

## Lutz Weltmann: A forgotten voice

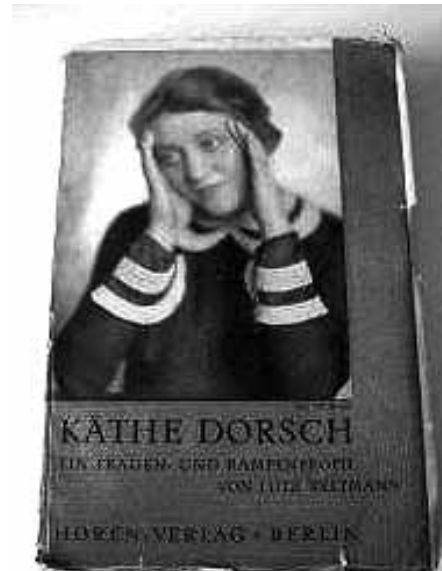
Over a period of some 15 years, from 1946 until 1961, readers of the *AJR Information* were treated to regular articles and reviews, often dazzling in their elegance and erudition, on literary, theatrical and artistic subjects, from the pen of Lutz Weltmann. Weltmann's name is now sadly unknown, though, as one of the journal's main cultural commentators, he brought pleasure and enlightenment to thousands of Jewish refugees. Weltmann's first article appeared in December 1946, and his last in December 1961, some six years before his death in 1967.

The writer, journalist and man of the theatre Lutz Weltmann was born on 15 February 1901 in Elbing, west Prussia. His father, Jacques Weltmann, a merchant, and his wife Emma (née Blumberg) moved to Berlin when Weltmann was very young and he grew up there. He studied literature, art history and drama at the universities of Berlin and Freiburg, where he was awarded his doctorate for a dissertation on the early nineteenth-century dramatist Heinrich von Kleist. Weltmann clearly numbered among those assimilated German Jews who placed the highest value on German culture and who contributed so notably to the German-speaking cultural tradition with which they associated themselves.

Weltmann embarked straightaway on a career in the theatre, including a spell as *Dramaturg* (dramatic adviser) and director at the Berlin theatres of the renowned theatre manager and director Victor Barnowsky, but his principal activity was as a theatre critic, writing for the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Berliner Volkszeitung* among other publications. In 1929 he published a book on the actress Käthe Dorsch. After 1933 he continued his activities within the increasingly marginalised Jewish community. Only in 1939 did he emigrate to Britain, with the assistance of the actress Elisabeth Bergner. In Britain, the prospects for a Jewish refugee journalist whose expertise lay in the sphere of German-speaking theatre were bleak. From 1940 to 1943

Weltmann served in the Pioneer Corps. In 1940 he married a British woman, Beryl Elisabeth Hopper; they settled in Ealing, west London, and had one son, Austin Jacques Weltmann. From 1944 Weltmann made his living by teaching modern languages.

Weltmann was important as a cultural intermediary whose activities frequently had a dual Anglo-German dimension. He



In 1929 Lutz Weltmann published a book on the actress Käthe Dorsch

wrote from London for such renowned West German newspapers as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Welt* and the *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, for *Aufbau*, the refugee publication which appeared in German in New York, as well as for the English-language *AJR Information*. He translated into German works by the writer J. B. Priestley and the Anglo-Jewish publisher and campaigner Victor Gollancz and he published a study of the English playwright Christopher Fry in German in 1961. He was the representative in England of the German Shakespeare Society, and he edited the volume *The Goethe Year: 1749-1949*, published in Britain to mark the bicentenary of Goethe's birth.

Weltmann's articles in the *AJR*

*Information* were often enriched by his personal acquaintance with leading theatrical and literary figures of the Weimar period, enabling him to evoke from living memory the achievements of an era that had vanished in 1933. He had, for example, known the great theatre critics Alfred Kerr and Julius Bab professionally, and was able to recreate their cultural and intellectual world as few others could. He had also been well acquainted with famous writers like Lion Feuchtwanger, to whom he had been introduced at a first night at Berlin's Volksbühne, and prominent directors and theatre managers like Rudolf Bernauer.

Many of Weltmann's articles displayed his encyclopedic knowledge of theatre and literature. His first article in the *AJR Information*, in December 1946, was a review of *The Sun's Bright Child*, a novel about the great nineteenth-century British actor Edmund Kean by Julius Berstl, a refugee who had been a major figure in the theatrical world of pre-Hitler Germany. After outlining Berstl's previous career, Weltmann turned to the device of the 'imaginary memoir', the form in which Berstl had cast his novel. This allowed him to display the breadth of his knowledge across the two cultures of Germany and Britain, ranging from Walter Savage Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* and Robert Graves's *I, Claudius*, both written in the form of 'imaginary memoirs', to Byron and Hazlitt, and throwing in a reference to the prologue to Schiller's *Wallensteins Lager* for good measure.

When the great German actor Albert Bassermann died aged 83 in 1952, Weltmann dedicated an article to his memory. After 1933 Bassermann, a non-Jew married to a Jewish woman, had resisted the blandishments of the Nazis and gone into exile in America. He was known to British audiences for his cameo role in the Michael Powell/Emeric Pressburger film *The Red Shoes*. Bassermann also provided a link to the younger generation of actors. Reviewing

continued overleaf

**Lutz Weltmann cont. from p1**

a book about the celebrated actor Ernst Deutsch, Weltmann described an incident when Deutsch, a Jew, was rehearsing the part of Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* opposite Bassermann's Shylock. When the actress playing Portia as the judge asked: 'Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?', Deutsch, out of role, replied: 'You will laugh, Sir, I am the merchant and he is the Jew!' Deutsch had achieved his breakthrough in the title role of Walter Hasenclever's pioneering Expressionist play *Der Sohn (The Son)*, first performed in Dresden in 1916. He went on to act in many films, and in the 1950s created the role of Anne Frank's father on stage.

Weltmann was very familiar with the generation of the Expressionist writers, born in the 1880s and early 1890s, and he was acutely aware of what that generation had gone through, during the First World War and under the Nazis. The Nazis considered Expressionist art and literature 'decadent', and persecuted its practitioners, many of whom were both left-wing in their politics and Jewish. Hasenclever, to take but one example, committed suicide in the French internment camp of Les Milles in 1940, to avoid falling into the hands of the advancing Germans. Weltmann understood how the banning and burning of the works of the Expressionists by the Nazis had cut them off from posterity and condemned them to obscurity. In an article entitled 'The Dead Speak to the Living', he conveyed his intention to (re)acquaint his readers with writers who had fallen into oblivion after 1933.

Consequently, he warmly welcomed in 1960 the reappearance of Kurt Pinthus's classic anthology of Expressionist poetry *Menschheitsdämmerung (Twilight or Dawn of Humanity)*, published then as some 40 years earlier by the well-known publisher Ernst Rowohlt. Weltmann reminded his readers that the great director Max Reinhardt had appointed Pinthus literary adviser at his Deutsches Theater, making possible productions of plays by such leading Expressionists as Reinhard Johannes Sorge, Reinhard Goering, Paul Kornfeld and Fritz von Unruh. Of these, only Unruh was still alive by 1945, in exile in America; Sorge fell on the Western front in 1916 and Goering (no relation to Hitler's crony) committed suicide in 1936.

Kornfeld had been a friend of Weltmann. A Jew, he had returned to his native Prague in 1933 and, to Weltmann's lasting sorrow, had refused to emigrate until too late; he was deported and died

## German Ambassador hosts reception for AJR's 70th anniversary

In December some 150 guests attended a reception hosted by HE The German Ambassador, Georg Boomgaarden, at his Residence to conclude celebrations of the AJR's 70th anniversary.

Following welcoming remarks from the Ambassador, Dr Charlotte Knobloch, former President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and President of the Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria, spoke on the theme 'Jewish Life in Germany Today'.

Dr Knobloch said that 'At present, some 120,000 Jews live again in Germany. This should be considered a miracle. The fact that I am standing here today in front of you – this too is like a miracle. I have consciously lived in Germany out of the firm conviction that it has been my



AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman presented to Dr Charlotte Knobloch and Georg Boomgaarden, the German Ambassador, copies of Dr Anthony Grenville's book *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain: Their Image in 'AJR Information'*. At left is Thomas Schneider, Head of Legal and Consular Affairs at the German Embassy

PHOTO: GERMAN EMBASSY

personal triumph over the Nazis to live and not just survive in this country as a Jew and as a formerly persecuted person.'

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman said: 'It was a splendid afternoon and reception and we are all enormously grateful to the Ambassador for his warm and generous hospitality and for joining in the celebrations for the AJR's 70th anniversary.' 'Today is a double celebration,' Andrew added. 'Chanukah relates the story of the Maccabees' struggle to re-dedicate the

Temple. It is a tale of triumph over adversity. The same can be said of AJR members who rebuilt their lives after having escaped and survived oppression.'

Rabbi Danny Bergson of Pinner Synagogue led prayers and sang traditional Chanukah songs.

in Lodz in 1941. Another Jew whose legacy Weltmann sought to revive was Arno Nadel, who had translated S. Anski's classic Yiddish drama *The Dybbuk* into German. Perhaps because of the sheer range of his artistic activities, Nadel had effectively disappeared from public view, his works apparently consumed by the Holocaust in which he met his death. In his memory, Weltmann published an article entitled 'Arno Nadel – Lost and Forgotten' in 1958.

Weltmann was also concerned to familiarise his Continental readers with the British theatre. The playwrights who featured most frequently in Weltmann's articles were what one might call the classic serious dramatists of the day, especially J. B. Priestley and the

now forgotten James Bridie. He was particularly expert on Christopher Fry. He discussed Fry's *The Firstborn* in an article on August 1947 that also examined the portrayal of Moses in Martin Buber's *Moses* and Thomas Mann's *Das Gesetz (The Tables of the Law)*, not forgetting Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*. Other plays by Fry referred to in articles in the *AJR Information* included *A Sleep of Prisoners* and *The Dark Is Light Enough*, though not *The Lady's Not for Burning*, the play for whose title Fry is principally remembered today (thanks to Margaret Thatcher's use of the phrase 'The lady's not for turning' in her 1980 speech to the Conservative Party conference).

