Germany in the early 1950s. His choice of the DDR rather than West Germany was clearly dictated by his left-wing ideology and his anti-Nazi stance and, with his background and reputation as a budding author and holding a British passport, Kaufmann was given a warm welcome. His literary output was prodigious, both in travel reportage and novels. He travelled widely – to the Middle East (Beirut and Damascus, as well as to Israel on several occasions), Belgium (as an envoy of the DDR Olympic Committee), West Germany, Cuba, the Soviet Union, Japan, the UK and the USA, gathering material for his travel books and reportage wherever he went. In America he attended the trial of Angela Davis, who was falsely accused of murder, hitchhiked to the deep South to witness at first hand the fight for emancipation of the black population, and was always

on the side of the underdog. He met a plethora of interesting people, including Fidel Castro and Ernest Hemingway. But meanwhile his marriage to Barbara had, perhaps not surprisingly, failed. The final trigger was a torrid affair with an American woman he had met accidentally – one of several affairs he describes with disarming frankness and sometimes in rather purple prose. He later married Angela (Brunner, not Davis!), with whom he had two daughters, and has lived happily with Lissy, a radiological nurse, for the last few decades.

What I missed in this otherwise thoughtful book was a penetrating discussion of Kaufmann's attitude to the less agreeable side of the DDR. It so happens that, as I wrote this review, a television interview with the widow of the former DDR leader Erich Honecker was shown in Berlin. In exile in Chile, she was wholly unrepentant, even though it was she who had been responsible for thousands of forcible adoptions of children from parents who opposed the regime. She dismissed the brutal shootings of the many who attempted to flee to West Germany over the notorious wall as trivial. Early on Kaufmann was, in fact, given the choice of returning to Duisburg but, having tried it, he found its Nazi past oppressive and soon returned to the DDR. There he was lionised, became a member of the committee of the writers' association and PEN, and had his numerous books readily published. The only novel that had a frosty reception from the press was written about a doctor who was determined to leave the DDR for West Germany, based on a real-life incident.

This book testifies to the incredible richness of the German language and chronicles the life of a man who has come triumphantly through the turmoil of the 20th century.

Leslie Baruch Brent

Grim 'game'

THE HIDE-AND-SEEK CHILDREN – RECOLLECTIONS OF JEWISH SURVIVORS FROM SLOVAKIA by Barbara Barnett

*Glasgow: Mansion Field, 2012,
495 pp. paperback, illustrated, index,
ISBN 9781905021109*

The title of this book is intriguing. If you overlook the early explanation, you have to read many pages before you find the answer: it refers to a game these children invented at the 'castle' in Ireland (yes, and Southern

Ireland at that!) where most of them spent about a year.

As the author points out, little has been written about the trials and tribulations of Slovakian Jewry during the Second World War. Is this because it is (again) a small country which borders Poland to the north and Hungary to the south and was formerly part of Czechoslovakia?

For me, the most interesting parts of this book are the detailed descriptions of how the children were found and the method by which they were brought to England after the war and before the Communist takeover of Eastern Europe.

The main mover in this grim 'game' was Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, born in 1912 in London. His father was born in Sutto, between Bratislava and Budapest, in 1880. Rabbi Schonfeld had travelled extensively on the European continent before the outbreak of the Second World War and had been successful in bringing several hundred, mainly orthodox, families, as well as Viennese children, to safety in England. Although there is reference to the Kindertransport, Rabbi Schonfeld's opinions, maverick attitude and unconventional methods made him work alone. He felt he was a brinkman with 'a direct line to his Creator'.

After the war, when the fate of Continental Jewry became clear, Rabbi Schonfeld was one of the first to take care of the survivors and search for hidden children. On several journeys he managed to bring some 800 children, mainly from Poland, to Britain. For his own safety, he had been advised to travel in a uniform – which he designed himself. He just about escaped an attempt on his life.

'It is not entirely clear how Rabbi Schonfeld operated in Europe or how he selected the Slovakian group,' the author writes. He extended an invitation to war-damaged children to spend a year in Britain in a traditional Jewish setting. This message was sent across Slovakia and reached the re-establishing Jewish communities. It resulted in a group of 148 children meeting at the Prague railway station for their journey to London. Some of the details read like a cloak-and-dagger story. I must include this quote: 'He is said to have visited a convent where the Mother Superior told him she had no Jewish children. He asked to accompany her "good night" tour of the dormitories. At each doorway he quietly pronounced the opening words of the *Shema*. Several times little voices joined in. He left with a contingent in tow.'

continued overleaf ➤

REVIEWS *cont. from page 9*

It is unknown why Rabbi Schonfeld chose Ireland as the destination for this group of children. However, he had persuaded a well-to-do Manchester Jew to purchase Clonyn Castle as a home for these refugee children. At the time, the Dublin Jewish community was divided as to whether to offer help to the children. Before the group made it to Dublin, they first had to travel from Prague through Germany and Belgium to England. In Ostend, there was the small complication that the number of visas did not match the number of children. The administrative and bureaucratic obstacles overcome were numerous and are spelled out in some detail.