Weltmann also revered the classics. In an article of August 1949, on the occasion of the bicentenary of Goethe's birth, he showed how highly he valued the great writer, presenting an authoritative overview of Goethe's reception in Britain. Shakespeare, too, was ever present in Weltmann's view of the theatre, not least on account of the figure of Shylock, which he discussed expertly on more than one occasion. The knowledge that he was living in the country that had given birth to the greatest playwright of all time doubtless helped to reconcile Weltmann to life as a refugee in Britain.

**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.

## 'A bitter-sweet occasion' as AJR Centre relocates . . .

Susie Kaufman, Organiser of the Paul Balint AJR Centre, told a party in December that the Cleve Road Centre's closing was a 'bitter-sweet' occasion: with the move to Belsize Square Synagogue, where the Centre had been located at the time of its foundation, 'the wheel had come full circle'. Susie, retiring the following month after 22 years' work devoted to the organisation (see story in next issue of the Journal), emotionally thanked all staff and members at the Centre.

'This is a very sad time for us all,' AJR Co-director Carol Rossen added: 'Susie has a very warm heart and will be much missed.' Susie was presented with a gift from staff together with a cake imprinted 'Relax and enjoy'.

Announcing the relocation of the

Centre to Belsize Square Synagogue, AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman said: 'After almost a quarter of a century, it is with a heavy heart that we leave our wonderful home at Cleve Road, where our members enjoyed so many good times and built enduring friendships with each other and our dedicated staff. Through the extremely generous support of the Paul Balint Charitable Trust and the endeavours of our inspirational President and former Honorary Treas-

urer Ludwig Spiro, we were able to create a bespoke atmosphere for AJR members that reflected the culture and heritage of the refugees. By moving to Belsize Square Synagogue, we will be able to preserve the unique refugee spirit and continue to offer our members their own distinctive setting and place to meet and enjoy each other's company.'



(From left) Carol Rossen, Sylvia Matus (former Day Centre Organiser), Susie Kaufman

## . . . 'Welcome to your second home!' AJR Centre at Belsize Square Synagogue launched with Lunch and Party



Addressing a crowded hall, AJR Co-Director Carol Rossen welcomed members to the Paul Balint AJR Centre in its new premises at Belsize Square Synagogue. There would be many new activities for members, Carol said, for instance a Book Club, an Art Appreciation class and many more outings. In addition, a Centre newsletter was planned and it was hoped to set up a members' committee – she asked members to contact staff with suggestions for activities they would like to see.

Carol thanked staff and volunteers

from Cleve Road for helping in the move to Belsize Square and asked members for their understanding – there were bound to be teething problems.

AJR Centre Organiser Susie Kaufman, welcoming members to their 'second home', said 'It is wonderful to see a full room like this.' She requested those present to bear in mind that catering arrangements at the Centre required members to give a week's notice of their intention to attend lunch.

Musical entertainment accompanying the Lunch was provided by Ronnie Goldberg.

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## A tale of two families: The Malletts and the Barhezels

Last year my Aunt Brenda died at the age of 98. One of the last things she gave me was a small packet of photographs of my mother Frances as a young woman on holiday in southern Germany with a German-Jewish couple named Barhezel – Herr W. and Frau R. (no forenames given). These photos were from the effects of her sister, my Aunt Margaret. Aunt Brenda's wish was that I do all I could to establish whether any of the Barhezel family had survived the Holocaust and, if so, to reunite them with the photographs as these might be the only ones of their kinsmen extant. Below is the story she told me to help me in my task (it may not be accurate in all details – it was all a lifetime ago and all direct witnesses are now dead).

The Malletts are a long-established Norfolk family: they can trace their ancestry back to the Norman conquest and refugee Flemish merchants in the 15th century. My grandfather, George Frederic Mallett, became a senior officer with the Norwich Union Fire Insurance Company, retiring just before the Second World War. He had three intimidatingly bright daughters: Frances Emma, my mother, the eldest, who married my father, Dr Philip Hay-Heddle, and died aged 87 in 1994; Margaret Louise, who never married and died aged 80 in 1988; and Brenda Phyllis, the youngest, who doesn't feature in this story beyond what I have described above.

Margaret Louise was a woman of many talents – a crackerjack mathematician and linguist and a better-than-fair violinist. On a postgraduate exchange to Freiburg University in southern Germany, she met a member of the Barhezel family with whom she became very friendly. According to both



(From left) Herr and Frau Barhezel, Frances Mallett and friend at home near Stuttgart, August 1934

Margaret and my mother, the Barhezels were a middle-class family of German Jews who lived in or around Stuttgart. In the summer of 1934, my mother went to Germany to spend a holiday touring with Margaret and the Barhezels. They kept up a correspondence until the outbreak of war, then all was silence. All attempts to re-establish contact after the war met with an ominous silence: it appeared that the family had been wiped out in the Holocaust.

There matters rested. It occurs to me, for reasons which I will explain later, that the silence may not have been absolute: my Aunt Margaret lost the love of her

life during the war and after it she suffered what appears to have been some sort of breakdown. Certainly she always seemed a bit strange to me. (My wife, on first meeting her, was convinced she would take off, Mary Poppins-style, on her umbrella!) It is just possible that Margaret did re-establish contact after the war, told no one and destroyed the correspondence before her death, just as she had destroyed her parents' family papers after they died. I never did find out what she did during the war. I once suggested Bletchley Park but all she would reply, with a twinkle, was 'I might have been.' If so, the habit of secrecy, given her mental strangeness, could have extended to not telling about her circle of correspondence and destroying it all when she knew she was not going to get better after her stroke.

In pursuit of Aunt Brenda's request, I have tried a number of Jewish organisations. Staff at the Wiener Library did a search on their database for the name 'Barhezel' in the Holocaust records (in all combinations and permutations of spelling) and drew a blank. This leaves the tantalising possibility that the family got out of Germany before the borders were closed: they were fairly wealthy after all. If anyone recognises the description of the 'Barhezel' family from the above, or the photo, I would be delighted if they would get in touch with me via the AJR.

**John Hay-Heddle**

## International Tracing Service archive now available in UK

At an historic event at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office last December, AJR member Eugene Black spoke about his reaction to obtaining records from the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Bad Arolsen and about the persecution he endured at the hands of the Nazis in several concentration camps. The records documented his journey from deportation in Hungary through several concentration camps until liberation at Bergen-Belsen.

Eugene Black was speaking at the launch of the UK copy of the ITS records that will now be publically available, free of charge, at the Wiener Library in London. Comprising 50 million documents covering 17.5 million people, the archive contains material from concentration, slave labour and

displaced persons' camps as well as transportation lists and Gestapo arrest records from the Nazi era, the Second World War and the following decade.

The archive, set up in London in 1942, was created for the ITS to ensure that those displaced by the Second World War and its aftermath could be traced by their families, but today it is of enormous value for researchers, scholars and educators studying and teaching this period in history.

Speaking ahead of the launch, the British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, said: 'The International Tracing Service archive is hugely significant. Allowing the British public access to the archive in the UK for the first time will enable Holocaust survivors, refugees and their descendants to obtain information

about the fate of their relatives who suffered at the hands of the Nazis. It will also provide an invaluable collection of primary source material for UK-based academic researchers and students, and is further proof of the UK's active approach to preserving the memory of the Holocaust.'

The decision to bring to the UK a copy of the archive, the world's foremost collection of documents on the Holocaust, followed an agreement in 2007 of the 11-government International Commission which governs the archive.

The AJR is part of the ITS Stakeholders Group, which worked with Sir Andrew Burns, the UK Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, and the government to bring a copy of the records to the UK.

**Michael Newman**

## Gloucester and the Kindertransport: A city's response to Kristallnacht

Rural Gloucestershire and its county city of Gloucester do not immediately come to mind when analysing the effects of Kristallnacht. However, it was in response to this terrible event that various religious, charitable and voluntary organisations in Gloucester decided to establish a hostel for older Jewish boys of the Kindertransport. These were boys the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany felt it would be difficult to place with families due to their age. The fact that very few people in Gloucester had ever encountered a Jewish person – or, for that matter, a German or Austrian citizen – made their decision to help foreign Jewish children even more remarkable and displays the powerful impact Nazi anti-Semitism had on non-Jewish people.

The hostel was set up by the Gloucestershire Association for Aiding Refugees (GAAR) following an emotional appeal for funding on the basis that this would be a long-term commitment to help child refugees. On 2 February 1939 *The Citizen*, the local newspaper, quoted Trevor Wellington, the Mayor of Gloucester, who read out a message from the Bishop of Gloucester, Dr Headlam, to a packed meeting at the city's Guildhall: 'It seems to me that as long as we are allowed to enjoy our liberty, our home life, our ordered freedom, we should do what we can to help those who are deprived of all these things.'

Through the efforts of local groups such as the National Association for Women, the Society of Friends, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Rotary Club and many others, GAAR was able to purchase the hostel in Alexandra Road for £750. They also provided furniture, food and clothes and employed two Czech Jews, Dr and Mrs Paul Arnstein, as wardens. In overall charge of the hostel was GAAR's secretary, Mrs T. Hall, who dealt with the various aid agencies and, at times, parents, eventual employers and future foster parents. Additionally, the redoubtable Mrs Hall was called upon to help find employment for Jewish 'domestic servants', refugee children from Danzig and Czechoslovakia, and holiday accommodation for girls from Anna Essinger's Bunce Court School in Kent.

In June 1939, as a consequence of the money raised, ten Jewish boys from Germany and Austria aged between 12 and 14 arrived in Gloucester from Dovercourt Camp via Barham House. The boys were Walter Kolpack (b. 1927, Vienna), Günther Meyer (b. 1924, Bochum), Iwan and Julius Mularski (b. 1925 and 1926, Lübeck), Peter Nebenzahl (b. 1925, Hamburg), Kurt Reimann (b. 1925, Danzig), Robert Suschitzki (b. 1926, Vienna), Arnold Ullmann (b. 1925, Berlin), Harry Vorgang (b. 1926, Vienna) and Werner Zorek

(b. 1925, Breslau). During early summer 1939, Günther Meyer, Kurt Reimann and Arnold Ullmann replaced the names of Willi Schneider, Bruno Veis and Hugo Wolff as the latter had been found foster homes.

Each boy came with a registration card from the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany with a few personal details and brief descriptions as to their character. All were given the label 'liberal Jew', but it was the latter that give an insight into what were perhaps snap judgements as to how the boys were perceived. In the language of the day, they were described as 'a decent boy', 'splendid little worker', 'tall and rather good appearance' and 'a very decent type of boy'.



**GERMAN REFUGEES IN GLOUCESTER:** Jewish children, escaping from the Nazi reign of terror, have found refuge in a hostel at 10 Alexandra Road, Gloucester. In our picture are some of the children at dinner. With them are their guardians, Dr Arnstein, a Jewish lawyer, and his wife, who have twice fled before the Hitler regime. *The Citizen*, 22 June 1939

As soon as the boys had arrived in Gloucester, they were enrolled at the local school with the long-term aim of giving each child a trade in which they could support themselves in later life. Prior to the war and the creation of the welfare state, and with a British Union of Fascists' presence within the city, there was a palpable concern that the Jewish children should not be seen to be a burden on the state either then or in the future. On reaching the age of 14, each boy was sent to the city's technical college and/or found an apprenticeship with a local employer such as builders, garage mechanics, leather workers and tailors. This situation continued until the end of 1941, when the last boy reached 14 and the hostel was sold. GAAR felt that the boys would now be better off going to foster families and continuing their apprenticeships. Although because of their nationality they were bound by various wartime defence restrictions (one foster family's pleading had prevented Kurt Reimann from being interned), ironically it did not prevent them from being 'fire watchers', protecting the city from German bombing.

One of the most delicate situations in which Mrs Hall and GAAR found themselves concerned the religious education of the boys. For a city that had had no synagogue or organised Jewish congregation since the mid-nineteenth century, Mrs Hall initially took advice from the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany and then from Rabbi Raphael Levine (1901-85) of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood, London. A lack of help from Bristol's Jewish community resulted in Rabbi Rappaport, from Birmingham's Sheepcote Street Synagogue, taking charge of the boys' education. Although during the war the boys were allowed to travel by train to Birmingham, the practical realities of bombing, distance, cost and perhaps a lack of enthusiasm from most of the teenagers, particularly once lodging at their foster homes, meant that by 1942 religious education was spasmodic. This was despite Mrs Hall's best efforts to get them to see the rabbi regularly.

The Gloucestershire County Archive holds all GAAR's detailed papers, from its establishment in 1939 to the closure of the hostel in 1941. However, once the boys went off to their foster families, the record lacks significant detail. GAAR's brief notes, along with records kept by London's Jewish Military Museum, show that some left their apprenticeships to volunteer for war service, such as Peter Nebenzahl and Harry Vorgang, who entered the Intelligence Corps and Pioneer Corps respectively.

The end of the war confirmed what many of the boys must have suspected at the time and was subsequently confirmed by the Yad Vashem *Shoah* database: that their families had died in the Holocaust. Therefore, with little reason to return to Germany or Austria, boys like Iwan Mularski and Harry Vorgang stayed in Britain to make new lives for themselves, unlike Walter Kolpack and Werner Zorek, who travelled to America to join relatives. In the case of Julius Mularski, his new life brought him to Israel.

Although only one small part of the Kindertransport experience, the lives of the ten boys mirror those of the majority. Similarly, as with so many other host communities who had no prior knowledge of a non-Christian faith, the people of Gloucester did what they felt needed to be done by looking after Jewish children who sought a safe home.

**Nicholas Burkitt**

*This article is a summary of a section of the author's PhD thesis 'British Society and the Jews: A Study into the Impact of the Second World War Era and the Establishment of Israel, 1938-1948'.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right  
to shorten correspondence  
submitted for publication

### HAS AUSTRIA REALLY CHANGED?

Sir – For the past 32 years I've been returning my *Lebensbestätigungen*, always from the same address, to the *Pensionsversicherungsanstalt* in Vienna. Imagine my consternation when, in mid-December, I got a letter from them asking me to complete and return *unverzüglich* (promptly) a form confirming my *Ansässigkeit* (residence), certified by my local tax office.

Official jargon always baffles me but I did get the gist of the letter. Get on with it or else! Guilty until proven innocent. At worst, I gathered, I might have to repay tax for all the years I had been drawing the pension. None of it made sense to me. The *Pensionsversicherungsanstalt* must know that our Austrian pensions are exempt from tax in the UK because the British government views them as restitution, although, of course, nothing can compensate us for our losses.

Fortunately, a second-generation friend e-mailed Michael Newman at the AJR and he responded with admirable speed. The AJR was dealing with it. What a relief!

To the best of my knowledge, only those of us who fled in our late teens or later and are now in our nineties have been contacted. The 'Kinder' were left alone.

In March 2009 I spent a most enjoyable week as the guest of the City of Vienna and the message throughout my visit was that Austria had changed, and I was persuaded to believe it. But has it really? This unsettling letter sent to the most vulnerable pensioners makes me doubt it!

*Edith Argy, London W9*

See 'Recipients of Austrian pension' on page 10 (Ed.).

### AN ENCOUNTER WITH LUDWIG SPIRO

Sir – I started at the AJR six years ago and in my very first week I was instructed to pick up the late Ludwig Spiro from his home in Northwood. Not a daunting task – but it was to turn into a little bit of a drama.

I set off from Stanmore vaguely knowing the way to Northwood and found his home quite easily. At 93 Ludwig was just a little bit scary as he had a voice that boomed and I had heard what an impressive man he was. We were going to our group meeting in Welwyn Garden City, where he was to be our guest speaker.

I went to put the address into the satellite navigation system built into my

car. But nothing would make it work. Without displaying too much panic and with neither of us having a clue as to how to get to Welwyn, I telephoned Susan Harrod, our administrator at Head Office. She promptly got a map up on the computer and talked me through the way on the phone on the loudspeaker in my car. Ludwig was quiet and a little bemused.

We arrived on time. I phoned my husband to tell him of my brave adventure on week one of the job and he asked 'Is the sat nav on a disc like a cd?' 'Yes', I replied. 'Oh, I thought it was a music cd and put it in the glove compartment!' So my journey home was perfectly navigated only for Ludwig to comment 'Excellent driving for a woman – well done!' You can imagine my relief. He was an amazingly striking man and a fantastic speaker.

*Hazel Beiny, Southern Region  
Outreach Co-ordinator, AJR*

### TRIP TO HOLLAND THANKS TO AJR

Sir – I am writing to thank the AJR for its involvement in the trip to Holland for the unveiling of a statue to the Kindertransport. It was a very special and moving occasion and many tributes were paid to all the agencies involved.

I would especially like to thank Andrea Goodmaker for all her care and thoughtfulness in looking after the 'Kinder' from the UK. She was very efficient and most kind. Many thanks to you all for *all your work*.

*Ruth Jacobs, London N20*

### CLUB 43: HANS SEELIG PAPERS

Sir – I noted that you wrote about the end of Club 43 in December 2011. I am a cousin of Hans Seelig. We donated all Hans's papers, including correspondence, to the Wiener Library in London. I do not know if it has been catalogued (there is a backlog), but I think that people interested in Club 43 should know that his papers, as well as photographs, are there.

*Lois Gilman, New York*

### LIFE IN WESTERBORK

Sir – I have just come across the moving article 'The short life of Kurt Herbert Ikenberg' in the November journal and am grateful for the information it contains about life in the Dutch transit camp of Westerbork. My grandfather, Moses Azdebal, was at that camp from

18 November 1942 to 23 January 1943, when he was transported to Auschwitz, where he was murdered. So it was good to learn that there was no famine at Westerbork and I like to think that my grandfather, who was there without family, derived some solace from seeing young children like Kurt Ikenberg playing on the camp grounds.

The information about my grandfather's time in Holland – he arrived in Haarlem from Leipzig in August 1940 – came from the Dutch Red Cross. I was surprised to learn from them that Dutch law requires that country to document the fate of all Jews who spent time in the Netherlands during the Second World War.

*Eve R. Kugler, London N3*

### GREETINGS FROM BUENOS AIRES

Sir – I didn't want to let the year 2011 pass without thanking you for sending me the *AJR Journal* every month. I always read every bit of it, including the advertisements! I love the Art Notes and the book reviews.

I often wish I didn't live so far away and had the chance to meet and get to know some of you as I am a solitary 'Kind' here in Buenos Aires. I am still in touch with my lovely 'foster family' in Bath, eternally grateful for all they did for me during the eight years I lived with them.

May 2012 bring peace to this troubled world we live in.

*Lisa Seiden, Buenos Aires*

### 'ERUDITE JOURNAL'

Sir – Thank you for sending me the November edition of the *AJR Journal*. As well as having the obituary of my very old friend and colleague Martha Blend, I have had the pleasure of reading so many informative and interesting articles (I had watched the BBC film on Hans Litten).

May I wish continued success for this unsurprisingly erudite journal, which demonstrates a wide spectrum of Jewish opinion. As a non-Jew, I applaud your contributors' integrity and courage.

*Ann Thomas (address not supplied)*

### 15 SECONDS OF FAME

Sir – 'Letter from Israel' is always the first article I read on receipt of the *AJR Journal* and I was especially pleased to read Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's latest article '15 seconds of fame' as it brought back memories of my own association with the Mann Auditorium.

As a temporary resident in Israel in 1961, I was lucky to be offered the job of English Secretary to the Director of the Israel Philharmonic, whose offices were located on the top floor of the Mann Auditorium. Built in 1957 in a very similar style to the Royal Festival Hall, but with better acoustics, so I was told, it was then brand new and the offices, with floor-to-ceiling windows from which one could see the



sea, were a pleasure to work in until the air-conditioning broke down in mid-July!