At about this stage, the text becomes interspersed with extracts from the children's memoirs. These include descriptions of daily life at the castle, how the older girls helped to look after the younger children, religious observance, visits to the nearby village, and a football match with the village children. There is ample description of the hard work by several adults responsible for the daily running of the 'Clonyn Castle Children's Hostel'.

Finally, we come to a more detailed account of how this book came about. One of the (former) children suggested a reunion to commemorate 50 years since their arrival in Britain. A Jubilee Reunion Committee was set up in 1996 and, by 1998, addresses all over the globe for nearly half the original group had been found. No fewer than 160 people attended the grand reunion dinner!

In the postscript to the first part of the book, the wish is expressed that it, together with the personal stories of the children, will be a monument to Rabbi Schonfeld's endeavours. It is a huge achievement in itself.

In the 200 or so pages of the second part of the book, the stories of the

children as well as of members of staff are told in greater or lesser detail. The stories are subdivided in accordance with the children's experience: children hidden with their mother and/or a sibling, on their own, in institutions, those that survived Auschwitz, and some post-war recollections. They are followed by appendices and notes.

This is a well-written and liberally illustrated and documented book which adds to our knowledge of the Holocaust and its aftermath. Readers might also like to visit the website, www.thehideandseekchildren.org, which refers to texts of a similar nature.

Henri Obstfeld

Theatre

Karen's Way

**KAREN'S WAY:
A KINDERTRANSPORT LIFE**
by **Vanessa Rosenthal**

York Theatre Royal Studio

It is tradition in this York theatre to perform with small casts and minimalist props. In this 'dramatisation with live music', two fine actors (one of them the author) and two accomplished musicians, together with a bench, two suitcases and a box, sufficed to provide a searching performance depicting the life of the middle-class Loewenthal family in Germany before and during the rise of Hitler and the need for parents to send their children to safety by the only means available to them, the Kindertransport.

The emphasis was on the problems encountered by Karen Gershon, a lone young refugee girl in England, problems similar to those experienced by thousands of youngsters. The radical difference was that this girl wanted passionately, from early youth into

adulthood, to become a writer, a poet, of renown. Language was out of the main difficulty: German was out of the question – it had to be English. Mastering a language in sufficient depth to pass muster in a literary setting takes much longer than gaining an everyday working knowledge. The burning desire of the young Loewenthal to emigrate to Israel had to be pushed into the background – yet another language was unthinkable.

Karen was beautifully played by two actors – Lindsay Mace as a young girl and Vanessa Rosenthal as a mature woman. This device allowed the author to verbalise the conflicts within Karen, although it, and the heavy German accent adopted by Ms Rosenthal, made unusual demands on the audience.

Throughout, David Riley, playing an 18th-century Italian violin, and Marion Raper, piano, movingly played an ingenious selection of music appropriate to the mood of the moment. George Gershwin needed a piano and an entire orchestra to express the hustle and bustle of New York in his *Rhapsody in Blue*, while Marion Raper and her piano managed to evoke a train journey all by herself.

After the performance the cast, together with Professor Nigel Mace in the chair and Chris Wilkinson, Director, formed a panel and held an interesting discussion with the audience.

This production of *Karen's Way* was staged on 17-18 April 2012. The performance on 18 April was sold out due to some schools making extensive bookings. Further performances will follow at 7 Arts in Leeds on 27-28 July and at the Edinburgh Fringe on 13-25 August at theSpace@Venue45. A visit to this event is highly recommended.

Marc Schatzberger

THEATRE OUTING

TOP HAT

Tuesday 24 July 2012 at 2.30 pm Aldwych Theatre WC2B 4DF

Tom Chambers (*Holby City* heart throb and *Strictly Come Dancing* winner) plays the irrepressible Broadway sensation Jerry Travers, who dances his way across Europe to win the heart of society model Dale Tremont, played by triple Olivier Award nominee **Summer Strallen** (*Love Never Dies*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*).



Packed full of Irving Berlin's greatest hits, such as *Let's Face the Music and Dance*, *Cheek to Cheek* and *Top Hat*, *White Tie and Tails*, stunning tap, romantic ballroom and a little bit of Busby Berkeley thrown in for good measure, **TOP HAT** is a giddy, glorious celebration of 1930s song and dance, featuring magnificent sets, over 200 costumes and a love story that will set the pulses racing!

We have only 20 tickets – best seats in the house in Dress Circle – no stairs!
£32.50 per person – be sure to book quickly.

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

A 70-year friendship

Renee Mittler became my classmate when we were both 11, and my friend at 13. By the age of 15 she had metamorphosed from a chubby child into a tall, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, almost beautiful girl. I say 'almost' for, although she had enormous limpid brown eyes, she also had a snub nose and her front teeth were too widely spaced – but these imperfections added to rather than detracted from her charm.