One of the perks of the job was meeting some of the eminent conductors and musicians who performed for the IPO such as Carlo Maria Giulini, who was exceptionally good looking, Isaac Stern, Sir John Barbiroli (the silver top of his walking stick contained a flask for an occasional swig of whisky) and his very imposing wife, Lady Evelyn Barbiroli, a musician in her own right. I was even given occasional tickets for a performance – worth more than gold dust – and thus was not short of new-found friends.

I have retained very fond memories of my time at the IPO and was therefore doubly upset when the Orchestra was almost prevented from playing at last year's Proms by some Muslim fanatics who, to the best of my knowledge, have never been prosecuted.

*Betty Bloom, London NW3*

### RELIGION 'DYING OUT'

Sir – Margarete Stern's thought-provoking letter in your January issue prompts me to put pen to paper.

I married many years ago into an Orthodox British family. The words 'deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens' were as alien to them as the German national anthem. My late husband and I attended numerous Jewish functions: engagements, weddings, barmitzvahs, funerals – all strictly Orthodox.

Many participants have passed away. Their children and grandchildren have (with the exception of four couples) all married out and none of *their* offspring have returned to Judaism. I am afraid that religion of whatever hue seems to be dying out generally, with perhaps the exception of Catholicism.

*(Mrs) Marion Smith, Harrow, Middx*

### 'CREATING ANTI-SEMITISM'

Sir – Mr Phillips (November 2011) considers that Jews should not observe commandments of their faith because it creates anti-Semitism. This is like a Jew who washes his car on Shabbat instead of Sunday in order not to upset his Christian neighbour, and the neighbour cuts his lawn on Sunday.

When the Chief Rabbi attends a church he does so out of respect and friendship. He does not pray there and no one would think that he regards them as a branch of Judaism.

In 1930 the Chief Rabbi of Hamburg was invited to the installation of a new bishop. He did not want to go into the church and also did not want to give offence by saying he was not going. So he took a taxi deliberately timed to arrive late. When he got to the cathedral he was told 'You cannot go in, it has already started.'

*Henry Schragenheim,  
London N15*

### STRICTLY DANCING LESSONS

Sir – Edith Argy's done it again with her excellent memory and witty style, with which she managed to conjure up in me my own memories of days gone by. 'Shall we dance?' (December) is a case in point.

Dancing meant a great deal to my father and mother. It was at a dance that they first met and immediately fell in love, he at 19, she at 18. Six years later, in 1913, they married (as they wanted to wait till he was earning more money) and a further six years later she gave birth to my sister, and six years after that, to me. Their love for each other remained as fresh as at the beginning until my father's passing, aged 74, in 1962, and so did his passion for dancing especially, or rather exclusively, the Viennese waltz, at which they both excelled.

At the Cumberland hotel in Bournemouth, by then an elderly couple, they were the focus of attention with their waltzes and the photographers would train their cameras on them. They even once won first prize as the best dancers of the evening.

I once heard my father say fully in earnest – and that greatly disturbed me – that he would sooner die than not be able to dance any longer.

With this sort of mindset my father was eager for me to learn ballroom dancing as was then generally the custom. So one day, when I was a young girl, he announced happily that he had seen an advert for dancing lessons in a window of a house in our neighbourhood and gone inside. He was amazed to find a middle-aged Scottish lady, who told him she was stone-deaf. He wouldn't even have noticed that as she could lip-read and communicate perfectly. But how was she going to go about teaching me to dance, I wondered. I was not at all surprised to find that I seemed to be her only pupil. Yet she did have one more – a nice young man she never tired telling me about.

She produced the music by turning on her old-fashioned gramophone and stuck her head right inside to feel the vibrations as she couldn't hear a thing. She would then whirl me around repeating 'Quick, quick, slow, quick, quick, slow!' She was very friendly and always cheerful. She probably didn't depend for a living on these lessons. Towards the end of the course she did what she had been raring to do: she got the lad to attend my lesson and to dance with me. She meant well but I felt uneasy. He was non-Jewish, from Ireland. I even remember his name: Desmond Oulton.

I now know something I didn't know then – that mixed dancing, with non-Jews or Jews, is forbidden in the Jewish religion, as is any physical contact between the sexes outside marriage. This is a precept ignored by most Jews, even by the strictly Orthodox in pre-war Germany, but it

makes sense and is adhered to rigorously by today's youngsters in the Orthodox world.

*(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3*

### RELYING ON REFERENDA

Sir – Anthony Grenville writes in the January issue that Napoleon III was the first political leader in modern times to rely on referenda, in 1851 and 1852. In fact, the precedent was set by Napoleon I, who had called two referenda – the first in 1802 to endorse his appointment of First Consul for Life, and the second in 1804 after he had made himself emperor. Before that there had been three referenda to endorse French constitutions: in 1793 (the constitution of that year), in 1795 (establishment of the Directory), and in 1800 (establishment of the Consulate).

*Ralph Blumenau, London W11*

### LIBERATED FROM DACHAU

Sir – I read with interest David Wirth's article 'The wrong Munich' in a recent issue of the Journal. Like his father, I went to Flossenbürg (I was taken there from Hungary) and, after working in Hersbruck, I too was liberated in Dachau.

I would like to mention that there was a plan to eliminate the Jewish prisoners before the US army's arrival. They were marched out from Dachau but managed to escape. I decided to ignore the order to assemble and stayed in my barracks, where I was liberated on 29 April 1945.

*Nicholas Marton, Bromley*

### DOREEN AND MARGARET

Sir – The following statement by Susan Cohen on Doreen Warriner in your August issue is incorrect: 'By December 1938, Doreen had been drawn into the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC), which represented the Labour Party, Lord Layton's News Chronicle Fund and the Friends. Not only was she entrusted with looking after Layton's fund, but he also invited her to act as the BCRC representative in Prague. His sister, Margaret Layton, was secretary.'

In fact, Margaret was Baron Layton's eldest daughter (and the mother of my late first wife Jane).

*Professor Marc Wigan,  
Melbourne, Australia*

### A POLITICAL BABEL

Sir – On 11 December the UK vetoed an EU resolution to ensure stabilisation of the Euro and the banking system. Mr Cameron, the PM, thereby severed the UK from the mainstream of Europe. The Continent is isolated – again! The various factions, constituting the parties in the House, are at odds with one another on this major issue. His Coalition partner has

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# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

A tea party in a Japanese cemetery; a girl called Anna taken to Italy from Benin City to work in the sex trade; a young man with a nasal deformity; political problems in the Western Sahara; child beauty contestants; a 15-year-old stabbing victim; and a young girl horrifically disfigured by the Taliban for fleeing her abusive husband's house – these are among the clashing images captured by photographers in the **National Portrait Gallery's 2011**



Jooney Woodward *Harriet and Gentleman Jack* 2011 © The artist

**Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize** (to 12 February 2012).

Social consciousness, political awareness and the need to tell it all through the camera's lens featured prominently among over 6,000 submissions for the annual prize. Yet the winners came from much less controversial stock. First prize went to **Jooney Woodward** for her portrait *Harriet and Gentleman Jack*, featuring a 13-year-old holding a guinea pig in the Royal Welsh Show. She caught the photographer's eye with her long copper hair and white stewarding coat.

US-born **Jill Wooster** took second prize for her portrait of *Lili*, of her androgynous friend Lili Ledbetter. The third prize went to US-born **Dona Schwartz**

for her portrait of *Christina and Mark, 14 Months*, in their son's vacated bedroom, from the series *On the Nest*, which documents parents facing the empty nest syndrome. *Wen*, the reflective portrait of Chinese artist Wen Wu in her work space, won fourth prize for **Jasper Clarke**. The £500 fifth prize was awarded to **David Knight** for his moving portrait of wheelchair-bound, 15-year-old *Andie Poetschka*, commissioned by Loud for the Cerebral Palsy Alliance to raise awareness of the condition in Australia. His description of his subject is moving and telling: 'You don't immediately notice Andie is in a wheelchair; you just see a beautiful young woman.'

But there is a bigger prize than the Taylor Wessing. The still beautiful mutilated Afghan girl, photographed by **Jodi Bieber**, was rescued by a women's shelter in Kabul and brought to the USA for reconstructive surgery and counselling.

The **Josef Herman** you don't know was the subject of the **Ben Uri's** recent exhibition, which presented a lesser-known view of the artist at work in a small Welsh mining town. In 1944 the Polish-Jewish Expressionist met miner-writer Dai Alexander and visited the small mining community of Ystradgynlais in the Swansea Valley. He became totally absorbed in Welsh culture, grew to love the warmth of the Welsh people and ended up staying for 11 years. There he recreated a series of drawings of heavy, workmanlike and almost sculptural forms, which represent the miners' dignity in their solid, human grace. In these lightning sketches, light cuts through the darkness of the men at work.

His artistic voice resonates through the Josef Herman Art Foundation, based in Ystradgynlais, which offers an annual award to schools and educational events and an annual prize at the Welsh National Eisteddfod. It promotes refugees like Herman, who 'arrive with nothing yet contribute so much to their host communities', according to the Foundation chair, Lynne Bebb.

## REVIEWS

### Exploding a myth

#### THE GERMAN-JEWISH SOLDIERS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN HISTORY AND MEMORY

by Tim Grady

Liverpool University Press, 2011, 260 pp. hardback, ISBN 978-1-84631-660-9

This is an interesting and well-argued account of a topic that has been much neglected, mainly because of the reluctance of many German Jews to be identified with the nationalistic sentiments with which the advent of the First World War was greeted – almost celebrated – by the German population. After all, don't Jews generally think of themselves as peace-loving and conciliatory? This book is intended to explode that myth. It is carefully researched, though perhaps not aimed at the intellectually faint-hearted. It includes a host of references and sources after each chapter. For former German Jews such as me, whose fathers participated in the First World War, it should be of considerable interest – even though its conclusions may not necessarily be accepted universally.

The stark fact is that at the outbreak of the war German Jews were well integrated into German society and were just as willing to serve their Fatherland as other German men. Indeed, some 100,000 donned uniform, about 12,000 were killed fighting, and a number became officers and even generals (the impressive war memorial in Berlin's Jewish Weissensee cemetery bears witness to this). The author's overall thesis is that, whilst remembrance of the war was at first all-inclusive and fully involved the Jewish population, the rise of anti-Semitism in the 1920s-30s, and the concomitant reluctance of the German Jews to be identified with the militarism and nationalism, led to the playing down of Jewish participation.

However, this process of separation was gradual and encouraged by Jewish writers and historians. Surprisingly, even after the Nazis came to power, the Jewish war dead were honoured in 1934 by the issue of a new war decoration. The real break came a year later with the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws, when legal exemptions for Jewish ex-soldiers were cancelled, followed by more complete exclusion from national and local acts of remembrance, and the German Jews had to arrange their own commemorations. Even so, the Nazi regime never denied that Jewish soldiers had died fighting for their country: even



at the infamous Wannsee conference early in 1942, when the fate of European Jews was sealed, there were discussions on how to deal with the question of Jewish war veterans.

The author, an academic at the University of Chester, argues that it was after the Second World War had ended that the German Jews who had died in the First World War were again thought about by the Germans, even though at that time the victims of the genocide were not. Even when the Federal Republic was formed in 1949, the focus was more on the general suffering of the population than on the victims of the Holocaust. Yet the Jewish dead of the First World War gradually helped to reintegrate German Jews into post-war German society: Theodor Heuss, the first president of the Federal Republic, mentioned the Jewish soldiers at many remembrance events and encouraged the exploration in the early 1950s of the Nazi past and the crimes committed.

By the late 1950s, the German public had become more aware of the Nazi crimes, an awareness aided by the desecration of Jewish sites in Cologne and the war trials. For instance, Franz Joseph Strauss republished a book of war letters by Jewish soldiers at that time. Yet, ironically, the belated recognition of guilt for the Holocaust drove recognition of the contribution made by Jewish soldiers into the background: the Holocaust narrative – not unnaturally! – predominated and by 1970 few Jewish ex-soldiers were alive to question the submergence of First World War remembrance.

The circle was not squared until 1982, when the German Defence Ministry launched an exhibition devoted to Jews in the military. Werner Nachman, President of the Jewish Central Council, compared in the opening session the heroic participation of Jewish soldiers in the First World War with the treatment they received during the genocide: they fought for their country and were murdered by the Nazis!

This is a thought-provoking book. Many readers will remember their fathers' participation in the First World War and the medals they earned and wore with pride. Alas, although they had hoped that these medals would protect them once the Nazis came to power, this was not to be.

I should add that this book is written entirely with West Germany in mind. In East Germany (the DDR), where culpability for the Nazi crimes was never acknowledged, it would have been a very different story.

**Leslie Baruch Brent**

## Theatre

### Great drama, deep emotional appeal

**KINDERTRANSPORT**  
by Diane Samuels

*Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Highgate, north London, 1-4 December 2011*

This is the fifth production of *Kindertransport*. I saw the original production at the Cockpit Theatre and productions at the Hampstead Theatre, The Old Barn in Norwich, and Colchester. All previous productions followed the text faithfully and all were excellent, partly because the play itself offers great drama and partly because the theme has deep emotional appeal in its exploration of such basic psychological issues as attachment, separation, loss, trauma, survival, inter-generational family relationships and the transmission of trauma between generations.

The production at the Cockpit was relatively gentle on the sensibilities. I experienced each subsequent production as daring to explore deeper layers of pain and emotion. So much so that Ros and Michael Berg, the directors of this amateur staging of *Kindertransport*, seemed to me to bring the internal world of the main characters out onto the stage for us to live it with them rather than be mere spectators. The rage between Kindertransportee Eva/Evelyn and foster mother Lil is more than most of the 'Kinder' I know, myself included, would have been capable of expressing in reality but were certainly living with internally. The unspeakable fear of annihilation was externalised in a most gripping and plausible *Ratcatcher*.

The fact that each performance at the Gatehouse was sold out reflects the success of the event in tuning in to where audiences are now in relation to the *Kindertransport* story. Jennie Eggleton, playing the 9-year-old Eva/17-year-old Evelyn, seems by the standard of her acting (especially with every muscle of her body and face) to have a great future in the theatre. Paula Morris was uncannily convincing as she crossed the stage from an upright, middle-aged foster mother with 9-year-old Eva to a stooping, shuffling grandmother with Faith, the adult Evelyn's daughter. Cate Oates, as Eva's mother Helga, Ashley Collins as middle-aged Evelyn, and Vanessa Williams as the granddaughter Faith also gave outstanding performances.

The one male part seems more

problematic as the entire story arises out of the general failure of the protective role of men in the Nazi era. *Ratcatcher* represents the Nazi descent into evil as well as the embodiment of 'existential Angst'. Rusty Ashman excelled in portraying this. His Nazi border official – a role that 'goes against the grain' of common decency and humanity – was less convincing. He portrayed the English gentleman well, but was harder to identify with. As the postman, he was chillingly offensive, portraying an institutionalised racism that is still with us today, and, as the station guard, again chillingly, he implied the vulnerability of naïve young girls to men with seductive/abductive ideas.

Overall, a fine production.

**Ruth Barnett**

## Film

### A unique cemetery

**IM HIMMEL, UNTER DER ERDE. DER JÜDISCHE FRIEDHOF WEIßENSEE (IN HEAVEN, UNDERGROUND: THE WEISSENSEE JEWISH CEMETERY)**

*Documentary, 90 minutes; DVD can be ordered at [www.jpc.de](http://www.jpc.de), the book (Der jüdische Friedhof Weissensee) at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)*

This film (in German with English subtitles) is not on general release, but had two showings at last November's Jewish Film Festival in London. The history of the Weissensee cemetery is unique and therefore of interest not only to those whose relatives are buried there, but far more widely.

The cemetery, which covers an area of over 100 acres and holds about 115,000 graves, is the largest active Jewish burial ground in Europe. Opened in 1880, it has been under continuous Jewish authority during the last 130 years and, apart from the Jewish hospital, it was the only Jewish institution during the Nazi period which was allowed to continue its operations without interference.

Shortage of space does not permit a comprehensive review of the film's contents and a brief survey must suffice. The film shows the cemetery's current state: large parts overgrown with ivy and other weeds, with many gravestones leaning or overturned; the many trees which have grown to a magnificent height; the parkland during the seasons; volunteers tidying up and clearing the overgrown portions; a German

*continued on page 10*

**REVIEWS** *continued from page 9*

army detachment taking part once a year in the clearing-up operations; a security guard (a former non-Jewish police inspector) explaining why he likes his job. The film also relates the history of the cemetery using archive photographs and interviews with Jewish survivors.

During the war the cemetery was sometimes used as a hiding place by Jews living underground – so-called ‘U-boats’. After 1945, when Berlin was divided into ‘West’ and ‘East’, Weissensee was in the latter part and neglected. The Jewish community in East Berlin had shrunk to a tiny number and for some years did not even have a rabbi: one had to come from West Berlin to take services.

The Nazis did not desecrate this cemetery, like many others, but from 1945 until 1990, when Germany was re-united, several acts of vandalism occurred. These were hushed up by the East German authorities, but nothing was done to prevent a recurrence.

The film won the Panorama Audience Award for Best Documentary at the 2011 Berlin International Film Festival as well as several other international prizes. It is directed by Britta Wauer, a German non-Jewish documentary director who has also published a lavishly illustrated book about it (German and English text).

**Fritz Lustig**

## **Kindertransport Conference, California, November 2012**

In 1989 the Reunion of Kinder (ROK) held its first gathering in London. There had been small gatherings of Kinder over the years, organised by school or hostel, but this was the first open to everyone who had escaped Nazi Europe via the Kindertransport. ROK organiser Bertha Leverton had no idea how many people would attend. In the event, 1,000 people showed up, among them several who were living in the United States. Inspired by what they saw in London, a group of Kinder in America founded the Kindertransport Association (KTA) and they have been holding gatherings – small local meetings and, every two years, a weekend conference – ever since.

The next national event, **Kindertransport Conference 2012 – Generation to Generation; Honoring the Legacy, Transforming the Future**, will take place in Irvine, California, on 2-4 November 2012. There will be an international focus as part of the agenda and UK refugees and their descendants

## **Recipients of Austrian pension**

Recipients of an Austrian pension recently received a letter from the pension office in Vienna requesting that they complete a ‘confirmation of residence’ form. Although the form itself is not very complicated, the letter said that if this was not done by the middle of February pensions would be retroactively taxed.

This is *not* the case and members should be assured that their pensions

will not be affected and will continue to be exempt from income tax. However, you will need to complete the form that was enclosed with the letter and send it to HMRC Pay As You Earn and Self Assessment, Post Office Box 1970, Liverpool L75 1WX. You should enclose a cover letter and your national insurance number. For further assistance, please phone AJR Head Office.

## **Wiener Library moves to Russell Square**

Readers of the *AJR Journal* will know that last year, after more than 50 years, the Wiener Library had to leave its home in Devonshire Street and take up residence in Russell Square. So how have we got on?

We were able to acquire a 99-year lease at 29 Russell Square thanks to the support and vision of Birkbeck College, University of London – especially Birkbeck’s Master, Professor David Latchman – and the University itself. The building was in a fairly run-down condition after decades of benign neglect and needed major refurbishment, which began in August 2010 and was completed one year later.

The project was possible thanks only to the generosity of the Library’s supporters, with the AJR taking the lead – being both the first and the largest benefactor. To date, £3.2 million has been raised towards the goal of £5 million. So, while we have achieved a good deal, there is still a lot of work ahead.