She excelled at any sport she tried her hand at and successfully competed in national swimming events for the Hakoah. But she was also clever and quick-witted and planned for a career in journalism.

The only child of an ideally happy couple, she was devoted to her parents and her grandparents and her many aunts and uncles and they all adored her.

It must have been in the spring of 1939 that she came to London. I was, as so often, between domestic jobs and she was, perversely, preparing her journey to France, where her family had fled. They came from Bratislava and she held a Czech passport.

For a few weeks we rented a room from a young Jewish refugee couple in Whitechapel. We shared not only the room but also the bed; I slept on its base, she on the mattress on the floor. We were so hard up that we hardly ever used public transport. We walked everywhere and once a week we ate only fruit.

Nevertheless, it was a happy interlude and we parted reluctantly – she for France and I to resume my duties as a skivvy and earn some money.

Renee married Edouard Cohen, a Turk by birth, early in the war. During the occupation, they and her entire family survived the war in a village in central France, mainly by bribing the police.

We weren't to meet again until the late 50s, when my husband and I spent a day and a night in Aix-en-Provence on our way to the Côte d'Azur. Renee's father answered my call and insisted we have dinner with them. Renee, Edouard, their three children – four-year-old Cathy and teenagers Pierre and Guy – as well Renee's parents and assorted uncles and aunts, all lived in a very large flat in Marseilles. It was a happy reunion and our husbands got on famously.

Because my husband loved the South of France we had holidays there most years and spent many agreeable hours at the Cohens' villa at St Aygulf. They – and that always included Renee's parents and at least one aunt and uncle – were the most generous and thoughtful of hosts.

Widowed by the nineties, I still visited the French Riviera regularly because my brother had retired to Cannes. By that time, the Cohens had moved to Monaco and lived on the 48th floor of one of the posh skyscrapers overlooking the sea. By that time, there were no Mittlers left and

all three children were married; the boys lived and worked in Paris, Cathy in Geneva, and there were five grandchildren.

Sometimes Renee came to Cannes to see me but, because she preferred it, I usually took the train to Monte Carlo and she always met me at the station. We walked and talked and swam in the sea and Edouard took us for delicious meals. She still swam regularly in a pool, and the couple had become keen golf players.

Then, in 2002, Edouard's health began to fail and he died in June. Renee had been diagnosed with cancer but had been assured that the growth had been successfully removed.

I sent her a card from an Austrian holiday in early September and, as usual, rang her on her birthday in October. All I got was, rather eerily, Edouard's voice on the answering machine. Two days later I tried again. This time Cathy answered. 'Forgive me, I'm a coward,' she said. Renee had died on 11 August but she hadn't had the heart to tell me.

A few years later I went to see *Watermarks*, a film about the women who had swum for the Hakoah in the 1930s. At the end it said: 'This film is dedicated to Renee Mittler-Cohen and' I didn't wait to find out to whom else and fled. I was very close to tears and wasn't going to make a spectacle of myself. It felt as if I had lost my friend of 70 years for a second time.

Edith Argy

SEARCH NOTICES

The **Allied Museum Berlin** is searching for persons, information and artefacts for an exhibition. The subject is German-Jewish refugees who emigrated in 1933-38 and returned to Berlin in 1945 as members of the Allied Occupation Forces. Pls contact d.schmiedke@gmx.de

My father **Walter Alt**, b. 1926, left Vienna via Kindertransport. The family's friend in England, Mr (?) Kalman, may have helped him, but he possibly ended up in a Catholic boarding school. Contact Marlene Alt, Canada, on 613 270 0038 or 613 608 0116 or at doug.mar@sympatico.ca

PhD student researching émigré **art collectors** seeks info on Peter and Irene Meyer, Lily Meyer-Wedell (1881 Düsseldorf – 1944 London), Dr Ernst J. Nelkenstock, later Norton (1893 Hanau, from 1937 London), Dr Fritz Rothmann (1893 Danzig, from 1934 London). Pls contact lucywatling@hotmail.com

For purpose of a screenplay am researching all aspects of **Austrian life** including before, during and after the Depression and Anschluss; family life; local government; the Socialist Party. Contact Marcus Hunefalk-Franzen at palfour@hotmail.com

London-based artist wishes to meet people (or family members) who lived in Munich before 1945 for **film by Munich Jewish Museum**. Contact Sharone Lifschitz on 020 880 60132 or 07980025054 or at sharone.lifschitz@gmail.com

Has anyone info on the role **Glyndebourne Opera** or its members played in assisting German and Austrian musicians to come to England as refugees from the Nazis? Michael Heppner, tel 020 8444 2290, Heppner@tesco.net

My mother **Queeny Francis Harvey (née Hahn)** died in London in July 1940 aged around 20. Her address was 43 Louisville Road, Balham, Wandsworth. My father's name was James Harvey. Any info on my mother please to jamesharveygoa@live.com

Any info pls on **Sigmund Levi**, detained at Kitchener Camp around 1940. He became a naturalised British citizen on 10 July 1947 in Liverpool and took the name Leslie Seymour. Also (?) **Kuchinsky**, from Berlin, who was in Kitchener Camp and was shipped to Australia as enemy alien. Herbert Kolb, TheKolbs132@verizon.net

David Litvinoff, b. David Levy in Whitechapel, London in 1928, grew up in Dalston, half-brother of writers Emanuel and Barnet Litvinoff. Evacuated to Habonim camps in WWII. Became associate of Kray Twins, Rolling Stones, Lucian Freud and Chelsea Set. Died 1975. Any info pls

For purpose of *Stolperstein* any info please on **Erna Elle Rahel Moser**, b. Berlin 21 June 1905, deported to Auschwitz 3 March 1943, last known address Hohenfriedbergstr. 5, Berlin. Contact henning.schmitz@yahoo.de

I am researching the following (among others) refugees who worked as **picture restorers** in the UK or in their country of origin: Johannes Hell, Helmut Ruhemann, Sebastian Isepp, Erich Wagner, Joseph Deliss (Delitz), Marianne Adler, Gerhardt Frankl, Hans Schubart, Ursus Dix. Pls contact Morwenna Blewett, National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London at morwenna.blewett@ng-london.org.uk

Seeking info on a Kindertransport girl from Vienna last name **Posomeiter** or similar spelling. Contact Michlean Amir, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC at mamir@ushmm.org

A **Quaker** family in Leeds took in four sets of (possibly) Kindertransport sisters. Family name Happold. Frank and Margaret were the parents, their children Elfrieda and Ted (Edmund), who died in 1996. Any info pls to Victoria Fisher at vkfisher18@gmail.com

Schubert family, Albert and wife Martha (b. Berlin 1886) and sons Klaus and Hans. Arrived Dover March 1939. Were probably Berlin shopkeepers. Pls contact Charles Masters at charles@easypenguin.co.uk

I am trying to locate Jewish refugees who worked at **Trent Park** during WWII. Any info pls contact me on 0207 284 6868 or at kate.bullions@octoberfilms.co.uk

INSIDE the AJR

Surrey Nice Food and Endless Talk

Fifteen enthusiastic members met again at Edmee's house to enjoy her hospitality and good company. A very pleasant morning spent eating nice food and talking endlessly to old, and new, friends. Not forgetting the 100th birthday of our sprightly member Alice Moller.

Eva Gold-Young

Ealing Alice and the Thames

Mark Davies, who is author of *Alice in Wonderland* and lives on a houseboat in Oxford, gave us a talk on the key role played by the River Thames in the creation of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Leslie Sommer

Leeds CF Full agenda

A full agenda. We watched the remarkable *Watermarks* film about the Vienna Hakoah sports club and Liesl Carter told us about the Terezin conference at the Leeds College of Music. Susanne provided details on the promotion of the 'Recipes Remembered' book in London.

Barbara Cammerman

Ilford Magen David Adom

Eli Benson offered insight into the work of the Magen David Adom, which does far more than provide an ambulance service but, with the help of volunteers, helps Israel in numerous ways. A very interesting and informative morning.

Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 6 June. Evelyn Friedlander, 'The Rescued Scrolls'

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

VISIT TO ST PANCRAS STATION
Monday 2 July 2012



Visit this unique station and hear its history with an official guide

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£15 to include guide and tea
All welcome

Please note there will be a fair amount of walking during the afternoon.

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

Café Imperial Looking Out for One's Fellow Man

A collective of Gents and Ladies today. Reminiscence of seders past. Cards sent to Willy Field wishing him well and to Geoffrey Perry on his 90th birthday. This outfit looks out for its fellow man.

Esther Rinkoff

Pinner Needy Jews in Romania

This meeting differed in being held at NPLS in Northwood; in our speaker Sharon Barron's powerful portrayal of poverty in Romania; in her and her fellow trustees' assurance that *all* sums donated to the Turgu Mures Trust go to the needy Jews; and in the Pesach treats after the lecture.

Walter Weg

Next meeting: 7 June. Brian Nathan, 'The Jewish Contribution to 20th-Century Popular Music'



THE ZEMEL CHOIR INTERNATIONAL JEWISH CHORAL FESTIVAL

Sunday 17 June 2012

7.30 pm at West London Synagogue
33 Seymour Place, London W1H 5Au
Tickets £15.00 per person

The Zemel Choir is hosting an International Jewish Choral Festival culminating in this Gala Concert for all participating choirs. The choirs expected to attend are the Wiener Jüdischer Chor and the Coro Ha-Kol Choir from Rome. The Festival has been accepted by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to be branded with the Inspired LOGO as part of the Cultural Olympiad.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear these three choirs and their wide repertoire, embracing Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Yiddish and Israeli cultures.