The move of the collections proceeded smoothly in August 2011 and, in the months since, the Library has gradually settled in and come to terms with previously unknown luxuries such as temperature- and humidity-controlled

storage rooms for the books, manuscripts and photographs. (In Devonshire Street, climate control took the form of a large tarpaulin to keep water leaking through a flat roof off the books!)

Our official opening took place on 1 December 2011, with HRH The Princess Royal as guest of honour. In the weeks since then, we have been thrilled to see visitor numbers increase threefold, as people come to our dedicated exhibition space. Especially pleasing is the fact that 80 per cent of visitors to the exhibition also make their way to the Library’s Wolfson Reading Room to consult our books and other materials. It goes without saying that we would love to welcome AJR members who want to see the building for themselves and to talk to them about depositing family papers and photographs with us.

Over the coming years we will be working hard to sustain and increase visitor numbers and to diversify the kind of visitors who come. Russell Square is buzzing with life and energy and the Wiener Library is very excited to be in its new home.

**Ben Barkow**  
Director, Wiener Library

who are members of the AJR are invited to attend. Many members of the AJR have family and friends in the KTA, just as many KTA members have family and friends in the AJR, and their descendants are bound together by a shared Holocaust history.

This conference, the first to be organised by members of the ‘second generation’ (with input and advice from the ‘first’ generation), will be an opportunity for Kinder and their children and grandchildren to join together in celebrating and honouring the legacy of the Kindertransport with an eye to passing on the torch to the next generations. Surviving Kinder and their families, wherever they live in the world, are invited to attend. Researchers and scholars too are welcome.

The hotel and conference centre is located in a beautiful part of Irvine, California, near Los Angeles, and is offering an affordable discounted rate that will extend to before and after the conference. The

location is easily accessible from three local airports and, for those needing special assistance to or from the hotel or while in attendance, we will do everything possible to be of help. It is near many attractions, including Disneyland, Hollywood, the Long Beach Aquarium, Knotts Berry Farm and Lego Land, and is ten miles from the Pacific Ocean.

Details and registration forms will be available in March 2012 on the ‘events’ page at <http://kindertransport.org>. Alternatively, if you would like registration materials emailed to you, or further information, please write to [kt2@kindertransport.org](mailto:kt2@kindertransport.org) or by post to the Kindertransport Association National Office, 36 Dean Street, Hicksville, NY 11801 5852, USA.

**Melissa Hacker**  
Vice President for the  
Second Generation,  
Kindertransport Association

# 'Channel Crossing to Life': A nostalgic trip to the Hook of Holland

On 29 November 2011 a group of men and women, now mainly in their 80s, met at Heathrow airport to travel to Rotterdam at the invitation of the mayor of the city and of Lisa Bechner, the (non-Jewish) German 'Frau Kindertransport'. Inspired by Bertha Leverton some ten years ago, she had single-handedly made the arrangements for the Kindertransport memorials in Gdansk and Berlin, in the latter case in the face of some unwarranted opposition from members of the Jewish community.

Both memorials were the work of the Israeli sculptor Frank Meisler, himself a 'Kind' from Gdansk, and both depict groups of children with their pathetic little suitcases and the occasional violin. The Berlin memorial consists of two groups facing in opposite directions, one looking forward with hope in their eyes and the other – those left behind – looking dejectedly backwards. It is remarkable that almost each day since its inception two years ago, fresh flowers have been placed on it by passers-by. The memorial at Liverpool Street Station (again by Frank Meisler) has, of course, been there for some time and is, I fear, less reverently treated.

And now the indefatigable Lisa has done it again, this time in the Hook of Holland, with the financial help of the Auswärtiges Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, the Bundesstiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft, Aktion Sühnezeichen & Friedensdienste Berlin, and the German Embassy in the Hague; and with the assistance of Volker Hobrack, Chairman of the Gedenktafelkommission, and Anke Schuster, an art historian from Berlin. The city of Rotterdam was also immensely helpful and the sculptor was, once again, Frank Meisler. Thus, remembrance of the fateful journey that took so many Kinder out of Germany and Austria via the Hook of Holland and from there to Harwich has been completed. Again, a group of boys and girls of different ages are shown in bronze, looking with hope as well as trepidation across the sea

towards England.

The unveiling, as dusk fell on a clear but cold day, was solemn and emotional. There were speeches from Ahmed Aboutaleb, the Mayor of Rotterdam, the sculptor, and Sir Erich Reich, the Chairman of the AJR's Kindertransport Special Interest Group. The Mayor in

eloquently and movingly, and a group of local schoolchildren touchingly presented each of us with a long-stemmed white rose, which we were glad to place on the memorial.

After the ceremony everyone joined a reception in a nearby restaurant. The group from the UK, with their spouses or carers, were joined throughout the three-day trip by a group from Berlin and former 'Kinder' from other countries such as the USA, and we were glad to be able to get to know them and to exchange reminiscences. Each of us had a story to tell, with similarities but also with breathtaking differences.

So much for the centrepiece of our visit. The entire trip had been beautifully organised by Lisa Bechner and we were all comfortably ensconced in a Novotel hotel, where we got to know each other. A trip through Amsterdam gave us the opportunity to visit the huge 1667 'Portuguese Synagogue', which is similar in style to the Bevis Marks synagogue in London and built by the same architect. Indeed, the latter was erected with the help of the Amsterdam Jewish community and the vast chandeliers, similar to those in Amsterdam, were a gift. The other significant visit was to the Anne Frank Museum, where we also had lunch and a guided tour in small groups. I had been there many years ago, but was once again moved by the poignancy of that family's hiding place, carefully preserved, and the fate of Anne and her family.

It so happened that a conference organised by the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research took place in The Hague at the same time, and I was privileged to be invited to give a five-minute talk about my life at

the last day's plenary session, in which I paid tribute to the Dutch women who greeted us in such a friendly manner on crossing into Holland – an act of kindness that none of us will ever forget.

All in all, a remarkable, emotional and memorable trip.

Leslie Baruch Brent

## Thoughts on the occasion of the unveiling of the Kindertransport statue in the Hook of Holland

I saw old men weep. I saw bewildered faces full of the agony of memory. I saw brave smiles at the Dutch children offering white roses. I saw younger people putting their arms around their parents, who were now in need of comfort.

Seventy-two years ago they had left behind them part of their childhood. They were torn out of the secure web of family, friends and neighbours. They were prised out of the warmth of their mother's embrace and the reassuring sounds and sights of the family home. They were cut off from the routine of the familiar day, from everything that had made their lives safe and enjoyable. They were forced to go without their friends to an unknown place. Some saw it as an adventure; others felt they had been cast out, unable to understand why their loving parents could do such a cruel thing to them. Some were too young to comprehend, just feeling the loneliness of the abandoned child.

Here they stood, feeling the cold wind as they might have done then, looking over the dark sea they had crossed so long ago for the first time in their lives. This had been for them the beginning of the need to grow up before their time. Their childhood was cut short, part of their memory was lost because there was nobody with them who could later retell the story. Many arrived into families where their mother tongue, and with it the stories and songs of their parents, were unknown. They forgot their mother tongue and, with it, much of what that language had carried. Thus they became strangers to their own past. Some felt, and still feel, guilty for not having been able to save their parents, guilty for having been spared.

These children surely had a right to happiness in a secure childhood. Their mothers and fathers wanted no more for them than any other German, Austrian or Czech parent. Neither they nor their relatives had done anything wrong. They had been good and loyal citizens, who had played their full part in society. Their countries and culture had become richer through the efforts of their forefathers. They had been proud to be citizens of a civilised country. And then this country began to turn against them, to single them out as different, then as inferior and then as a threat. Germans had rediscovered something most Jews had thought was part of the Dark Ages.

We don't need to look at the *Shoah* to see the inhumanity, the injustice and the brutality of a state which excludes and persecutes innocent citizens.

Jurgen Schwiening

particular spoke with deep feeling and empathy, with the emphasis on 'never again'. (It is, of course, well-known that the Dutch played a significant, and even pivotal, role in the creation of the Kindertransports, but shortage of space prevents me from going into that here.) Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg spoke



# INSIDE the AJR

## Recipes Remembered



(From left) Pippa Landey, Felicia Fern, Susanne Green

Yorkshire CF members gathered in Leeds for an early Chanukah party with wonderful musical entertainment by David Apfel. Ruth Rogoff retold the story of Chanukah and, after symbolically lighting the candles, we all sang *Maoz Tsur* with gusto led by Rudi Leavor.

Another feature of the afternoon was the launch of *Recipes Remembered*, a book of Continental dishes and memories from pre-war Europe which was designed, collated and produced by Leeds AJR volunteer Pippa Landey. A copy of the book was presented to Felicia Fern, whose generosity in memory of her mother Annie Perez enabled us to have this beautiful book printed. Recipes were collected from AJR members throughout Britain. The book is available at £5 – please contact Susanne Green on 0151 291 5734 or at susanne@ajr.org.uk.

*Barbara Cammerman*

Next Leeds CF meeting: 8 February

## Book Club Warm and cosy

Bitterly cold outside but warm and cosy inside Joseph's bookshop discussing Penny Vincenzi's *The Best of Times*. A group of ladies of discernable age discussing a 21st-century novel with incredible humour and clarity. Followed by an interesting discussion with bookshop owner Michael Joseph putting across a male point of view.

*Esther Rinkoff*

Next meeting: 29 Feb. Book to be read: *The Company She Keeps*

## Glasgow CF Early New Year party

We enjoyed a convivial get-together at an early New Year party with mulled wine, delicious sandwiches and cakes (as usual). A New Year concert from Radio City, New York presented by the brilliant violinist André Rieu was enjoyed by all. Chanukah lights were lit by third-generation Jony Isaacs.

*Halina Moss*

## Pinner Two parties

An early Chanukah party plus our 14th birthday party. Musical entertainment was provided by Ronnie Goldberg, who treated us to a splendid selection of songs

of Jewish backgrounds and languages. Thoroughly enjoyed by all.