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

Kingston CF

The Best Cake Shop in Kingston

Eleven of us got together in the best cake shop in Kingston – aka Susan Zisman's house – for lots of chat. Hazel's basset hound, Shirley Basset, though not strictly an AJR member, was in attendance and welcomed by all.

Jackie Cronheim



Shirley and Anne Marie Seelig see eye to eye

OXFORD RIVERBOAT CRUISE

BOAT CRUISE AND
PICNIC LUNCH ONBOARD



REBOOKED FOR
THURSDAY 14 JUNE 2012
DUE TO BAD WEATHER IN MAY

A unique opportunity to cruise the waterways of Oxford with expert guide and Lewis Carroll Society member Mark Davies. Find out how these beautiful rivers inspired Lewis Carroll to write the classic book *Alice in Wonderland*.

Transport will be provided from a pick-up point in North West London. The cruise will last 2 hours and will include a picnic sandwich lunch. Return transport back to North West London.

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

Brighton & Hove Sarid

The Current Financial Situation

Bank of England Agent Andrew Holder discussed the financial situation in comparison with previous years and told us the Monetary Policy Committee was closely monitoring all aspects of the country's economy.

Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 18 June. Mark Perry-Nash

Edgware 'Jewish Mother, Nazi Father'

Angela Schluter told us her life story – a most interesting story, especially when one talks about it in a pleasant atmosphere to people who can well imagine the prevailing times.

Felix Winkler

Next meeting: 19 June

Kent A Treasure Trove of Ephemera

Evelyn Friedlander took us on her trail of southern rural Germany. She and her daughter Ariel scoured overgrown cemeteries and

Launch of

'Recipes Remembered'

Thursday 21 June 2012

3-5 pm at the Wiener Library

29 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DP

We are delighted that we will be joined by Annabel Karmel MBE, author of books on nutrition and cooking for babies, children and families.



The recipes in this book were sent in by members of Continental Friends and AJR Groups around the country. A miscellany of tastes, aromas and recollections of times of prosperity or privation, the book is made up of memories of meals cooked and food eaten long ago in a different time and place.

Refreshments, including cakes and biscuits made from recipes in the book, will be served. The contributors of some of the recipes will talk about the story behind their dish and a representative from the Wiener Library will show us recipes and food-related items from their archives.

Please contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or at susan@ajr.org.uk

former synagogues to find a treasure trove of ephemera, including lottery tickets and Torah binders.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 19 June. Phil Eckersley, Bank of England Agent

Radlett A Rabbi and His Dog

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg recently walked from Frankfurt to London accompanied by his dog. Bringing along his dog, Mitzpah, he spoke to us about his journey – a talk full of warmth, humour and humanity which sparked an animated discussion.

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: 20 June. Myra Sampson, 'The Story of Jack the Ripper'

Outing to Westcliff AJR Group Tuesday 12 June 2012



We are pleased to announce a visit to the AJR Essex Group, which meets in Westcliff-on-Sea. This annual event is always a most enjoyable and relaxing day out. The price of £20 per person includes refreshments on arrival, a buffet lunch, a tour of Westcliff, and return coach journey.

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

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3070

Bristol/Bath
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Cambridge
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Cardiff
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Dundee
Agnes Isaacs 0755 1968 593

Ealing
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

East Midlands (Nottingham)
Bob Norton 01159 212 494

Edgware
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3077

Edinburgh
Françoise Robertson 0131 337 3406

Essex (Westcliff)
Miriam Kleinman 01702 713884

Glasgow
Claire Singerman 0141 649 4620

Harrogate
Inge Little 01423 886254

Hendon
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

HGS
Gerda Torrence 020 8883 9425

Hull
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Ilford
Meta Rosenell 020 8505 0063

Leeds HSFA
Trude Silman 0113 237 1872

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Cambridge The History of the Kibbutz

David Merron enlightened us on the origins of the Kibbutz and its current crisis. A very interesting talk, covering everything from politics to agriculture.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 21 June. Helen Fry, 'Veterans of the Second World War'

Marlow CF Excellent Lunch, Stimulating Conversation

We had an excellent lunch and stimulating conversation – an event so successful that we overstayed by nearly an hour. Looking forward to the next meeting.

Alex Lawrence

ALSO MEETING IN JUNE

HGS 11 June. Warren Ashton, 'Groucho Marx'

Essex (Westcliff) 12 June. Annual Lunch

Welwyn GC 12 June (pm). Social Get-together

St John's Wood 13 June. Helen Fry, 'Inside Nuremberg Prison'

Wessex 14 June. Annual Summer Outing

Bromley CF 18 June. Lunch at home of Liane Segal

Temple Fortune Dancing with Ginger and Singing with Gracie

Dennis Hart gave us insight into his career as a Fleet Street photo-journalist. Highlights of his career were dancing with

continued on page 16 ➔

Norfolk (Norwich)
Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London
Ruth Jacobs 020 8445 3366

Oxford
Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield
Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

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

Surrey
Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Weald of Kent
Janet Weston 01959 564 520

Welwyn Garden City
Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

Wembley
Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Fred Austin 01384 252310

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
020 8385 3070

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

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

Meals-on-Wheels
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Wednesdays only) or 020 8385 3070

The AJR Paul Balint Centre at Belsize Square Synagogue

51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX

Telephone 020 7431 2744

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays
9.30 am to 3.30 pm

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Thursday 21 June 2012

David Barnett
'Jewish London'

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special
interest group

Tuesday 12 June 2012

Ruth Rothenberg
'My Life in Jewish Journalism'

PLEASE NOTE THAT LUNCH
WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7431 2744

JUNE ACTIVITIES

| | |
|---------|--|
| Tue 5 | CLOSED (JUBILEE) |
| Thur 7 | French Conversation Class – Ruth Sands Book Club – Ruth Sands. Exercise Class – Rosalie |
| Tue 12 | KT Lunch Ruth Rothenberg Computer Classes – Lisa (ring Judy/Annie on 020 7431 2744 on Tuesdays or Thursdays to book) Exercise Class – Jackie Chiropodist (ring Judy/Annie on 020 7431 2744 on Tuesdays or Thursdays to book) |
| Thur 14 | Exercise Class – Rosalie |
| Tue 19 | Computer Classes – Lisa (ring Judy/Annie on 020 7431 2744 on Tuesdays or Thursdays to book) Exercise Class – Jackie |
| Thur 21 | Luncheon Club David Barnett NB the speaker will start at 12.00 Exercise Class – Rosalie French Conversation Class – Ruth Sands Book Club – Ruth Sands |
| Tue 26 | Computer Classes – Lisa (ring Judy/Annie on 020 7431 2744 on Tuesdays or Thursdays to book) Exercise Class – Jackie |
| Thur 28 | Exercise Class – Rosalie |

All activities begin at 10.30 am. Admission is £7 to include lunch from 12.30 pm, or £2 for activity alone. There is a nominal charge of £3 for a carer accompanying a member for the day, including lunch.

JUNE ENTERTAINMENT

| | |
|---------|------------------|
| Tue 5 | CLOSED (JUBILEE) |
| Thur 7 | Margaret Opdahl |
| Tue 12 | KT LUNCH |
| Thur 14 | Geoffrey Strum |
| Tue 19 | Paul Toshner |
| Thur 21 | LUNCHEON CLUB |
| Tue 26 | Mike Marandi |
| Thur 28 | David Peace |

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

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Meyer, Hans Bernd, late of Newcastle and Portugal, died 3 May 2012 aged 86. Deeply mourned and never to be forgotten by his wife Margaret, children Richard and Penny, grandchildren Leah, Matthew and James, and sister Susi.

Robbey, Kathé (née Lehfeldt), born Magdeburg 2 February 1915, died April 2012.

Consecration

The memorial stone for **Rolf Julius Weinberg** will be consecrated at Edgwarebury Cemetery on Sunday 10 June at 12.00. Rabbi Rodney Mariner will be present.

New Organiser at the AJR Centre



Judy Silverton has taken over as Organiser of the AJR Paul Balint Centre at Belsize Square Synagogue following Susie Kaufman's retirement.

Judy's background is in publishing, educational professional development and conference management. She has been involved in voluntary work at Middlesex New Synagogue in Harrow for over 30 years. Judy has been married for nearly 39 years and has a son, a married daughter and a granddaughter.

Her great passion is going to the theatre. She likes nothing more than fitting in 29 shows in a week at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival!

Judy is looking forward enormously to continuing and enhancing the dynamics of the AJR Centre.

HOLIDAY FOR NORTHERN MEMBERS

Sunday 2 September to Friday 7 September 2011

At the Inn on the Prom
11/17 South Promenade, St Annes
Tel 01253 726 726

Cost, including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast
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or mobile **07966 886535**

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ANNUAL NORTHERN GROUPS GET-TOGETHER

Thursday 14 June 2012
at Stenecourt Manchester

Discussion Groups am and pm

Lunchtime speaker
RICKIE BURMAN

Jewish Museum, London

For further details, please contact
Susanne Green on 0151 291 5723
or at susanne@ajr.org.uk

HOLIDAY IN EASTBOURNE 2012

The AJR are doing another holiday at the **Lansdowne Hotel**

Sunday 22 July to Sunday 29 July

£520 per person double/twin, dinner, bed and breakfast.

£40 per week single room supplement to include transport from Cleve Road, lunch on outward journey

Book early to avoid disappointment

Please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

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OBITUARIES

Walter George Siller, 11 November 1924 – 23 October 2011

Walter and I first met at the Friends' School in Cumberland, also known as Brookfield, and quickly formed a close friendship. Both refugees from Nazi-occupied Austria, we had been granted, with numerous others, free school places by the wonderful Quakers, thus rescuing our broken education and prospects for life.