*Paul Samet*

Next meeting: 2 Feb. Dr Henry Oakley, 'The Use of Plants in Medicine'

## Manchester New production of Ghetto

Philip Greene, Director of the Manchester Jewish Theatre Group, spoke to us about their production of *Ghetto*. It was fascinating to hear about all the research that went into this production of an unusual play about an unusual and sad episode in our history.

*Werner Lachs*

## ANNUAL LONDON TRIP

Tuesday 27 – Thursday 29 March 2012

We are pleased to announce our annual 3-day trip to London.

The trip will include visits to the Royal Courts of Justice; Westminster Synagogue Museum; the newly opened Wiener Library; a behind-the-scenes tour of the world's most famous department store, Harrods; a trip to the theatre; and a tour of the East End of London.

The trip will also include an opportunity to meet the Israeli Ambassador, His Excellency Daniel Taub.

Accommodation will be at a London hotel for members based outside London.

Members living in London can participate in the daily events.

For further details, please call  
Susan Harrod at Head Office  
on 020 8385 3070

## Ealing The story of Eva Erben

David Lawson, who relayed to us the story of how Eva Erben from Czechoslovakia survived the Holocaust through a series of miraculous events, was instrumental in the publication of her autobiography in English.

*Leslie Sommer*

Next meeting: 7 Feb. Tu b'Shevat Seder

## Ilford Memories of Chanukah

Harry Harris entertained us at our early Chanukah party and we enjoyed the usual seasonal goodies. Myrna also gave us a resume of the Chanukah story and we all added our own memories of this event in the past.

*Meta Roseneil*

Next meeting: 1 Feb. David Barnett, 'Jewish Trades in Regency London'

## Surrey Old and new friends

Seventeen of us met, again, in Edmee's house for a very pleasant morning, enjoying as always her hospitality and a delicious variety of food. It was nice to catch up with old friends and get to know about our newer members.

*Eva Gold-Young*

## HGS A most enjoyable morning

No speaker this time, but some members brought an item that was of sentimental value to them; others spoke about personal experiences. A most enjoyable morning.

*Hortense Gordon*

Next meeting: 13 Feb. Ann Hove, 'Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy'

## Essex Singing piano recitals and jokes

Rob and Geoffrey entertained with a programme of Mozart and Gilbert and Sullivan – a morning of singing piano recitals and some jokes. The perfect way to celebrate pre-Chanukah, rounding off with *Maoz Tsur*.

*Esther Rinkoff*

Next meeting: 14 Feb. 10th Anniversary

## HOLIDAY DIARY DATES

Cumberland Hotel, Bournemouth

Sunday 20 May to Friday 25 May

Landsdowne Hotel, Eastbourne

Sunday 22 July to Sunday 29 July

## Café Imperial A wonderful turnout

A wonderful turnout in which one of our group, from 88 Company, spoke about his heroic return from St Malo two weeks after Dunkirk. Another member showed us his passport from the age of 15 and told the story of how he was picked as the most 'Aryan-looking' chap in his class!

*Hazel Beiny*

## ALSO MEETING IN FEBRUARY

Kingston upon Thames CF 6 Feb.

Social get-together at home of Susan Zisman

Welwyn GC 14 Feb. Evelyn Friedlander, 'Czech Memorial Scrolls'

Radlett 15 Feb. Bring along an object that means a lot to you

Bromley 20 Feb. Social get-together at home of Lianne Segal

Edgware 21 Feb. Joel Finler, 'Jewish Film Makers'

North London 23 Feb. Michael Newman, 'AJR Update'

Hendon 27 Feb. Joel Finler, 'Jewish Film Makers'

## Oxford Early Chanukah party

An early Chanukah party with a quiz, latkes, Chanukah *geld*, and much good food was enjoyed by members.

*Anne Selinger*

## Cambridge Background of a Polish poet

Having well-known poet Lotte Kramer present as a member of our group gave special relevance to a talk by Martin Kahn about Jerzy Kamil Weintraub, a Polish poet who died in the Holocaust. A booklet he wrote found in an antique table drawer bought 35 years ago by a relative of Martin prompted him to research Weintraub's background.

*Keith Lawson*

Next meeting: 16 Feb. Chris Carr, 'History of Hearing Aids'

## Brighton and Hove Sarid Reminiscence of Chanukas past

It was a good turnout for our Chanukah party. Due to a train delay, Esther was a little late with the doughnuts but reminiscence of Chanukahs past and the holiday spirit put everyone in a happy mood.

*Ceska Abrahams*

Next meeting: 20 Feb. Screening of *A Morning at the Pictures*

## New Museum of Liverpool accepts Holocaust Memorial Book

The Liverpool Chanukah party took place at the home of Inge and Eric Goldrein. Third-generation Bobby Abrams delighted us with Michael Publ -style music. Jen McCarthy, Deputy Director of the new Museum



(From left) Inge Goldrein, Bill Longshaw, Guido Alis, Jen McCarthy, Rita Abrams

of Liverpool, was present together with Bill Longshaw, Curator of Community History. Guido Alis, who collated and produced the Liverpool Holocaust Memorial Book, presented them with a leather-bound copy for display at the Museum.

### Edinburgh CF A trip to the theatre

We finished the year off with a trip to the theatre – an excellent production of *The King and I*. A great time was had by all.

*Agnes Isaacs*

Next meeting: 1 February

### Farewell to Cleve Road (in future: St Johns Wood Group)

For our very last meeting at Cleve Road, Myrna arranged a special Chanukah party. We then had an informative quiz before our meeting ended all too quickly. And so we said a sad farewell to Cleve Road.

*David Lang*

Next meeting: 8 Feb. At St John's Wood Synagogue. Tu b'Shevat Seder

### Kent Chanukah party

We lit the first candle of the Hanukkah, talked about the meaning of Chanukah, ate doughnuts and mince pies, listened to a CD of Jewish songs sung by Connie Francis, and answered quiz questions. A good time was had by all.

*Josephine Singer*

Next meeting: 22 Feb. Lunchtime get-together

### Newcastle Violin recital of Jewish and Scottish melodies

Our pre-Chanukah lunch party at The Croft included a violin recital of Jewish and Scottish melodies performed by Gica Loening. She was charmingly accompanied at times by her young son, a budding violinist. A most enjoyable occasion.

*Kurt Schapira*

### Jewish contribution to music of Broadway

Some 70 members from Edgware, Hendon, North London, Radlett and Temple Fortune gathered for our Chanukah party. It was a delight to listen to Myrna's son Stephen Glass, director of music at a Montreal synagogue, speak of the Jewish contribution to the music of Broadway. So many composers and lyricists were of Jewish origin! Stephen's most entertaining talk was illustrated with recordings as well as melodies played on the piano – we happily joined in as the memories came flooding back.

*Hannah R. Freedman*

### Three days which determined the fate of the world

Our theatre outing was to *Three Days in*

### Reception at the Wiener Library's new home

As part of our three-day annual trip to London (see p.12), we will be holding a reception at the new premises of the Wiener Library on Wednesday 28 March 2012.

The evening will begin at 7pm and transport will be available.

Among highlights will be:

- An address from a prominent figure in the Jewish community
- An introduction to the Library and its new facilities
- A guided tour of the Library
- Reception with refreshments
- The opportunity to meet members from across the country

Places are limited for this very special evening. For further details, please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3078 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

May at Trafalgar Studios, a fascinating account of the little known battle in the War Cabinet in May 1940 over whether or not Britain should seek a settlement with Hitler. Warren Clarke brilliantly played Churchill in his battle with Halifax and Chamberlain. Truly three days which determined the fate of the world.

*Susie Barnett*

### Wessex A real treat

Our Chanukah party turned out to be a real treat. Wonderful entertainment was provided by Lynne Bradley, a versatile expert artist, and wonderful food by our Myrna. A Chanukah candle was lit by our Hebrew Congregation host Rabbi A. Jesner.

*John Toyne*

### Manchester Better late than never! A 'post-Chanukah' social

Even without candles, *Maoz Tsur* or doughnuts, some 40 members enjoyed a 'post-Chanukah' social. We were entertained by the lovely voice of Debra Finlay with songs from musicals and there were tasty refreshments. This annual gathering again proved a most popular event – thanks are due to Susanne Green and the social workers for their help in ensuring the success of the afternoon.

*Werner Lachs*

### Meals-on-Wheels

To order Meals-on-Wheels please telephone 020 8385 3075. This number is manned on Wednesdays only.

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

### AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Thursday 16 February 2012

Mark Davies

'How Lewis Carroll Came to Write about Alice'

**PLEASE NOTE THAT SPEAKERS START AT 12 NOON**

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the AJR Journal, to phone the Centre on 020 7431 2744 to book your place.

### KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Tuesday 7 February 2012

Dr Anthony Grenville

Author, *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain: Their Image in 'AJR Information'*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM**

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7431 2744

### FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

The **COMPUTER CLUB**, facilitated by Lilli Meinck, will take place on Tuesday mornings

**A CURRENT AFFAIRS DISCUSSION GROUP**, facilitated by Joanna Feldman, will take place on Thursday mornings

Thursday 9 **ART APPRECIATION GROUP**, facilitated by Lauren Rotenberg

Tuesday 14 **FUN DAY** by JFS students, with manicures and other activities

*All activities begin at 10.30 am*

### FEBRUARY ENTERTAINMENT

Thur 2	Michael Heaton
Tue 7	KT LUNCH
Thur 9	Douglas Poster
Tue 14	Jen Gould
Thur 16	LUNCHEON CLUB
Tue 21	Mike Marandi
Thur 23	Ronnie Goldberg
Tue 28	Margaret Opdahl

### 'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

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

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Births**

Mazeltov to Andrew and Susie Kaufman on the birth of their granddaughter Sophia Amelie, born 24 December 2011, and to parents Nicole and David Feldman and great-grandparents Eva and Kurt Shapiro.

Mazeltov to Helena and Stephen Reid on the birth of their granddaughter Noa, born 6 January 2012.