Walter's father was a non-Jewish oral surgeon in Vienna, his mother a Jewish physician. In 1939 Walter and his brother were sent to Scotland on the Kindertransport. They were soon followed by their mother, who had to accept humble domestic employment. Their father remained in Vienna, deluded by the belief that 'The whole silly business will soon blow over.'

I recall the young Walter as a large and jolly character, willing to take on any de-

manding task. Untrained in the British summer ritual of cricket, we volunteered to look after the open-air swimming pool during the summer term instead. This demanded damming of the 'beck' to allow the water – plus frogs, small fish and less wholesome items – to reach the feeder pipe to the pool, which we had to sweep daily. It was a fascinating biological study.

Walter had decided early on that he would like to become a vet. He took on farm work during each vacation, returning with lurid tales about how he had spent weeks having to throw large pigs and tups on their backs.

After Brookfield he spent six months as keeper at Edinburgh Zoo, working his way



around every department, before starting his studies at the 'Royal Dick' veterinary college of the university.

After the war Walter rejoined his father in Vienna. He obtained a doctorate from the outstanding Vienna Veterinary School. He developed an overwhelming interest in pathology, even taking courses in human pathology.

But the pull of Scotland proved too much and he returned to Edinburgh, where he was based for the rest of his life. He turned himself into a music-hall Caledonian, complete with accent, heavy tweeds and not averse to a wee drop. His working time was devoted to pathology research and to the investigation of animal disease outbreaks. He became recognised internationally as an authority on domestic fowl.

In 1962 his university awarded him a PhD for his work on renal diseases. In 1963 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 1972 he received a special merit promotion to Senior Principal Scientific Officer. For his international contribution to research, the Vienna Veterinary School elected him a 'freeman' (*Ehrenbürger*).

Walter was multilingual and translated numerous textbooks and articles into English. In 1981 he received the Tom Newman International award for 'the Most Conspicuously Meritorious Contribution to Research in Animal Husbandry'. During his working years he published over 100 original articles and lectured widely in this country and abroad.

In 1954 he married Henrietta. They had two children, Peter and Wendy; there were four grandchildren, to whom he was a devoted grandfather.

Walter retired at the age of 60 and devoted himself to family, travel, fishing and classical music, a man much loved and admired by his friends worldwide. He died aged 86, typically while feeding his beloved garden birds. His ashes were scattered partly in Vienna and partly close by his favourite Scottish trout stream.

(Dr) Hans L. Eirew

Bryan Reuben, 12 January 1934 – 25 February 2012

The March edition of the *AJR Journal* saw the last book review written by Bryan Reuben, a scientist by training who wrote on a wide range of subjects with humour and insight. He was one of the founder members of *Mosaic*, a Jewish youth magazine, where his notion of the Divided Synagogue (a satirical version of the United Synagogue) was born. His article 'proving' that Shakespeare was a Jew was taken up by the Manchester *Guardian*.

Bryan was born in Bradford, where his father was a GP. It was in his dispensary that Bryan carried out the early and often explosive experiments that awakened his love of chemistry. From Bradford Boys' Grammar School he won a scholarship to Queen's College, Oxford, where he was involved with the Inter-University Jewish Federation and the Oxford Union and wrote songs and sketches for comedy reviews. After a post doc at Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, he returned to England and worked for a while in industry before turning to academia.

At Battersea College of Advanced Technology, soon to become the University of Surrey, he ran one of the first industrial chemistry courses in the country with his great friend and colleague Mike Burstall. Together they wrote *The Chemical Economy* (1973), one of the 13 books and more than 140 papers on the chemical, pharmaceutical and process industries which Bryan produced. *Industrial Organic Chemicals in Perspective*, which he wrote with Harold Wittcoff in 1980, was so successful that he was working on proof-reading a third edition when he died. In 1977 he moved to the chemical engineering department at Borough Polytechnic, later

South Bank University, where he was a principal lecturer responsible for encouraging research.

He was a teacher with a gift for explaining complex problems with clarity and wit, which is probably why he was asked to give courses all over the world, including Brazil, Sweden, the USA and Israel. He had longstanding research projects with colleagues at the Hebrew University and spent time teaching at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

For many years he had wanted to write a book for the popular market ('such as people might buy at airports', as he used to say) and in 2008 *Bread – A Slice of History* was written with John Marchant and Joan Alcock, colleagues at South Bank University, where he became Professor of Chemical Technology in 1990. He enjoyed appearing as an authority on bread on the BBC Four programme 'In Search of the Perfect Loaf'. This caught the attention of Caitlin Moran in *The Times* who, to his great pleasure, called him 'the nutty professor' and said he should have presented the whole programme.

Bryan was an avid skier and delighted in taking the family to different resorts. In 1987 he had a serious skiing accident and tore his aortic valve, which had to be replaced by a porcine valve in a pioneering operation. He enjoyed the subsequent halachic debates in the *Jewish Chronicle* letters column, to which he was a frequent contributor all his life. He continued to ski, despite two further open heart operations, until last year, and his greatest joy was watching his grandchildren take to the



slopes with such enthusiasm.

Apart from the book reviews and articles he wrote for the *AJR Journal*, Bryan often worked with Rita Rosenbaum and her team recording the Journal for blind and partially sighted readers.

In 1966 he married Catherine Katzenstein, who survives him together with their children David, Debbie and Anthony and nine grandchildren.

Catherine Reuben



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



A memorable concert

A cold and rainy Saturday morning with no visiting grandchildren or social obligations presented a golden opportunity to attend a concert of chamber music given in the nearby neighbourhood of Ein Kerem. This is an outlying part of Jerusalem, consisting mainly of picturesque old houses, many of them inhabited by artists. The programme on this occasion consisted of two quintets by Schubert, and we had hastened to order tickets earlier in the week.

The Eden-Tamir Music Centre in Ein Kerem was founded by Alexander (Alex) Tamir and the late Bracha Eden, both renowned pianists. During Bracha Eden's lifetime they played as a duo, but today Alex Tamir, who is now aged 80, no longer performs but continues to give broadcasts about music on the radio. The Music Centre is also his home and it is in the auditorium there, with its wonderful acoustics and seating for an audience of about 120, that concerts are held, usually at the weekend.

The concert we attended was sold out, and we soon understood why. The two Schubert quintets are among the

most popular pieces of chamber music in the world. In addition, the Millennium Ensemble, consisting of outstanding musicians, most of them originally immigrants from Russia, played with a sensitivity and profundity that brought tears to my eyes.

The first chord of the 'Trout' quintet (D667) resonated with a clarity so full and rich that it was immediately clear that we were in the presence of musicians of the first water. Schubert's joyful music echoed through the auditorium as the artists played in perfect harmony, their hearts seeming to beat as one, sweeping the audience along with them and taking us all to higher realms. Sitting in the auditorium, listening and watching, it struck me that no matter how well one knows a piece of music and how many times one has heard it on the radio, records, discs or any other medium, nothing can compare with hearing and seeing it performed live, especially if you're in one of the front rows and the musicians are almost sitting on your lap. It is only then that one can catch all the nuances, observe how Schubert sends the same musical element from one instrument to the other, and how the music benefits when all five musicians are

in harmonious dialogue with one another, supporting one another in bringing out every brilliant note.

After the interval, when hot drinks as well as hot soup made by Alex Tamir were available for the members of the audience, the musicians played what is one of Schubert's final and saddest pieces: the quintet for two violins, viola and two cellos, D956. In stark contrast with the light-hearted gaiety of the 'Trout', it is full of tragic cadences and passages that seem to presage Schubert's own untimely and imminent death. In some ways its dark, brooding themes echo elements of Schubert's last piano sonatas, especially his posthumous D960. Nevertheless, in this quintet, as in the sonata, despite the tragic beginning Schubert tries to finish on a more optimistic note.

And deservedly so, as although his physical existence was so heartrendingly brief, Schubert's music is immortal, and through it he continues to live on in our hearts and minds.

A few weeks later we went back to hear another concert, this time one devoted to chamber music by Mozart and played by the same ensemble. It concluded with an arrangement for sextet of the sublime *Symphonia Concertante*, which again took us to the heights of intellectual and emotional pleasure. The soup was delicious too – almost reaching the same level of excellence as the music.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

Ginger Rogers, singing with Gracie Fields and flying with the Red Arrows.

David Lang

Next meeting: 26 June. Myra Sampson, 'The Story of Jack the Ripper'

Book Club A Jolly, Lively Group

A jolly, lively group enjoyed a discussion about *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*. We were delighted to be joined by AJR Journal art critic Gloria Tessler, whose novel *Carmen*, as well as Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française*, we will read next. Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* will follow for the next meeting on 27 June.

Esther Rinkoff

Wembley Account of a Trip to London

Our meeting was as enjoyable as ever. One of our members, Ruth Pearson, enjoyed the whole experience of the London trip which the AJR organises for its-out-of-town members, though the outings are open to all.

Ingrid Morland

Next meeting: 27 June. Social get-together

North London Celebration of Yom HaAtzmaut

Along with members of other groups, we celebrated Yom HaAtzmaut. Myrna, Hazel and volunteers did us proud by serving a most wonderful Israel-style lunch. The

travelogue on Israel was also worth seeing.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 28 June. David Barnett, 'Jewish Trades in Regency London'

Hendon Famous Phrases and Their Origin

Warren Ashton's interest in the origin of well-known phrases began when he was at school in the 'Square Mile'. He explained to us the origins of 'at sixes and sevens', 'getting the sack', 'double-crossed', 'a square meal' and many more such phrases.

Shirley Rodwell

Next meeting: 25 June. Roger Sanders, 'My Life as a Judge'