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**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

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**ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY  
FEBRUARY**

**Thur 2 Prof Mark Roseman (Indiana University), 'The Rescue of Memory: Wartime Experience and Postwar Claims of a Group of German Rescuers' 4 pm, University of Sussex, Arts A 155. Booking not required**

**Mon 27 Dr François Guesnet (UCL), 'Is There a Jewish Political Tradition? The Jewish Intercessor (shtadlan) in Modern History as Case Study' 4.30 pm (tea 4pm). University of Sussex, Arts B 127. Booking not required**

**North London**  
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**Oxford**  
Susie Bates 01235 526 702

**Pinner (HA Postal District)**  
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**Radlett**  
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

**Sheffield**  
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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



## OBITUARIES

### Frederick Morgan, 12 May 1912 – 11 November 2011

**F**rederick (Freddie) Morgan was born Bedric/Fritz/Fred Morgenbesser in Brno, Moravia, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His father, Joseph Wolf Morgenbesser (1862-1942), was born in Tarnow and died in Brno. His mother, Evzenia (Eugenia) Rozenfeld (1888-1942), was born in Wadovice and died in Sobibor. His brother, Hanuš/Hans/John (1913-1996), was born in Brno and died in Woking, Surrey.

Having studied medicine at Masaryk University in Brno and qualifying in 1936, Freddie worked in the local hospital for two years before spending six months as an undergraduate in Paris. With the rise of the Third Reich across Europe, he rushed home to Brno in an attempt to persuade his parents to flee the growing anti-

semitism. Although he personally had never suffered from any anti-Jewish sentiment, he was well aware of it. But he and his brother had to flee the country without their parents, just before the outbreak of the war. A Scottish medical student friend, Louis Finlay, helped him obtain the guarantee necessary to enter the UK.

As his medical qualification was not recognised in the UK, Freddie became a private in the British army, joining the Pioneer Corps in London in May 1940. He was sent to Devon, where he worked digging up golf courses to prevent German aircraft landing troops on them.



Later he became a Medical Orderly.

In 1941 Freddie's medical qualification was recognised. He entered the Medical Reserve and worked at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and later at the EMS Hospital in Exminster. He then volunteered for the Regular Army and was accepted. He had training in tropical medicine before being sent to the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in Dorset. Posted to Gibraltar, he became the Fortress Medical Officer; involved in rescuing a soldier who had tried to climb the Rock and fallen, he was Mentioned in Dispatches and promoted to Major.

In 1947 he returned to civilian life, working in hospitals in Bristol, Manchester and Liverpool before returning to Bristol and entering general practice in Avonmouth. He started his general practice in Henbury, subsequently becoming chairman of the local Medical Council. In addition to being a well-respected family doctor, he developed an interest in occupational medicine.

Following his technical retirement at the age of 65, Freddie continued to attend a weekly ward round at Southmead Hospital as well as continuing his occupational health work. He finally retired in his mid-nineties, the oldest working doctor in the country. He was extremely hard-working. He expected obedience and respect and could seem authoritarian and old-fashioned at times.

Freddie was blessed with a vivid and accurate memory and was an accomplished linguist, a man of culture and an enchanting conversationalist. He was a keen sportsman too: even in his seventies, he acquired a scuba diving certificate.

Freddie was proud of his Jewishness and attended High Holy Day services with the Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation. His Jewishness was casual, sentimental rather than theological. He was also a proud Zionist. He visited Israel and worked on a kibbutz there.

Freddie passed away peacefully leaving a son, Joe, and two daughters, Eugenia (Jenny) and Susan.

HS

### Hilde Davis, 18 August 1922 – 10 September 2011

**H**ilde Rosel Davis (née Meyer) died unexpectedly on 10 September 2011 at sea whilst on a Norwegian cruise with her daughter.

Hilde was born in Offenbach am Main on 18 August 1922 to Else and Albert Meyer. She was the youngest of three: Lore was eight years older and Charles (Helmut) four years older. Both sadly predeceased her within the last two years.

As a child in Germany, she forged strong links with her *Kränzchen*; these five girls met weekly in each other's homes for picnics and entertainment and performed plays for which an entrance fee was charged. Leaving childhood friends was a wrench: by 1936 her father realised it was no longer safe in Germany and sent Hilde with her mother to live in London whilst trying to bring the rest of his family to safety. Sadly he didn't manage to save all his family.

Hilde's school was evacuated to Cornwall and she had to report to the police. As her education was interrupted, she learned secretarial skills. When she returned to London, she registered at Chelsea Polytechnic to study science (unfortunately pneumonia put an end to those studies). She worked for an architect whose remit was to assess war-damaged buildings and later worked for solicitors near the Temple in the City of London, where she could play tennis during lunch.

Hilde joined the WAAF in 1943 – an exciting experience, she said. She loved marching, which set the scene



for her later years, when she could be seen striding over Hampstead Heath. Her days as a flight mechanic were a challenge in which she learned to drive, although she

never passed the driving test.

She met her husband John at a friend's seaside cottage and was eventually accepted into the Davis family, despite being a German refugee! They were married on 28 April 1949 at West London Synagogue and she became active in John's growing dental business.

In 1978, due to her own experience as a refugee, she was drawn to do something for Jews in Russia and made three trips there, which she found very rewarding.

Hilde's love of music, which stemmed from being forced to learn to play the piano as a child, remained with her: she regularly went to concerts whenever possible, whether singing choral works, attending Wigmore Hall Sunday morning concerts, or the local St Jude Proms in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Her later years were devoted to caring for John, but she always found time for volunteering at Osmond House, recording books for the AJR, delivering meals-on-wheels, attending the U3A studying French, tap dancing or Mahjong, and spending time (when her busy diary allowed) with her grandchildren David

and Rachel Packman and Joanna and Oliver Davis, who were so dear to her.

Hilde is sorely missed by her husband John and her children Susan (Packman) and Daniel.

**Daniel Davis and Susan Packman**



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL



### Going to the mall

Despite rumours to the contrary, Israel is a normal country – at least as far as retail therapy is concerned. Shopping malls are popping up with ever-increasing frequency wherever one looks. They incorporate many advantages for both vendors and shoppers, and the ambience in them varies from quiet elegance to rowdy bombardment by broadcast announcements, together with rampant crowds and over-assertive salespersons.

Said Kashua, an Israeli Arab originally from the village of Tira in Galilee and now a resident of Jerusalem, writes a weekly column in the Hebrew-language newspaper *Ha'aretz*. In it he depicts life as an Arab, writer and devoted family man in Israel today. Deploying a wry sense of humour, he presents his view of the behaviour of the Israeli person-in-the-street, not to mention the Israeli authorities.

One of Mr Kashua's columns in November described what happened when his wife told him to buy clothes for their young son for the Muslim Festival of the Sacrifice (*Eid el-Adha*), which celebrates Abraham's non-sacrifice of

Isaac (why don't Jews celebrate it, I wonder?). Following his wife's instructions, Mr Kashua dutifully betook himself to Jerusalem's main shopping mall in Malha, purportedly the largest in the Middle East. His first shock came when he espied the long lines of cars waiting to pass through the vehicle security check, followed by the inevitable difficulty of finding parking. Later on there were long lines of eager customers, both Jews and Arabs, waiting to go through the personal security check, where ladies' handbags are inspected. Once inside the mall there was an unusually large crowd of people, with equivalent queues at the tills. In his column Mr Kashua added a few complaints about remarks made by passing Israelis, sour looks on the faces of shop assistants and the lack of any entertainment for the children or joyful festive spirit. But he added on a happy note that he was gratified by the fact that at least for that brief period the Malha Mall was Arab.

As luck would have it, I also paid one of my rare visits to that self-same mall that week. I, too, had to park my car a long way away and walk uphill in order to get to the entrance. I, too, was surprised

to see the crowds of people, and it was instantly evident to me that these were not the usual crowds. The heads of Arab women who observe the Muslim religious proprieties, including many of those who were there that day, are tightly covered with headscarves. Thus, many Arab families seemed to be intent on making their purchases that day and enjoying the experience to the best of their ability.

Unlike Mr Kashua, I did see entertainers, using inordinately loud amplifiers and surrounded by a throng of well-behaved children at their feet. Parents, both Jews and Arabs, stood at the sides, enjoying the performance. The atmosphere was decidedly festive, and to my surprise and relief I didn't see a single instance of ungracious or unpleasant behaviour.

As I made my way through the crowds I felt this was more than just another day at the mall. This was a day on which Arabs and Jews were living alongside one another in harmony, just as they do on the buses and Jerusalem's recently inaugurated light railway, just as they do in Jerusalem's modern French Hill neighbourhood, where many Arab professionals live alongside middle-class Jews, and just as they do in the hospitals and health clinics, where staff and patients are drawn from both communities. But of course those non-events are never going to make the headlines of any newspaper.

**Dorothea Shefer-Vanson**

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

openly expressed his disapproval of the PM's action. At the time of writing, the Coalition is on the point of breaking up.

This island is now cut adrift – not only geographically but also politically – from the Continent on the decision of just one man. It has the undertones of the turmoil befalling other regions of the globe. This all-embracing issue has never been debated or put before the citizens of the UK. The PM used the last bullet in his armoury to shoot himself in the foot, creating a political Babel. Having severed its anchors, Britain, a political pariah on

the Continent, is now all at sea and nobody will be there to rescue it.

The British press supports the move because 'the PM stands up for Britain.' In fact, his veto was enacted solely to support the financial interests of this country and their employees! Obviously, all other countries have the same concerns. This, like any other country, depends on its exports but, thanks to a former Lady, there is hardly an industry left that produces anything which enriches the Treasury. Perhaps the most glaring examples are the essential utilities, which have been lost

to Germany and France! Many banks, however, which caused the universal upheaval, are in such dire straits, their share prices being in pennies and falling steadily, that the PM strove to rescue them three times so far, generously with our money, but without success. Now the banks are available at knock-down prices, those countries would be able to make shreds of the paper money that is now being printed as QE, not GE, not yet! The Arabs had their spring – we are having our British winter.

*Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx*