

AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Arnhem 1944

In autumn 1944, *Zeitspiegel*, the publication of the Austrian Centre in London, gave its refugee readers a piece of rousing advice: if you ever meet someone who fought at Arnhem in September 1944, raise your hat to him. Such advice was unusual, coming from *Zeitspiegel*, a Communist-influenced paper which was not naturally inclined to celebrate the heroism of the British forces, though it loyally supported the Allies (especially the Soviets) in their war against Hitler. But the aura surrounding Arnhem, though it was a defeat for the British, overcame even *Zeitspiegel's* reservations about the exploits of the capitalist nations of the West.

The feats of arms performed by the British 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem, most notably the defence of the bridge over the Lower Rhine by a small force of paratroopers under Lieutenant-Colonel John Frost, passed almost immediately into legend. In the characteristically British mythology of heroism in defeat, Arnhem came to rank next to Dunkirk and is probably the best-known battle involving British forces in the entire Second World War after the Battle of Britain and the Normandy landings and alongside the Battle of El Alamein. It may come as a surprise that a number of Jewish refugees fought in the British forces at Arnhem; that was certainly a cause for pride among the refugee community, then still labouring under their classification as 'enemy aliens'.

Operation Market Garden, of which the Battle of Arnhem formed part, was an ambitious plan to use airborne troops to seize the bridges over the Rivers Maas (Meuse) and Rhine, the last major obstacles between the advancing British and American armies and the German heartland, and to encircle the Ruhrgebiet, the key industrial area on which Germany's military production depended. The war, it was hoped, would be over by the end of the year. The taking of the two sets of bridges nearest to the Allied advance, in the area of the Dutch cities of Eindhoven and Nijmegen, was entrusted to the American 101st Airborne and 82nd Airborne Divisions respectively, while the taking of the bridge at Arnhem, many miles further behind the German lines, was entrusted to the paratroopers of the British 1st Airborne Division, supported by the

1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade. The latter proved to be, in a famous phrase attributed to Lieutenant-General Frederick Browning, commanding 1st Airborne Corps, 'a bridge too far'.

The weeks before Arnhem had seen the Allied armies break out from their beachheads in Normandy and race across France and Belgium. American and French forces took Paris on 25 August 1944, while the British 21st Army Group pushed into Belgium, taking Brussels on 3 September and Antwerp on 4 September. But the advance then stalled, as the lines of supply to the ports in distant Normandy became over-extended. To regain the initiative, Field Marshal Montgomery decided on a bold stroke, the seizure by airborne troops of the bridges over the Rhine, which were to be held until the arrival of the relieving land forces, whose armoured spearheads would then roll on into Germany. The first two sets of bridges were taken but at Arnhem only a small force of paratroopers reached the northern end of the bridge; the rest of the force was trapped in a pocket at Oosterbeek, west of Arnhem, from which it was compelled to retreat across the Rhine. Of the 10,000 men of 1st Airborne Division who were sent into Arnhem, only some 2,500 returned to Britain.

Probably the first book about the battle, Louis Hagen's *Arnhem Lift* was written by a Jewish refugee from Nazism serving with the British forces. Hagen was born in Potsdam in 1916 and fled to Britain in 1936 after enduring a spell in a concentration camp while still a teenager. After service in the Pioneer Corps he was accepted into the 1st Airborne, changed his name to Lewis Haig, and was trained as a glider pilot. It was in that capacity that he flew to Arnhem, where he took part in the desperate defence of Oosterbeek by lightly armed and heavily outnumbered British troops. His account of the action is divided into eight sections, each in diary form, covering one of the eight days from the glider lift on Monday 17

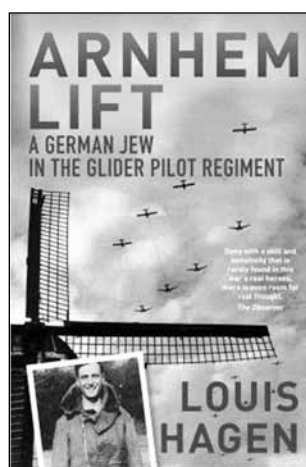
September to Monday 24 September 1944, when the British paratroopers attempted to break out and make their escape from the Arnhem area, in Hagen's case by swimming across the Rhine.

Arnhem Lift gains much of its impact from its simplicity and directness; it has the immediacy and authenticity

of a day-by-day report on a military action, an authenticity underlined by the book's original subtitle, *Diary of a Glider Pilot*. Although Hagen had never written anything before, he completed *Arnhem Lift* with remarkable speed; it appeared in January 1945. His publisher described the process of its composition: 'When the author of this book arrived home on leave after fighting right through the Arnhem action, everybody wanted to hear

his story. After telling it several times, he began to find the repetition irksome. So he spent the rest of his leave writing it all down, while the events were still vivid in his mind.' *Arnhem Lift* is written from below, from the perspective of the fighting man at the front, and records the apparently spontaneous reactions of an ordinary soldier to the battle with gritty, but ultimately uplifting realism: 'This is the story of one man's battle. It doesn't purport to describe the action as a whole. It gives instead a series of ultra-vivid images and experiences. Like real life, it is inconsequent and surprising.'

Hagen never mentions himself by name. His anonymous first-person narrator refers to himself simply as 'I', or often 'we', to emphasise that he is speaking for all the men who went to fight at Arnhem. 'Anyone who went to Arnhem could have told this kind of story,' he states. But Hagen, a Jew from Germany, was anything but a typical British soldier. Yet by writing from the perspective of a British soldier, he was rejecting the perspective of the refugee from Nazism, preferring to depict the British around him as if he were one of them. We learn almost nothing about him and his German-



 **Arnhem 1944** *continued*

Jewish past, while his perfect command of English adds to the impression that he is British. Only a few small details betray his background: he can understand what enemy troops within earshot are saying and proves useful in the interrogation of German prisoners; with difficulty he convinces his hungry comrades to eat Dutch preserves, 'Continental concoctions' in their view, which he, as a 'Continental' himself, knows to be eminently edible. Otherwise, Hagen appears to be accepted without reservation by his fellow soldiers as one of them. There is no national, cultural or linguistic distance between him and his comrades; his narrative perspective could be theirs.

The superiority of that British fighting collective over their German counterparts forms one of the principal themes of the book. Hagen's opinion of the German troops whom he encountered in the wood between the landing zone and Oosterbeek was that they were 'a badly disciplined and poor crowd'. The Germans' low morale and reluctance to fight are evident in the failure of an SS Panzer Division to wipe out the vastly inferior British force confronting it in Oosterbeek; instead, Hagen and his comrades repeatedly repel attacks by German armour with only a hand-held anti-tank weapon at their disposal. By contrast with the Germans, the British troops, largely civilians in uniform, maintain their discipline and order under extreme pressure, fighting with selfless solidarity as part of a unit that believes in its collective cause. Their quiet, understated heroism, reflecting their inner confidence in their superiority, infuses the book with the spirit of optimism that turns defeat into a stage on the path to ultimate victory.

Among the other Jewish refugees who fought at Arnhem was Rudolf Julius Falck. Falck, whose father had been an architect in Cologne, came to Britain in 1937 to study law at Balliol College, Oxford. Walter Eberstadt (see July 2015 issue of this journal) knew Falck at Oxford; he acted as an usher at the ceremony in April 1943 when Falck married Pauline, whom Eberstadt describes as 'an absolutely gorgeous English girl'.

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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.

ADVANCE NOTICE • ADVANCE NOTICE

Day Trip by Special Train: London to Harwich 1 July 2016

On Friday 1 July 2016 a number of 'Kindertransport 77' special trains will run from London and elsewhere in the UK to Harwich to mark the first anniversary of Sir Nicholas Winton's passing and the 77th anniversary of the arrival in Harwich of his largest single transport of 241 children.

A Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving will be held in St Nicholas Church in Harwich together with other events in the town which welcomed many thousands of *Kinder* to safety in 1938-39 and accommodated many hundreds at Dovercourt.

The organisers wish to invite any *Kinder* – not only those on the Czech transports – to attend with their families.

**For further information,
please phone 01908 410450,
email kt@papyrus-rail.com or go to
www.papyrus-rail.com/kt77**



Eastbourne Lansdowne Hotel

**Sunday 3 July to
Sunday 10 July 2016**

Come and join us for a week
Make new friends and meet up
with old friends

**£425pp for twin/double
£450 for single room**

Sea View rooms an additional
£15 per room per night

Carol Rossen will be among those
accompanying the trip

Space is limited so book early

**For further details,
please telephone Lorna Moss
on 020 8385 3070**



NORTHERN REGIONAL MANCHESTER

Tuesday 19 July 2016

Please join us at our annual Northern Regional Get-together

Our keynote speaker will be

**Mike Levy, playwright, journalist and educator for the Holocaust Education Trust,
whose subject will be 'From Hitler to Hi-de-Hi'**

This is the story of the Warner's Camp which was used as a transit camp for the first wave of Kindertransportees in December 1938 and later became the location for the BBC TV series 'Hi-de-Hi'. The day will include refreshments and lunch, discussion groups and musical entertainment. It's an excellent opportunity to meet and socialise with friends old and new.

For full details and an application form, please contact
Wendy Bott on 07908 156 365 or at wendy@ajr.org.uk

Falck, like Eberstadt, was interned in 1940, then joined the Pioneer Corps and was commissioned in July 1942. He was killed on the retreat from Arnhem, joining the sadly long list of Eberstadt's Oxford friends who died in the war. Falck's details appear in Julie Summers's absorbing study *Stranger in the House: Women's Stories of Men Returning from the Second World War* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2008), which analyses the dislocation caused by the wartime absences of men from their families as well as the trauma endured by the families of those who never returned. Summers interviewed Falck's daughter, Christa Laird, who was born three months after her father's death and lived with that loss into adult life. Thus did the aftermath of Arnhem reach down into the second generation.

Anthony Grenville

75th Anniversary of the AJR SCOTLAND REGIONAL

Wednesday 8 June 2016

in Edinburgh

Special guest speaker

**Olivia Marks Woldman
Chief Executive,
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust**

Three-course lunch

**Film by young film-maker Misha Cooper
*My Dearest ...***

Transport will be provided

For further details contact
agnes@ajr.org.uk or tel 07908 156 361

Refuge for the refugees?

During the 'Woche der Brüderlichkeit' in Hannover in March 2016, both the German Rabbinic Conferences (Orthodox and General) met with both the Protestant and the Catholic Bishops' Conferences for our annual get-together. The theme this year was, of course, refugees – in the wider sense and also in terms of what we, as religious leaders, should be saying.

It is, truly, an interesting conundrum. On the one hand, we all of us represent in one way or another religious traditions that stress the unity of humanity – the Brotherhood (and Sisterhood) that stand behind the theme of the week. We all proclaim Justice and we preach about the need to help and protect the Weak and the Stranger.

But – and here there is a *big* but – the elephant in the room, so to speak – is the cultural tradition from which many of the current wave of refugees in Europe come. We rabbis expressed our amazement at how little the churches had done over the past few years for their fellow Christians from Syria and Iraq (and Palestine), but at the same time both groups shared a concern: Are *many* of the Muslim refugees anti-Christian as well as anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli? And, if so, what should our relationship be – not only to them but also to the communities we serve here in Europe – communities which are becoming increasingly alarmed, even afraid, due to the arrival of people, a large number of whom seem to have a very different view of the world?

The political consequences of this alarm have been well demonstrated in the rise of populist, nationalist and even racist political parties in many European countries, by the erection of fences and barriers, by heated political debates. Who is running the asylum for the asylum seekers? Should we, as rabbis and bishops, not have something useful to contribute to the discussion on the immoral issues as well as the moral ones? For example, there are many who profit from the refugee crisis, there are many who write or speak in racist terms. There are those who insist people be returned to areas ruled by fundamentalist rapists and murderers – would *you* return in such circumstances?

Quite remarkably, the only thing we could really agree on at the meeting was a rather vague and weak plea for more humanity and understanding. The fact is that the Jewish communities, who already feel themselves under threat from left-wing and right-wing extremists, don't relish the thought of towns filling with Muslims, some of whom – perhaps a tiny minority – may possibly have been raised on a diet of 'Israel should not exist and all Jews are animals'. And the Christian leaders too are finding themselves confronted with refugees who display very little education (the standard of education in Syria has clearly been

There are no easy answers but a lot will depend on the desire of those who come – or succeed in coming – not only to arrive but to integrate, to adapt to living in secular, libertarian, pluralist, post-Christian countries. The Muslim leaders were not represented at our meeting but ... it is unclear what they or their communities could say or do in any case.

catastrophic for decades) but cling to the hierarchic structures that they understand – whereby women priests and bishops feel themselves especially confronted by the misogynistic attitudes displayed.

The individual stories are, of course, heart-wrenching and many of the refugees also fled to get away from Islamic fundamentalism as such. A few days ago I met a young family. He had worked for seven years in Cyprus to earn the money to build a house in Syria, then they had had to sell it for only \$7,000 and to pay all this to a *Schlepper* for their illegal transport to Germany. The father then locked the mother in a room while he went out to seek work and, not surprisingly, she required some weeks of treatment for depression. Now at last both are trying to learn German and their kid will soon start kindergarten. The vicar and his wife who have been trying to help this family are also worried and depressed by the sheer scale of the work required to integrate such people – and the churches are overwhelmed.

There are no easy answers but a lot will depend on the desire of those who come – or succeed in coming – not only to arrive but to integrate, to adapt to living in secular, libertarian, pluralist, post-Christian countries. The Muslim leaders were not represented at our meeting but, bearing in mind that many mosques are financially supported and controlled by the Turkish government through the DITIB (Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs), founded in 1984 as a branch of the Religious Affairs Ministry in Ankara, it is unclear what they or their communities could say or do in any case.

It will take at least 20 years and another generation to see what the results of the current crisis will be. Many of the arrivals are traumatised: they have been bankrupted, uprooted, often abused and raped and tortured, bereaved ... they bring with them feelings of loss and fear and insecurity, just as all refugees have done throughout history. One can perhaps – as Christians and Jews, as citizens – start working with these problems. But if some, even a tiny minority,

bring hate and intolerance with them too, then things will become more difficult. For now, many of us find ourselves in a state of ambivalence. And feel thoroughly guilty about it ...

Walter Rothschild

Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild was born in Bradford, UK, was ordained by Leo Baeck College, and has lived in Berlin since 1998 serving mainly communities around Germany and Austria.



CONFERENCE

WELCOME TO BRITAIN?
REFUGEES THEN AND NOW

In Memory of
Eleanor Rathbone, 1872-1946,
'The MP for Refugees'

20 June 2016, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm
at

King's College London, Strand Campus

Keynote Speaker:

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

£20.00 inclusive

To book, please contact Lesley Urbach at
lurbach@aol.com or on 020 8346 2256

www.rememberingeleanorathbone.
wordpress.com

KT LUNCH

Wednesday 11 May 2016
at Alyth Gardens Synagogue
12.30 pm

We are delighted to welcome
Dame Esther Rantzen DBE



Dame Esther is a journalist and television presenter, best known for the hit BBC Television series *That's Life!* for 21 years from 1973 to 1994. Also well known for her work with

charitable causes, she is the founder of the child protection charity ChildLine and The Silver Line, designed to combat loneliness.

Dame Esther famously made a documentary for ITV about Sir Nicholas Winton entitled *Winton's Children*.

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

We look forward to seeing you

REMEMBER
TOGETHER
WE ARE
ONE



YOM HASHOAH
SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2016 - 2PM
BARNET COPHALL STADIUM
YOMHASHOAH.ORG.UK

AJR Annual Report 2015

Highlights

It gave us great pleasure to organise a number of events last year that honoured the lives of notable émigrés and commemorated the anniversaries of events that have helped define our organisation.

Some 300 guests attended the Holocaust Generations Conference in January and took part in an array of workshops themed to span the history and lives of the refugees, including sessions on the secret listeners at Bletchley, Antisemitism in Post-Holocaust Europe and genealogy. Participants also heard from keynote speakers Baroness Julia Neuberger and Lord Dubs.

As part of the conference, we were also grateful to colleagues from the Institute of Education's Centre for Holocaust Education for presenting their findings of research on the impact of Holocaust education on school pupils.

In November we were delighted to jointly convene a special event at the British Academy to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Thank-You Britain Fund, endowed with donations from AJR members. As well as hearing presentations on four distinguished refugee academics – Sir Otto Kahn Freund, Sir Ernst Gombrich, Sir Ludwig Guttman and Sir Ernst Chain – the AJR's Dr Anthony Grenville outlined the history of the Fund and commemorated the lives of those who perished unknown in the Holocaust. We were honoured that Lord Stern, President of the British Academy, whose parents were also refugees from Germany, gave an address at the reception.

Continuing the theme of honouring prominent émigrés, we were thrilled to unveil an AJR plaque in honour of Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck at the address in Hendon where he had lived briefly in the 1950s. We were especially delighted to welcome Rabbi Baeck's great-grandson Jim Dreyfus and his wife Ellen, who were visiting London from the US, to the unveiling, which was also attended by a number of rabbis who knew Rabbi Baeck and/or were inspired by his work.

Also inaugurated last year was the latest Kindertransport monument created by the acclaimed sculptor Frank Meisler. 'The Last Farewell' in Hamburg was established with the support of the AJR and complements the other Meisler statues in Europe.

With great sadness we learned of the passing of Sir Nicholas Winton, whose force of will saved the lives of hundreds of children from the Holocaust. We were honoured to welcome his daughter Barbara at our KT Lunch in September when she spoke about her father's life.

We were also saddened to hear of the deaths of two distinguished historians with whom the AJR and many of our members enjoyed a close friendship. Sir Martin Gilbert's prodigious work, including his pioneering research chronicling the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, leaves an unbridgeable gap.

Professor David Cesarani too enjoyed a global reputation as a historian of the Second World War and the Holocaust, in particular war crimes, but also regarding

Jewish affairs generally.

David was the guest speaker at our Kristallnacht commemoration in Manchester in November 2014. Last year we welcomed Ivan Lewis MP. Guests also heard from AJR member Gisela Feldman, who spoke of her memories of the night of 9 November 1938.

At the Kristallnacht commemorative event at Belsize Square Synagogue, guest speaker Sir Peter Bazalgette reported on recent activities of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, to which the AJR continues to give strong support. Our thanks also went to AJR member Professor Leslie Brent for sharing his reflections on his Kindertransport journey and to Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg for leading the service and commenting on the current refugee crisis.

I am grateful too to my fellow Trustee Sir Erich Reich for raising with the Prime Minister and the Government the issue of the humanitarian tragedy of the refugees fleeing Syria, in particular the children. In a series of letters he implored them to provide sanctuary for the most vulnerable and noted that given the same opportunity as the Jewish refugees from the 1930s, some of the refugees we help today could make equally invaluable contributions to British society.

I must also express my gratitude to the AJR's close friend Glenys Groves and her colleagues for their stirring performance of 'Melodic Memories' at the AJR's annual concert. As ever it was a memorable and heart-warming occasion.

As well as organising the concert, our thanks went to Carol Rossen and other AJR colleagues for leading the excellent holiday to Israel last November. I gather it was a great success.

Personnel and administration

In September we said a fond farewell to Andrea Goodmaker after 22 years of dedicated service to the AJR. Andrea performed a number of roles for the AJR during her time, most notably as the secretary to the Kindertransport Committee.

Eva Stellman was recruited to our outreach department to replace Hazel Beiny, who also left us in September.

We welcomed Michael Flannery as cover for Karen Barnes, who went on maternity leave in August and who later resigned from her position as one of the London-based social workers. Also in the Social Work Department we welcomed Florina Harapcea, who joined us in April to replace Helena Reid.

As part of our plan to expand our social services, we recruited Dave Moon and Dean Lloyd-Graham to develop our work in, respectively, the North East and the Essex area.

We were also very pleased to develop our volunteer services and to take on Hila Kaye to work on the *My Story* project and Naomi Kaye (no relation) as the dementia co-ordinator for the North. Also joining us were Alex Pinnick to replace Lesley Woolfe and Claude Vecht-Wolf, who succeeded Jonathan Rose. Their work is outlined in the

volunteers' report below.

We also welcomed John Grant to our accounts department to administer the Austrian emergency fund.

Membership

We were delighted to enrol 105 members last year, bringing our total membership at 31 December 2015 to 2,163. This figure includes 516 second generation members, of whom 42 joined last year.

At the start of this year, our database showed 637 members aged 90 or over and a further 31 who have reached their century. On a sad note, in October we mourned the passing of our oldest member, Edith Kaufmann, at the age of 111.

Financial assistance

The AJR continued to act as the lead agency of the Umbrella Group of five agencies managing the welfare programmes of the Claims Conference, which is further supplemented by Six Point Foundation. Altogether, we managed £3m of grants, of which some £738,000 was paid to AJR members to provide care in their homes and support other urgent needs. Both funding organisations continue to generously provide support for our social work and volunteer activities, for which we are most grateful.

Further, it gave us great pleasure to award above-inflation increases totalling £619,000 to members with the greatest need through the AJR's Self-Aid programme. We aim to continue to make their lives more comfortable in the years ahead.

Social and welfare services

The Social Services Department continued to identify new and existing members requiring assistance from programmes supported by the Claims Conference, principally the Emergency and Austrian funds and Homecare, but also through the AJR's Self-Aid.

As first generation members age there is a greater need to provide Homecare to enable them to remain in their own homes and lead independent lives. Continued support was also provided for immediate relatives and second generation members in general.

Although assessments and applications now require a much greater level of detail, as well as the involvement of medical and care professionals and local authorities, we continued to make life-changing interventions and to improve members' welfare.

As well as our AJR colleagues, we worked with community organisations to meet members' needs and provided support to members on holidays to Eastbourne, Scotland and Israel.

Volunteers

The projects undertaken by the Volunteer's Department continued to flourish and we were delighted to launch a new initiative with the Fed in Manchester. Through

My Story, we aim to tell the life stories of members through the production of booklets to be kept as treasured memories and tools for reminiscences.

In the North of England Fran Horwich continued to co-ordinate the befriending project and we were pleased to recruit Naomi Kaye to work with members in Northern areas suffering with memory loss and to match specially trained volunteers with our members. As well as supporting her volunteers, Naomi will regularly visit some of our most challenging clients.

In the London area, Alex Pinnick joined us to support members with memory loss at home and in residential care.

In the past year we started a befriending service for Birmingham-based members using volunteers from Action Reconciliation Services for Peace (ARSP), which also arranged for Bodil Ulm, from Berlin, to be our volunteer intern.

We continue to receive regular requests from members who would like to improve or learn basic computer skills. Claude Vecht-Wolf, who took over from Jonathan Rose, has been able to find suitable volunteers for these requests. During the autumn term Claude and Bodil took part in a series of Jewish Lads- and Girls Brigade-run school volunteer fairs resulting in a number of new young volunteers joining the Computerhelp programme.

Ros Collin continues to attract volunteers to the telephone befriender project, through which we keep in regular contact with some of our most isolated members aged 90 and over; feedback shows they greatly appreciate the opportunity for a friendly chat.

Sobell

Ros also keeps a watchful eye on members who attended the AJR Centre at Cleve Road and then at Belsize Square Synagogue. Over two years have now passed since our Centre members joined the Jewish Care family at the Sobell Centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They continue to socialise, play cards, and join in the exercise classes and other numerous activities offered there, including the wonderful art and pottery room. The hairdressing salon and manicurist are added bonuses.

Community

The AJR retained a key role in the organisation of the national Yom HaShoah commemoration, with last year's event at Allianz Park attracting over 5,000 people.

The AJR is also a member of the Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) Trust's collaborative group, which looks at ways to further the reach and impact of HMD, and participated in committees advising the work of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation. We were proud also to partner JW3 at an event commemorating unsung heroines.

Regional groups and holidays

The outstanding highlight of last year was our trip to Scotland in May, when 35 members enjoyed five days of excursions, entertainment, great food and even better

company. As well as visits to the Royal Yacht Britannia, a whisky distillery and Kelvingrove Museum, members enjoyed a guided tour of Pollok House, a boat trip on Loch Lomond, and a visit to the Burrell Collection.

Other outings included group trips to see *The Seagull* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, to the Gypsy Theatre and to see *Taken at Midnight*, followed by tea with Penelope Wilton, as well as to the Emirates Air Line and the Canal Museum. As ever, our Chanukah parties proved very popular.

Forty members enjoyed a wonderful week in Eastbourne with entertainment, trips to the theatre, and outings to local places of interest.

Our Northern meetings ran smoothly and steadily with some wonderful group discussions and much eating. Groups enjoyed trips to the Holocaust Centre, Marks and Spencer's archives and afternoon teas at parks in Sheffield and Hull, and a meal out for York and Harrogate members. We also organised film showings for Leeds members at Donisthorpe Hall.

At the Northern Regional Get-together, in Leeds, guest speaker James Smith, co-founder of the Holocaust Centre, gave a brilliant account of the life, work and achievements of Raphael Lemkin under the banner 'Cultural Genocide: Did the World Learn from the Destruction of Germany's Jews?'

Members in Scotland also enjoyed an array of outings and entertainment, including a special HMD reception at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, the Judah Passow Exhibition, afternoon tea at the House for an Art Lover, and a piano concert at the Royal Overseas League.

We were delighted to welcome Agnes Hirschi, stepdaughter of Carl Lutz, as keynote speaker at the regional gathering in Edinburgh. Agnes spoke movingly about the *Schutzpässe* (letters of safe conduct) her stepfather issued, saving the lives of some 60,000 people.

Other speakers during the year included Edward Green, the Queen's former jeweller, Doreen Cohen of Simcha Catering, and Fiona Frank, who spoke on the life of her aunt, the artist Hannah Frank.

AJR at the Sobell Centre

In January, Jewish Care's Sobell Centre welcomed our AJR Centre members into their family. Since that time, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the same days the Centre was open at Belsize Square Synagogue, our members have been socialising, playing Rummikub, Kalooki and Bridge, eating, exercising, debating, making pottery, drawing and painting – although presumably not all at the same time!

At Sobell members can also book hairdressing and manicuring appointments and enjoy the afternoon entertainment with their longstanding (never old!) AJR friends as well as the rest of the Sobell membership.

Although the philosophy at Sobell differs from that of the AJR Centre, our members managed the transition well and have embraced the change. For those who require the service, we also retain a dedicated carer offering practical support.

We are delighted that our Meals-on-Wheels service continues to deliver a

delicious range of meals to members in north-west London.

AJR Journal

As before, the *Journal's* Consultant Editor Anthony Grenville regularly contributed articles germane to the history of the refugees, Gloria Tessler wrote a column on art exhibitions, by Jewish and non-Jewish artists alike, and Jerusalem resident Dorothea Shefer-Vanson contributed a 'Letter from Israel', often focusing on the day-to-day reality behind the Middle East headlines. These regular contributors were joined on a quarterly basis by Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild, born in the UK but resident in Berlin, who provided a contemporary perspective on Jewish life in Germany.

In addition, articles by members recounting family histories, reports on members' group meetings and outings, book, theatre and concert reviews, search notices, obituaries, and the often provocative Letters to the Editor pages remained regular features of the *Journal*.

Kindertransport

The Committee continued to organise the monthly KT Lunches. As well as Barbara Winton, notable speakers included composer and conductor Carl Davis, who performed *Last Train to Tomorrow* for us at the Roundhouse, Herman Roth on Hitler's will, and a talk by Philip Goodmaker on the Jewish community under Castro.

Child Survivors' Association (CSA)

Alongside social events in the homes of CSA members, the CSA, a special interest group of the AJR, continued to send out a bimonthly newsletter which kept members abreast of events and publications of interest.

The experiences of children living under Nazi occupation are now recognised as an integral part of Holocaust education and many CSA members were actively involved in Holocaust education, with two awarded MBEs for their services to this work.

The CSA's book, *WE REMEMBER*, an anthology of the experiences of 30 of our members during the Holocaust, is now in its fourth reprint; together with its earlier version, *Zachor*, it has sold over 7,000 copies, with high demand in secondary schools.

The AJR was delighted to receive confirmation in November from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, the Rt Hon David Gauke MP, that the one-time payments made from the Child Survivor Fund will be exempt from income tax, capital gains tax and inheritance tax.

Grants and Holocaust memorialisation

We were delighted to commit additional resources to expand our Refugee Voices testimony collection and to commission Dr Bea Lewkowicz to record a further 50 interviews to bring our archive up to 200 witness statements.

To complement the pledges we have made to other regional initiatives, it gave us great pleasure to commit funds to the establishment of the Holocaust Heritage and Learning Centre for the North, to be based

continued overleaf ➔

at the University of Huddersfield, and to the development of the Scottish Jewish Archives, to be housed at the refurbished Garnet Hill Synagogue in Glasgow.

As in previous years, we helped defray some of the costs of Holocaust Memorial Day programmes organised by the Finchley Reform and Northwood Synagogues and contributed to the HMD annual events at the Universities of Sussex and Glasgow.

We were also delighted to renew the support we have provided in recent years to Belsize Square Synagogue for their welfare and outreach officer.

Our Chief Executive Michael Newman and Finance Director David Kaye represented the UK Government at the Living with Dignity conference organised by the European Shoah Legacy Institute in Prague in May. Michael addressed delegates on the AJR's leading role in supporting Holocaust refugees and survivors in the UK as part of the conference's aims to analyse the current status of social welfare benefits for Holocaust victims and assess ways of improving services to them.

Michael also attended plenaries organised by the Hungarian Government, which last year chaired the International

Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and co-organised an event at the Wiener Library which explored Hungary's approach to Holocaust memorialisation.

Thanks

As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of our great organisation this year, my fellow Trustees and I are immensely proud of all the holistic and life-changing services it is our great pleasure to deliver, and I am sure you will join me in expressing my sincerest thanks to all our gifted, committed and friendly staff, capably led by Chief Executive Michael Newman, who truly go the extra mile.

We are nothing without you, our members, so please do tell us if you know of anyone who can benefit from our services. Thank you also to all of you who have sent in letters and cards of gratitude throughout the year – we truly appreciate knowing that our efforts are recognised.

We all greatly look forward to your continued involvement and active participation in the AJR and to seeing you at our events this year.

Andrew Kaufman
Chairman,

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Treasurer's Report 2015

Our financial performance this year reflects the commitments we have made to enhance the level of service we provide to our members. This is underpinned by the strength of our balance sheet, which has enabled us to withstand turbulent financial headwinds. Last year saw a sharp reversal in financial markets and our own investment portfolio value suffered accordingly. Our reserves, recently reinforced through major legacies and property disposals, have enabled us to pursue our service objectives without interruption.

Increased levels of expenditure on social services and welfare grants to our members are to be seen as a reflection of our successful service delivery. The charity significantly strengthened our social service team and expanded the innovative programme that we have put in place to support our members suffering from dementia. We allocated further resources to expanding the delivery of volunteer visitors to provide additional pastoral care to members who have this need. The cost of providing these front-line services increased accordingly. We were again in a position to pay inflation-beating self-aid increases to our most vulnerable members.

Administration costs continued to be monitored carefully and fell slightly.

The accounts show a decrease

of over £600,000 in funds donated to other organisations, which mainly relates to educational activities and which were exceptional in the previous year. Our willingness to support Holocaust education remains undiminished. The charity has worked with the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, which has developed plans to establish a major memorial and learning centre in London. Additionally, significant funds are contingently committed to other educational institutions and will be recorded when the conditions emerge that allow these future grants to be released.

We are grateful to our former members whose legacies assisted the organisation by some £700,000 in 2015. While this is less than we have received in recent years, we are aware of further bequests currently going through the process of administration that will have a positive impact in 2016. We respectfully encourage our members to remember that legacies do provide a critical income source to enable services to be continued and enhanced in the way that we have been able to achieve in recent years.

We again offer our heartfelt thanks to the Claims Conference, which as administrators of German and Austrian Government programmes for refugees and Holocaust survivors, together with Six Point Foundation, provide the major source of funding of the welfare and social service

Finance Report 2015 (unaudited)

Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) Summary Income and Expenditure Accounts Year ended 31st December 2015

Income:	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
Claims Conference, Six Point & Other Grants	1,057,412		1,209,285	
Subscriptions/Donations	76,328		98,885	
Investment income	673,961		502,401	
Rent from Investment Property	0		131,162	
Other Income	5,114		136,291	
		1,812,815		1,956,861
Legacies		708,703		1,610,278
Total Income		2,521,518		3,567,140
Less outgoings:				
Day Centre	0		167,109	
Self Aid, Homecare and Emergency Grants	1,357,527		1,206,265	
Social Services and Other member services	997,640		866,784	
AJR Journal	116,407		148,036	
Other organisations	41,830		687,913	
Administration/Depreciation	985,837		992,703	
		3,499,241		3,901,701
Donated by AJR Charitable Trust				
Gain in disposal of investment property		0		4,412,632
Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year		-977,723		4,078,071
Surplus/-Deficiency on realised and unrealised investments		-794,171		215,273
Net movement in funds		-1,771,894		4,293,344

The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) Summary Balance Sheet Year ended 31st December 2015

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets and Investments		21,903,844		16,841,058
Current assets	6,075,228		12,808,813	
Current liabilities	-1,333,368		1,232,273	
Net Current Assets		4,741,860		11,576,540
Net Assets		26,645,704		28,417,598
Reserves brought forward		28,417,598		24,124,254
Net movement in funds for year		-1,771,894		4,293,344
Reserves Carried Forward		26,645,704		28,417,598

Notional Comparative
with AJR Charitable Trust
and AJR

activity for ourselves and other members of the Umbrella Group of agencies we lead. Over 2015 some £3m of grants were administered in relation to these various programmes – of which £738,000 directly assisted our members. We are currently working with them to deliver further service enhancements for the years ahead.

Overall with assets of £26m our organisation remains on a sound financial footing and well placed to support our first generation members as long as that is needed.

As always, I offer my thanks to the finance team for their continued dedication in relation not only to our own administration but also in carrying out the sometimes onerous administrative requirements of the programmes we manage.

David Rothenberg
Treasurer, The Association of Jewish Refugees



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

UK HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

Sir – I read Anthony Grenville's cover piece for the April *Journal* with interest, not least because several of the people he listed – Popper, Perutz, Gombrich – had links to the SPSL (Society for the Protection of Science and Learning), Cara's predecessor. I share his hope that the UK's experience of the 1933-39 period will be properly reflected in any memorial/learning centre and would be happy to be associated with the AJR's involvement with the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

*Stephen Wordsworth CMG LVO,
Executive Director, Cara (Council for
At-Risk Academics)*

Sir – I would like to thank Dr Grenville for his timely and insightful article into the background and possible future of the UK Holocaust Memorial.

However, I believe that in his argument, placing Holocaust memories clearly in the UK context, Dr Grenville has allowed his politeness to obscure the folly of this venture. Nobody can doubt the need to remember the Shoah – unfortunately this act of remembering fails to prevent other genocides.

Did the committee reflect on the fact that there are already 38 statues in Westminster? It would appear that this number quickly increases to 185 statues if the area is slightly enlarged to include Whitehall (19), Trafalgar Square and Charing Cross (28), Millbank (10), St James Park (46), and Victoria Embankment (44).

Moreover, can any member of the Holocaust committee indicate, without a map, the location of the memorials to Julius Salter Elias, 1st Viscount Southwood, and Edward Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, or even that of Jan Smuts, or the memorial to the 2002 Bali bombings?

All the above, I am sure, were erected with good intent but, I suspect, have been quickly forgotten. Placing the UK Shoah Memorial within this muddle of monuments will clearly dilute any impact.

May I once again quote James Young, who so eloquently states 'Once we

assign monumental form to memory, we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember' (*The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (1993)).

It would appear that the Holocaust commission, having completed their recommendations, feel satisfied that there will now be 186 (!) memorials in the vicinity of Westminster. Those who gained refuge in the UK and those who perished deserve better.

Arthur Oppenheimer, Hove, Sussex

Sir – I was surprised at the one-sided information Anthony Grenville's editorial contained in relation to the British Government's role before, during and after the Holocaust.

Without detracting from some of the good work done by determined individuals in the UK to assist Jews in Europe who put pressure on the Government to act, many survivors and refugees had an extremely difficult time after arriving in the UK. Some were treated almost as slaves in domestic service and even highly qualified doctors, dentists and other professionals were prevented from practising here directly or indirectly due to fears of an oversupply of practitioners competing for jobs.

As for as the children, of whom I am one, who came over with the 'Boys' (there were over 70 girls, it must be stated), the British Government was persuaded by the Jewish community to take us in, but only on a temporary basis. We were not allowed to take British citizenship. The planes that came to pick us up from Prague to the UK were returning empty having dropped off Czech airmen who had been fighting with the RAF. No cost was incurred. When we arrived in Windermere the UK Jewish community organised hostels and children's homes without government funding – their upkeep and running costs were paid entirely by the community.

Joanna Millan, Swiss Cottage, London

Sir – Anthony Grenville's article on the Holocaust Memorial is a timely, if gentle, reminder that Britain has not always

been a safe haven for those fleeing persecution.

This perception has been perpetuated by the emphasis on the rescue mission known as the Kindertransports as well as the tendency to focus on the success stories of refugees. Whatever the limitations of the Kindertransports, the fate of these children contrasts directly with the fate of just over 11,000 Jewish children of mainly Polish parents trapped in France. In July 1942, the War Cabinet discussed the Vichy Government's offer of safe passage for the children to any country willing to take them, but refused to do so. The difference in the response to these two groups of children by the organisation which originated as the Central British Fund for German Jewry remains in the shadows of Holocaust history. In response to pressure by the Joint Distribution Committee, the USA did send a rescue mission, but by the time they arrived Vichy had fallen and the children were dispatched to the camps for extermination.

The history of the Holocaust is not as black-and-white as sometimes portrayed. We can only hope that those responsible for planning this memorial are willing to include the evidence that genocides are as much down to those who close their eyes and their doors as those who fan the fires of hatred and prejudice.

Joan Salter, London N10

YOM HASHOAH 'RAZZMATAZZ'

Sir – Over the last couple of months I have noticed your advert in the *Journal* and on the internet for Yom HaShoah at the Barnet Copthall Stadium. As a Holocaust survivor, this event makes me cringe. Worse still that we survivors are 'paraded' like some prehistoric species among the 5,000 spectators assembled there for this razzmatazz.

For me, Yom HaShoah is a very personal thing when our people remember our people and what they went through. Not this sort of public spectacular. Last year it might have been permissible as it was after all the 70th anniversary. But not again!

I just wonder how many of our members generally, and other survivors particularly, agree with my thoughts.

Steven Frank, Chorleywood, Herts

'FIRST THEY CAME FOR THE COMMUNISTS'

Sir – I am working my way through Daniel Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* – difficult but worthwhile and eye-opening in many respects despite the author's clear agenda. I had read his description of Niemöller's behaviour post-WW1 and leading into WW2 and was pleased to read Jurgen Schwiening's article 'First they came for the Communists' in your April issue – I think it is so important that myths which have been erroneously

continued overleaf ➔

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
continued from page 7

created are debunked. Good for the AJR in publishing it.

*Michael Hilsenrath, Deputy President,
Anglo-Jewish Association*

See also review by Anthony Grenville of the Goldhagen book in AJR Information, June 1996, p. 4 (Ed.).

DEFINITION OF EXILE

Sir – Can I assure Fritz Lustig that he has *Collins Dictionary* on his side, at least partially. Its first definition of 'exile' reads 'a prolonged, usually enforced absence from one's home or country; banishment'. It goes on to 'banishment by official decree'. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 do not explicitly banish but patently have that purpose. Thus the dictionary is silent on the element of return but explicit on the use of force or authority to cause the absence.

As with Fritz, Britain has become my home and I would consider myself patriotic – whilst rejecting the right-wing overtones of that term. But has the time not come to recognise that the offenders have passed on, as have many of their children, and that now both Germany and Austria deserve praise for their internationalism and their generosity towards strangers, including Soviet Jews and, currently, Syrians etc? To continue to damn them comprehensively surely makes us guilty of the racism for which we condemn their parents. Indeed, because of our past should we not give a lead in extending the hand of friendship and link that with our love of country and its status, most simply by voting on 23 June for staying in the EU?

Francis Deutsch, Saffron Walden

NOT ONLY NICHOLAS WINTON

Sir – I read with interest Werner Conn's letter entitled 'Not only Nicholas Winton'. I agree with him that more thanks could be given to others who helped to save many Jews who had to leave Germany in 1938-39.

Recently we managed to trace my father's passport dated the 30s and, on close inspection, saw the name Insoll as a signature for a visa. My father, who was in Dachau, was released from concentration camp only if he left the country or went to Vienna. With the help of my mother he obtained a visa to come to Britain.

It was through the help of Insoll, and no doubt many who worked in the British embassy day and night at risk to themselves, that my father's life was saved. My husband managed to trace Insoll's son and we invited him and his wife to our house for lunch. It was only then that I could thank him in my father's name for rescuing him from certain death. I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity.

*Ruth Schwiening,
Market Bosworth, Warwickshire*

AJR VOLUNTEER SERVICE FOR PC USERS

Sir – For the past year I have greatly benefited from the above service, which I can highly recommend to all members who use a personal computer but do not claim to be 100 per cent PC-literate.

I get regular visits from a volunteer, who not only solves the more complicated issues that arise but also translates into plain English the constantly changing icons.

I can receive and send e-mails, I can send letters on my WP, and I can skype – but after that my PC skills become rather patchy.

My very pleasant volunteer shows great patience and has the ability to motivate me to extend my PC skills. My thanks to her and the AJR.

Peter Wayne (aged 95), London W14

If you would like to find out more about the Computer Help Programme, please contact Claude on 020 8385 3096 or at claud@ajr.org.uk (Ed.).

'DEPLORABLE STATE' OF WEISSENSEE CEMETERY

Sir – Gordon Spencer (March) bemoans the deplorable overgrown state of the Weissensee Cemetery in Berlin but doesn't say whether or not he has relatives buried there.

I recently visited Vienna, where both my grandfather (died 1922) and great-grandfather (died 1902) are buried in the Jewish section of the Zentralfriedhof. The cemetery paths are indeed well maintained but inside every area block mother nature has overtaken matters so that whilst I could just about make out my ancestor's grave, the ones next to it were as an example totally overgrown with ivy.

I also discovered by chance that my great-grandfather had sisters who died as small children buried in the closed (since 1875) Währinger cemetery. I went to the Jewish community offices in the main synagogue to find out how to visit but gave up when I was told that the cemetery was indeed overgrown and the area they were buried in was about as far from the entrance as one could get – particularly whereas the records show grave numbers, they didn't have the row number. Had I succeeded I am sure I would have been the first family visitor for over 100 years to have been able to recite *Kaddish* at the graveside.

I thought long and hard about all of this and my own responsibilities for family graves, but never for one moment worried, as Mr Spencer does, about whether the poor state of upkeep in areas of burial from before the Second World War 'gives a very bad impression to the non-Jewish world'. Whatever I could do to clear up a small area of a family grave would soon be overtaken by nature's forces.

If Mr Spencer wants to start a clean-up campaign he might begin with the closed

old Jewish cemeteries in London and elsewhere in the UK. I know that in Austria some of the very old Jewish cemeteries in Burgenland have been cleaned up but I am sure it is all a question of lack of resources for small-size local Jewish communities which are left with the huge responsibility of the legacy of their past glories of Jewish graves.

Peter Simpson, Jerusalem

Sir – It is interesting how different perspectives can be. I returned several weeks ago from Berlin and visited Weissensee. Mr Spencer, in his letter, reported that the state of the cemetery was deplorable. I found it to be exactly the opposite. The staff at the desk were helpful and immediately found my grandmother's grave, providing me with a map marking its site.

The Holocaust memorial was in good condition. Those graves which were in a state of disrepair were being refurbished by the government and, in general, practically all graves were in a good condition. Many gardeners were cleaning up the cemetery, brushing up the leaves and keeping the paths tidy.

Richard Wolfe, London NW1

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRAENKELUFER SYNAGOGUE

Sir – The Fraenkelufer Synagogue in Kreuzberg, Berlin, was founded as a 2,000-seat modern-orthodox synagogue in 1916. Like many other Jewish buildings, it was vandalised in the pogroms of 1938 and the main building was destroyed by Allied bombing. Soon after the Holocaust, it was partially rebuilt and re-consecrated and is today a centre of Jewish life in south-east Berlin.

As part of our plans to celebrate 100 years of Fraenkelufer's existence, and together with the Jewish Museum of Berlin, we are putting together a small historical exhibition. We are therefore searching for objects, documents, photographs, film and sound recordings, as well anything else connected to the Fraenkelufer Synagogue. Some of these will be added to the Museum's collection.

Should you have anything that could be of interest for this exhibition, please contact the Museum on +49 3025993382 or at zeitgeschichte@jmbberlin.de

Additionally, the costs of the celebrations are borne by a small group of members and volunteers. If you wish to support the jubilee celebrations, please write to info@fraenkelufer.de

Josh Weiner,

Friends of Fraenkelufer e.V, Berlin

FOSTER FAMILIES

Sir – As part of my research degree, I am keen to hear from anyone who still keeps in contact with members of the foster family who looked after a Kindertransportee just before and during the war. I know there are lots of examples of *Kinder* (or the next

continued on page 16 ➔

ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

By 1510 he was dead from the Plague at the age of 33. Nonetheless, despite his tragic short life, **Giorgio Barbarelli da Castelfranco** – otherwise known as **Giorgione** – had a mysterious power over his contemporaries and those who followed. However, as the **Royal**



Giorgione *Portrait of a Young Man*
c. 1497-99

Academy's exhibition **In the Age of Giorgione** (until 5 June 2016) indicates, few of his works survive and many belie attribution.

So who was this enigmatic Giorgione? He hailed from Venice, which produced some of the finest artists of the Italian Renaissance and was a magnet for art-hoppers everywhere. At a time when the all-powerful Catholic Church rejected landscape painting as the work of the devil – or at least representing man's animal nature – Giorgione painted what is believed to be the first landscape in Western art history. He had to introduce human figures into the almost ethereal *Il Tramonto* (*The Sunset*), which existed unnamed for over 400 years, and yet the playful and miniscule two men and a man riding a white horse to the right are barely noticeable; instead, we look at the menacing bush in the left-hand corner, the tender sapling just above the figures, and the mountains, the sea and a few sketchy houses in the middle distance.

The RA exhibition presents other works, by **Titian, Bellini, Campagnola** and **Cariani**. Titian is considered the heir to Giorgione's talents, later superseding him. The intensity of colour, the play of light and shade, came first from Giorgione's artistic arsenal, possibly influenced by Leonardo. The strangely asymmetrical composition of Titian's *Christ and the Adulteress* and the lush attention to fabric detail of his *Jacopo Pesaro Being Presented by Pope Alexander VI to Saint Peter* defy the awkward pose of the Pope and both may have lost intensity by over-restoration. Despite the florid painterly devices of the Italian Renaissance, some works look strangely flat and lacking in warmth, exemplified by Bellini's rather static *Virgin and Child*.

Which brings us back to the masterful young Giorgione. His *Portrait of a Young Man and His Servant* shows the man clutching an orange. The times were full of symbolism and the orange resting in the aristocrat's left hand, while his right hand clutches his face, is as vivid as the sigh of the lovelorn – the likely metaphor of this painting. It is an effete, romantic face but the coarser and worried features of the servant describe the narrative. Another painting attributed to Giorgione, *Portrait of a Young Man*, which some have taken to be his self-portrait, shows how this artist moved the art of portraiture into another dimension, in the subtlety of skin colour and texture, depth of expression, and the way in which the subject engages with the viewer, unlike similar contemporary portraits where the subject stares into the middle distance.

But the *pièce de résistance* shows the depth with which Giorgione handles old age. *La Vecchia* (*The Old Woman*) is full of metaphor and a contrast to the Venetian ideal of feminine beauty. Here a woman tentatively leans over a parapet; the hand pointing to her breast contains a curling letter with the words *col tempo* (with time); and her wispy hair peeps out of a cap. The woman is in plain peasant dress but her face shows her riches – all the wisdom and fears gathered into a long life.

Annely Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street
(off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578
Fax: 020 7491 2139

CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Not light reading

VERKLEMPPT

by Peter Sichrovsky

Los Angeles: DoppelHouse Press, 2016,
176 pp. hardback, \$19.95

The rather unusual title of this book is a Yiddish word, which is also used in German, is defined as 'choked with emotion', and refers here to at least one of the characters in each of the short stories in the book.

The author, Peter Sichrovsky, is also an unusual as well as a complex character. With a Jewish background and active in promoting the importance of preserving the memory of the Holocaust, he yet joined the extreme right-wing Austrian Freedom Party and even temporarily represented it as an MEP in the European Parliament. When, after a short time of relative moderation, the party again swung to extremism, he left it and for the last two years of his term as an MEP sat as an Independent. As well as being a journalist he is the author of a wide range of books, with topics ranging from the pharmaceutical trade, economics, espionage and travel to the crimes of Nazi Germany. One of his most relevant books in this context covers the lives of young Jews in present-day Germany and Austria (*Strangers in Their Own Land: Young Jews in Germany and Austria Today*) and he has also written about some of the German post-war generation (*Born Guilty: Children of Nazi Families*).

Verklemppt consists of 11 separate short stories, which the author describes as fiction but based on fact and are often related to experiences of people he has interviewed. It was originally published in 1998, in German, with the subtitle *Jewish Love Stories*.

None of the action takes place during the Holocaust but each story is concerned with the Holocaust's direct or indirect effect on survivors or subsequent generations. The locations of the stories range from Austria to Tel Aviv and Berlin as well as undefined countries and vary from dark humour to drama and episodes of near pornography.

One of the most interesting tales is that of a survivor who is celebrating his 70th birthday and is desperately hoping that as a present, his daughter will announce her engagement so he can be assured that despite all that has happened the family line will continue. He even employs a lady *shadchan* to find a suitable match for her. His hopes are dashed when nothing happens during his birthday party.



continued on page 10 ➔

Afterwards he goes to see his daughter and the *schadchan* and, after an initial shock, there is a happy ending but in an entirely unexpected and bizarre way!

A very different story is that of a taxi driver who tells his passenger (possibly the author himself) that during the war he was an ardent Nazi but became disillusioned and allowed himself to be captured by the Russians. While a POW he meets a Jewish woman for the first time. She has lost all her family and expresses her hatred to the first German she has seen other than as a conqueror. As a result of her violence towards him he loses an eye. Nonetheless, as they discover each other's history, a strong but platonic relationship develops between them. Several years after the war the taxi driver even travels to Kiev to try to find her.

It is difficult to summarise this book: although it consists of short stories, it is not light reading. The stories have a depth which is not always apparent at first reading and it is likely that this volume, like some of Peter Sichrovsky's previous ones, will be widely acclaimed. It is not certain, however, that all readers will necessarily enjoy it.

George Vulkan

Well written story of a Kindertransportee

ESCAPING HITLER: A JEWISH BOY'S QUEST FOR FREEDOM AND HIS FUTURE

by Phyllida Scrivens

Pen and Sword Books Ltd, 2016, 201pp. hardcover, ISBN 978-1-47384-346-4, £25.00

This is yet another, though very interesting, story of a young refugee from Germany who came to this country on a Kindertransport. The author took some four years to gather the material for this book. But it is obvious that she also used her imagination: direct speech is frequently quoted and nobody can remember the exact words used in conversations which took place 70 or 80 years ago! The book is full of detailed descriptions, which probably were not given by the people she spoke to.

Günter Stern was born in 1924 in Nickenich near Koblenz. His father Alfred was a cattle dealer; his mother Ida strictly observed the Jewish religion but Alfred was less inclined to do so and Günter followed in his footsteps. He went to the village school, where he was the only Jewish child. When the Nazis came to power Günter was only eight and in the rural parts of the Rhineland anti-Semitism was slow to take hold. Kristallnacht made him realise that his family belonged to a persecuted minority. His father was convinced that his military service in the First World War would ensure his safety – he had been wounded four times and

awarded the Iron Cross – but he was sent to Dachau concentration camp. After six weeks he was released, having promised he would emigrate with his family. But arranging the family's emigration proved extremely difficult: too many Jewish families were in the same position, with no country opening its doors to them. Before long the Sterns heard that the British government had given permission for children to come to England on a so-called Kindertransport.

In July 1939 Günter said goodbye to his parents at Cologne station. Having arrived in London, he was met by his cousin, who took him to his foster family in Birmingham, the Frees. The couple realised Günter was bright enough to benefit from higher education and sent him to the local grammar school. When the school was evacuated to Gloucestershire he went there too and lived with the Allsops. The head of that family was a Labour Party member and trade unionist whose influence caused the young man to become very interested in politics. He passed the School Certificate exam with flying colours only two years after he had arrived in England, not knowing a word of English. He wanted to stay on in the sixth form and prepare himself for reading chemistry at university.

Günter had kept in touch with his parents in Germany by forwarding letters through the Red Cross but they were restricted to one communication every three months. In February 1942 he received an unusually brief letter from his parents saying they were going to Poland to 'resettle' there but didn't know their new address yet. It was the last letter he received from them.

In May 1944 Günter postponed the place Birmingham University had offered him and enlisted in the army. Allocated to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment as an infantry private, he was told to change his name in case of capture by the Germans. He chose to call himself 'Stirling' and his friends replaced the German-sounding Günter with Joe. Having injured a foot, he was transferred to the Royal Army Ordnance Corps, where he trained as an Ammunition Examiner. After the war, having become friendly with Jean, an ATS woman in his unit, Joe proposed marriage and she accepted. As he had to serve another two years before his demobilisation and the Army Education Corps was looking for additional personnel, he applied for a transfer and was accepted, involving a promotion to Sergeant followed by promotion to Warrant Officer.

Joe and Jean married in May 1946. In September 1947 he became a naturalised

British subject and was demobilised a month later.

He joined the local Labour Party. In 1950 a vacancy for a full-time party secretary-agent occurred and Joe's application was successful. His new job also involved acting as secretary to the Trades Council. In 1954 there was a by-election in Harwich and Joe was told to help there. The Labour candidate, an Oxford graduate named Shirley Catlin (later known as Shirley Williams), was not elected. Some 62 years later she wrote the foreword of this book.

When after 1955 British people began taking holidays on the Continent, it was suggested that, with his knowledge of German, Joe might lead a group there. The trip was a great success. Joe started up a travel agent's business: 'package holidays' were fast developing and he took full advantage of this 'modern' way of taking holidays. He had an excellent business sense and soon needed to rent a second shop, and later a third one, in Great Yarmouth to cope with the increasing number of customers.

In October 1958 a Norwich Council member resigned and Joe was put forward as a candidate. He was elected and became chairman of several committees.

A Lions Club was established in Norwich, receiving its charter in 1960. These clubs donate funds to deserving causes but members also do local community work. Joe joined in 1962 and became a very active Lion, being elected President of Norwich Lions Club in 1966. In 1971 he was elected District Governor,

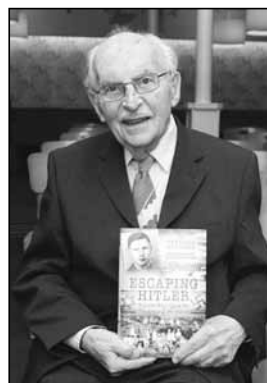
having to look after 42 clubs, visiting them all during his tenure of one year. In 1975 he was made Sheriff of Norwich.

The author relates developments in Joe's company (now Stirling Travel Ltd), its sale and change of name, his family (by now also involved in the running of the business), his friends, and finally his retirement. Jane died in 2002 and, in the same year, in his late seventies, Joe learned where and when his parents had died: in 1942 in Sobibor. In 2011 *Stolpersteine* were placed outside their last flat and Joe was invited to witness the ceremony.

Joe celebrated his 90th birthday in 2014 in great style, with the Mayor and Sheriff of Norwich attending. His non-involvement in Jewish affairs is evident from his joining the AJR only in 2012 – he had always thought one had to be religious to become a member.

The book contains many photographs, a comprehensive index, and a bibliography. It is very well written and well worth reading.

Fritz Lustig



SPF Connect: Is it for you?

Do you want to send and receive emails? Browse the Internet? Make video calls to family and friends anywhere in the world? Access culture and events without having to leave your home?

Six Point Foundation's SPF Connect scheme enables Holocaust survivors and refugees to access the benefits of modern technology. It is designed for those who are not online and find using computers tricky.

Those who take part sign up as an SPF Connect Member and receive the following package, free of charge: an easy-to-use touch-screen desktop computer; installation and training from the very friendly team at IT company Natpoint; wireless internet connection for those without broadband; helpline support; and access to a range of entertainment such as music and theatre and live Jewish cultural events streamed online.

At the time of writing, 40 SPF Connect systems have been installed in survivors' and refugees' homes throughout the UK and there is capacity to install over



Vera Kovacs, who has never previously used a computer or keyboard, listens to Chopin from her 'Composed Music' player

ten times this number. One AJR member has reconnected with classmates from Germany via email. Another is thrilled to be able to read German newspapers every morning. Another has been able to bring four generations into his living room via video call: his daughter in the UK and his granddaughter and infant great-grandchild in Israel. Another says that even though she has had to call for help once or twice, she is delighted with her machine and joked 'This old dinosaur just might manage this!'

Unlike other grants from Six Point Foundation, SPF Connect is available to

all UK survivors and refugees, regardless of their financial situation, who would like to get online.

If you, or someone you know, would like to become an SPF Connect Member, please speak to your contact in the social services, volunteer or outreach teams at the AJR or call Six Point Foundation on 020 3372 8881.

Sandra Jacobs
SPF at Natpoint

ARTS AND EVENTS MAY DIARY

Wed 4 At Pinner Synagogue: Yom Hashoah Evening. Keynote speaker Eva Mendelsson
The focus of this year's commemoration will be on a Holocaust childhood, the destruction of a family and the involvement and help of OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants), a French-Jewish humanitarian organisation tasked with rescuing children. 8.00-10.00 pm

Wed 4 'Yom HaShoah Concert Commemoration: Degenerate Music'
Devised by Peter Braithwaite baritone, Nigel Foster piano, introduction by Dr Malcolm Miller. At JW3, 7.30 pm

Thur 5 'From Hitler to Hi-De-Hi: Winter 1938'
Mike Levy tells the story of the first Jewish refugee children at a freezing cold holiday camp near Harwich. At JW3, 3 pm. In partnership with the AJR

Wed 11 Michael Smith: 'Frank Foley: Spy and Rescuer of Jews'
At JW3, 2.00 pm

Thur 19 The House by the Lake: Thomas Harding
in conversation with Tom Holland At JW3, 8.00 pm

To 15 June 'Dilemmas, Choices, Responses: Britain and the Holocaust'
Exhibition at the Wiener Library, tel 020 7636 7247

JW3 tel 020 7433 8988 info@jw3.org.uk

EU REFERENDUM

IN? OUT?

Shake it all about!

Monday 6 June 2016
at 12.00 pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue,
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune,
London NW11 7EN

Guest speakers
Mike Freer MP
Sir Bernard Zissman

A sandwich lunch with tea and coffee will be served after the debate £7.00 per person payable on the door

Booking is essential
Please contact Susan Harrod
on 020 8385 3070 or at
susan@ajr.org.uk
or email esther@ajr.org.uk

PROPOSED TRIP TO BETH SHALOM FROM NEWCASTLE & SURROUNDING AREAS

Sunday 10 July 2016

We are arranging a trip to Beth Shalom, The National Holocaust Centre, in Newark near Nottingham.

The AJR will arrange a return coach and lunch at Beth Shalom, including entrance, at a cost of £13.00 per person.

If you are interested
please contact Agnes Isaacs at
agnes@ajr.org.uk
or on 07908 156 361

Link to British Academy lecture

Anthony Grenville's lecture at the British Academy on 10 November 2015 was filmed and can now be accessed via a link on the AJR website or by following the link

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTJ17sZJveQPwoSJXxprvmaLzjHkjr9f

The lecture set out the history of relations between the AJR, the British Academy and the Jewish refugee academics in the UK, and concluded with a commemoration of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Call for papers

The Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies is holding a conference on 'Emigration from Nazi-Occupied Europe to British Dominions, Colonies and Overseas Territories after 1933' on 13-15 September 2017 at Senate House, University of London.

Anyone interested in offering a paper should contact Anthony Grenville at tony@ajr.org.uk with an abstract (up to 300 words) and a brief c.v.



AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB

Please join us at our new Card and Games Club
on **Wednesday 4 May at 1.00 pm**

at North Western Reform Synagogue,
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

Card games including Bridge, Backgammon, Scrabble – you decide.
Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient.

A sandwich lunch with tea, coffee and Danish pastries will be served on arrival.

£7.00 per person

Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.
Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email susan@ajr.org.uk





HARROGATE/YORK Laughter and Fellowship

Arek began by relating his most recent visit to Auschwitz with 230+ members of the synagogue in Leeds. We then discussed how we felt about being in or out of Europe with most of us definitely feeling 'European' as well as English. Inge got us onto how we might achieve peace in our lifetime, and we then planned outings for spring and summer. Despite the grim Brussels outrages and talk of Auschwitz, there was much laughter and fellowship among us.

Edith Jayne

EALING Hungarian Childhood

Andrew Roth spoke about his childhood in the Hungarian village of Mezocsat at the end of the war. He gave us insight into the coming of the Communist era and the aftermath of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising, which led to his family moving to the UK, where, with great resolve, they re-established themselves.

Lesley Sommer

GLASGOW BOOK CLUB Everyone's Favourite Book

We met at Eva's house, the topic being everyone's favourite book. We had a lively discussion on a variety of novels from historical to comical, rounded off by a delicious afternoon tea. We were delighted to welcome new member Carol. Our next book: the first novel by TV presenter Kirsty Wark.

Anthea Berg

ILFORD A Good Laugh – Humour in Literature

Nick Dobson, ably assisted by Vincent, trawled through English literature to show us the humour lurking within. He also showed us photos of the writers mentioned, some never seen before, so that was an additional bonus. A very pleasant morning for us all.

Meta Roseneil

PINNER From Brick Lane to Birmingham via Buckingham Palace

We were honoured to have Sir Bernard Zissman trace quite casually the various stages of his illustrious career in voluntary and public organisations that included the office of Mayor of Birmingham. Sir Bernard remained mindful of his humble

beginnings in Brick Lane and his debt to his hardworking grandfather, a refugee from East European pogroms.

Walter Weg

KT LUNCHES

Hilary Hodzman – Her Life as an Actress

Hilary Hodzman told us that her parents, when both were aged 15, had come over separately from Germany on the Kindertransport and had met at the Jewish Refugee Club in Glasgow. They married in 1945 and became kosher caterers.

Born in Glasgow in 1953, Hilary had always wanted to be an actress. Aged 16, she joined the Royal Scottish Academy, went to university, then worked for M&S for 30 years. In 2004 she gained an advanced acting diploma at the City Lit and in 2006 obtained an agent. She has worked for Secret Cinema, which combines film screenings in purpose-built sets with notable productions such as *The Third Man*, and has appeared in plays, films and TV productions.

David Lang

HGS Memories of the Yiddish Theatre

Singer, choirmaster and actress Adela Gottlieb-Lassman gave us a most interesting account of her childhood memories and involvement in the Yiddish Theatre. She interspersed her delightful presentation with songs and jokes. A most enjoyable couple of hours.

Eva Stellman

DIDSBURY CF Family Histories

Members enjoyed a light sandwich lunch whilst discussing their family histories. It was a pleasure to welcome newcomer Ellyn to our group and I very much hope she will continue to attend our meetings.

Wendy Bott

MARLOW CF Refugees and Migrants

Meeting at the home of Alan Kaye, the main topic of conversation was the current refugee crisis. As Jews, we sympathise with the Syrian families and lone children who have fled the indescribable horror of the situation in their homeland. We feel less sympathetic, however, to the young men in their twenties and thirties, carrying mobile phones and relatively well dressed, among the refugees. We guess that these are mainly 'economic' migrants and that priority should be afforded the families with children and children travelling alone.

Dennis Dell

MANCHESTER Entertaining and Uplifting Afternoon

We were treated by Alex Klein to the rare opportunity of seeing some of

the virtuoso cantors on film. Alex's talk demonstrated his amazing wealth of knowledge and we had a most entertaining and uplifting afternoon.

Thomas Einstein

NORFOLK Walking through Germany

Phyllida Scrivens, author of the recently published biography of our member Joe Stirling, told us about his walking through Germany and into Holland as a very young boy in the hope of ending up in England. Eventually he had to return home to start on his journey to these shores via the Kindertransport. Phyllida also told us about the people he met here who helped him towards a successful life.

Frank Bright

EDINBURGH Afternoon of Delights

Our meeting, generously hosted by Maria and David Chamberlain – who also mesmerised us with a slides presentation of their botanic themed trips to the Far East – was made especially enjoyable by a record number of us attending, including first-timers Francesca and Ulrich, and by meeting Jim Sutherland, our new AJR Social Worker. Thank you AJR and our hosts for an afternoon of delights.

Jonathan Kish

AJR Card and Games Club

We gathered at Alyth for the inaugural meeting of the AJR Card and Games Club. Following a lovely sandwich lunch, including delicious Rinkoff Danish pastries, we sat at the appropriate tables for the games of our choice: Bridge, Rummikub and Scrabble. Next time we will also have Backgammon. Our thanks to the AJR staff, who made this all possible and joined in the games with us.

David Lang

RADLETT Justice of the Peace – Not Jewish Princess

Susan Shaw JP has been a magistrate for 25 years but the rest of us knew little about this important branch of the British judiciary: it was salutary to learn something about the history, role and making of magistrates. Susan spiced her talk with a number of 'case histories', which led to a very lively discussion.

Fritz Starer

IMPERIAL CAFÉ A Flying Start

An extremely interesting and pleasant afternoon spent visiting the RAF Museum in Hendon. In among the aircraft we had our very own pilot in the shape of Kurt Taussig, the only Czech-Jewish commissioned officer to become a Spitfire pilot in the RAF. Kurt arrived in the UK as a 'Winton child' and it was an honour to be in his company on this day.

Esther Rinkoff

WESSEX 'The First Lady of British Jewry'

Lady Judith Montefiore (1784-1862), David Barnett told us, has been described as 'the first lady of British Jewry'. She was unusually well educated in languages, music and the domestic arts and wrote the first Jewish cookery book – a sort of Jewish Mrs Beeton. After her marriage to the wealthy and influential Sir Moses Montefiore, she threw herself into his many philanthropic enterprises and travelled extensively with him to countries including Russia and the Holy Land.

Harry Grenville

BATH/BRISTOL In Memory of Sir Nicholas

Barbara Winton gave a wonderful talk about her father. She was particularly proud to show everyone the Post Office stamps recently issued in his name. We had a particularly large attendance as details of the meeting had been circulated throughout the Bristol community.

Kathryn Prevezer

ST ALBANS DELIGHTS

How wonderful to spend an early spring day in St Albans exploring its beautiful cathedral. Our guide led us on a most fascinating tour and we learned about St Alban's martyrdom, the history of the building and renovation plans. Having enjoyed lunch at Café Rouge's colourful art deco building, we visited the synagogue for a talk and to admire its celebrated David Hillman stained glass windows.

Janet Weston

BRIGHTON AND HOVE 'SARID' Brexit: For and Against

We held a lively debate on 'Brexit'. We also had a second discussion on personal experiences of 'the most enjoyable decade' and the meeting ended with comments on the forthcoming elections for the mayor of London.

Ceska Abrahams

PRESTWICH CF Purim Hamentashen and Tea

A most interesting discussion about the pros and cons of religion followed by Purim *hamentashen* and tea, to round off a most enjoyable meeting at the home of Louise Elliot.

Wendy Bott

BOOK CLUB A Very French Romance

This month's book was Antoine Laurain's *The Red Notebook*, translated from French, a charming and easy read about the quest of a Parisian bookseller for a mystery woman whose lost handbag he finds in the street. We then moved on to talk about the more sombre topic of the Brussels attacks and the position of immigrants in Western societies, comparing our

MAY GROUP EVENTS

Ealing	3 May	Susan Shaw JP: 'Justice of the Peace – Not Jewish Princess'
Card and Games Club	4 May	Lunch and Games
Ilford	4 May	Elaine Wein: 'Highlights of the City of London'
Yom Hashoah Scottish Event	4 May	Speaker: Ben Helfgott
Glasgow Book Club	5 May	Social
Hull	8 May	Fish & Chips Lunch
Cardiff	9 May	'Churchill's German Army'
HGS	9 May	Social Get-Together
Essex (Westcliff)	10 May	Moirá Dare-Edwards, Christian Israel Representative for Essex
Didsbury CF	11 May	Social Get-together
KT LUNCHES	11 May	Dame Esther Rantzen
Bradford	12 May	Lunch at Saltire Mills
Pinner	12 May	Henry and Dorothy Obstfeld: 'Jewish Ethiopia'
Sheffield	15 May	Mike Lewis – his mother's story
Brighton	16 May	Eva Clarke: 'Born Survivor' – her life story
Edgware	17 May	tba
Kingston and Surrey	17 May	Lunch at home of Susan Zisman
Liverpool	17 May	Guest speaker: HH David Harris QC
Book Club	18 May	Social Discussion
Radlett	18 May	Tim Pike, Bank of England: 'Economy Update'
Wembley	18 May	(one week earlier) Kathryn Prevezer: 'Highlights of Trips to Istanbul, the USA and Barcelona'
Imperial Café	19 May	Lunchtime Social Get-together
North London	19 May	(one week earlier) Tony Jacobs: 'A Scribal Journey'
North West London	31 May	Lesley Urbach: 'Sir Isaac Shoenberg'

members' own experiences of being immigrants.

Eva Stelman

NORTH WEST LONDON 'The MP for Refugees'

Dr Susan Cohen spoke to us about the life of the humanitarian activist Eleanor Rathbone (1872-1946). One of only 14 women MPs, she became known as 'The MP for Refugees', having set up the Parliamentary Committee for Refugees in 1938 and in 1939 travelling to Prague, where she met Sir Nicholas Winton. From 1918 onwards she argued for a system of family allowances to be paid directly to mothers. Her lasting legacy came in 1945 when she saw the Family Allowances Act passed into law.

David Lang

continued overleaf ➡

New website for International Tracing Service

The International Tracing Service (ITS), an archival and documentation centre on Nazi persecution and Holocaust survivors situated in Bad Arolsen, Germany, has launched a new website considerably simplifying access to the information it contains.

The new website is

www.its-arolsen.org/en/

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Eva Stelman
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator
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Child Survivors' Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

INSIDE THE AJR
cont. from p.13

NORTH LONDON An Indomitable Victorian Woman

Lady Judith Montefiore was a truly indomitable Victorian woman. Born into great wealth, she acquired even more after her marriage to Moses. She was exceptionally well educated and fluent in many languages. She and her husband travelled extensively, setting up and contributing to many charitable causes. We are truly indebted to David Barnett for his excellent account.

Hanne R. Freedman

LEEDS CF Gerald's Choice

At Donisthorpe Hall Leeds member Gerald Jackson gave a presentation of some of his favourite music, including Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven ... and a most surprising but entertaining finale with Flanagan and Allen! The afternoon continued with a sumptuous tea courtesy of Donisthorpe Hall.

Wendy Bott

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Fish and Chips
Dessert

Second Stop

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or at susan@ajr.org.uk
or email esther@ajr.org.uk



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www.fishburnbooks.com

Jonathan Fishburn

buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

**Contact Jonathan on
020 8455 9139
or 07813 803 889
for more information**

OBITUARIES

Susanne Graham, born Hamburg 18 February 1928, died Stevenage 18 January 2016

Susanne (Susie) Graham (née Burghardt), much loved Mum to Tony and Hazel and adored Grandma of Sophie, Emily, Oliver and Jack, died on Monday 18 January aged 87. Her full life and amazing accomplishments were celebrated on Monday 8 February.

Susanne came to the UK as a child with her younger brother Hans on the Kindertransport from Hamburg, leaving behind her family home and memories of Kristallnacht. Although not from a religious family, she remembered seeing the synagogue on fire on her way home from school. The experiences of her childhood stayed with her and she maintained a lifelong empathy with refugees, particularly children, and always opposed war, worried about the impact on the lives of people caught up in conflict.

She was modest about her own achievements – rarely talking about how she won a scholarship to, and was head girl at, the girls' grammar school in Grantham (her name sits alongside a more well-known 'grocer's daughter' from Grantham on the school's roll call of head girls). She rarely spoke about how she went back to Germany after the war to help people, being involved in the Allied air drops, nor how she spent time in India, where she met a lifelong friend in Monica. She also did not talk about her time as Vice President of the Students' Union at Nottingham University, where she completed her social work diploma. We only

recently found out that whilst a student she travelled around Europe on her own after her planned companion dropped out through fear of not having enough money. She spent time sleeping outdoors in Greece (around the Parthenon) and reported no qualms at having done this!

Social work was a job she loved and in which typically she spent a lot of time and energy trying to help those less fortunate than herself. She worked with young and old, drove miles across the county and the country if necessary, and was even attacked by a dog not long before she retired. She always supported the 'underdog' and was unfailingly generous with her time.

Susanne owned a succession of what would now be called classic cars – a Morris Minor Traveller, a Triumph Herald and her beloved MGB, which she kept until she was in her mid-70s. While she was still fit and well she made the most of her spare time in a range of creative and campaigning activities. Over many years she renovated and created her garden, belonged to a gardening club, and worked with clay and made beautiful pots and vases in her own kiln – she admired art and enjoyed regular trips to the Royal Academy.

She supported CND and briefly joined the



demonstrations at Greenham Common. She went on adventurous holidays, including a winter trip to Antarctica – from which she returned black and blue having been tossed out of her bunk by rough seas. She wrote letters for Amnesty, sold Christmas cards for Save the Children, and volunteered at the local hospice. In 2010 she made a return trip to Hamburg at the invitation of the Hamburg city government and was able to show her family just how 'posh' her childhood home had been!

In her late 60s Susanne advertised in the *Observer's* singles column for 'relaxed companionship' but had to be persuaded not to describe herself as 'non-domesticated' – what she meant was that she disliked cooking. As a result, she enjoyed two relationships – not simultaneously – but she had a good number of offers!

Should anyone wish to make a donation in her memory the family has chosen the Lister Hospital, Stevenage Forget Me Not Appeal online at www.justgiving.com/forget-me-not-lister. Please write 'In memory of Susanne Graham' so that donations can be directed to the ward where Mum's dignity and wellbeing were keenly looked after by all the staff.

Hazel Turvey

Sigmund Laufer, born Hagen, Germany, 10 July 1923, died London 3 November 2015

My uncle, Sigmund Laufer, was born in Hagen, Germany, to Deborah and Simcha Laufer. He had an elder sister, Rosi, and a younger sister, my mother Selma. On 28 October 1938 my uncle, along with his family, were deported from Germany to Poland based on the



fact that my grandparents were born in Poland and were thus not considered German citizens. My aunt left for what was then Palestine. My uncle, who was then 15, and my mother, who was nine, were sent to an orphanage in Otwock, near Warsaw, to await a boat to England via the Kindertransport. My grandparents moved further into Poland to stay with my grandfather's sister, Pearl Hanfling, in Przemysl. They were able to keep in touch with their children for several years. However, at one point the letters stopped coming. My grandparents' ultimate fate is unknown to this day.

My uncle was fortunate to board the *Warszawa* in July 1939. The *Warszawa* was a cruise ship that made four trips to Poland to rescue Jewish children and take them to England. The last trip, in August 1939, included my mother. Several days after my mother landed in England the Germans invaded Poland

and the Second World War had officially started. The *Warszawa* was unable to rescue any further Jewish children from Poland.

My uncle and my mother did not see each other while in England during the war. My uncle was declared an 'enemy alien' due to his German nationality and sent

to the Isle of Man. From there he was sent to a detention centre in Sherbrooke, Canada. In a letter he wrote from there he spoke about the books he had on his bookshelf, including works by Plato, Descartes, Spinoza and Kant and a full set of Shakespeare.

After the war my uncle eventually moved back to England and worked as a translator for Unilever. His passions were music, art, culture and reading. He had friends all around the world who shared these passions with him. Until several weeks before his passing, he was still able to attend concerts and spend time in museums.

His death severs the last ties to a world that no longer exists, to grandparents I never had the opportunity to know, and to a life I can only imagine. He is survived by a nephew, nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces.

Deborah M. Rosenberg

Henny Newman, born Rozan, Poland, 5 August 1922, died Manchester 19 February 2016



Henny Newman was born on 5 August 1922 in Rozan, Poland. She had four sisters: Chana, Sara, Rachel and Gittel. Her mother Chava and two sisters were killed by the Nazis. Mum, her father Abraham and Chana were sent to work in a slave labour camp. They were led into the forest by the partisans in Belarus, hiding there from the Nazis. Chana did not survive after the war and so my grandfather and my mum were the only survivors of the Frajman family. Mum met my dad Fishel in Förenwald, where they married.

Henny came to Manchester and my father followed with my grandfather. There they made a new life and a future for their children.

My mum was such a special person. Sadly she passed away on 19 February. My brother and I will miss her so much. A brave lady who died with dignity.

Andrea Newman



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Hoppe, hoppe, Reiter

Now that we are well and truly entrenched in the digital age it comes as no surprise to find that this has been adopted and adapted to its own ends by the community of Jews originally from German-speaking lands, otherwise known as *Yekkes*.

Ever since I joined Facebook some time ago I have been bombarded by homilies about how best to conduct my life, by pictures of kittens, puppies and babies, and occasionally also by edifying information about world developments, ideas, and, of course, jokes. I do my best to keep up with this flood of data but am starting to feel that I am increasingly being inundated with indigestible material.

There are, however, one or two points of light in the barrage, among them two groups intended for Jews originally from German-speaking countries. The first such group, entitled 'Hoppe, hoppe, Reiter', is based in Israel and tends to display family photos and accounts of the lives and times of the members of the group from before the war. And, of course, their descendants. One by-product of this virtual group has been the establishment of physical groups that meet in various places in Israel. I belong to the one here in Jerusalem, which meets

every two weeks to talk about a variety of subjects, but always only in German. The group meets in the offices of the Association of Jews from Central Europe and is led by the ever-energetic Ilana Alroy-Brosh, who is considerably younger than most of the members. These are people (mainly women) who were born in Israel or abroad to German-speaking parents, heard and spoke German at home as children, but now no longer have anyone with whom to converse in German.

I personally do not fit into that category because in wartime England it was not considered appropriate to speak in German and so I grew up hearing English spoken at home. Luckily, both of my parents spoke English well and, although in my childhood I was aware of their foreign accents, I had no desire to speak any other language and did not even take up the option of learning German at school. It was only much later in my life, in the last 15 years or so, that I have been studying German in order to be able to read the documents and correspondence my parents brought out of Germany with them in 1938 as well as other material. My German isn't as native as that of the other members of the group but I manage to understand what's going on and even add my little bit to the conversation from time to time.

In the group of German speakers we generally decide on a topic for discussion at the next meeting and are sometimes asked to prepare suitable material to illustrate our contribution. When the topic was children's books we were treated to original editions of *Struwwelpeter* and I even found myself joining in when everyone sang *Hänschen klein*, though I have no idea where or when I learned it. And no, we did not play *Hoppe, hoppe, Reiter* with one another! At another meeting we were asked to talk about our childhood hobbies and were treated to impressive, themed collections of stamps, paper serviettes, transfers, and even a couple of professional-looking puppets made entirely by one of the participants. One participant is an expert *chocolatière* so you can imagine how we delighted in what she had brought along.

The other Facebook group is run by another energetic lady, this time in America. The group, known as JEWS – Jews Engaging Worldwide in Social Networking – is run by Vera Meyer, who hails from Boston, I believe. The group posts items of interest to the *Yekke* community as well as potted biographies of individuals and families. As is the case with the *Hoppe, hoppe, Reiter* group, the posts are in a variety of languages – mainly English and German but also Hebrew and even occasionally Spanish, French or Italian. New members are welcomed and asked to send a small autobiography and account of their family. In this way people who are scattered all over the world are given a sense of community and are able to get in touch with their roots.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *cont. from p.8*

generation) staying in touch with foster brothers and sisters. If this is the case, I would be grateful if you could contact me.

Mike Levy, Holocaust educator and
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MISTAKES IN OUR JEWISH LIVES

Sir – I am dismayed at certain events that have occurred recently in our Jewish lives, all of which I believe to have been mistakes.

Naftali Bennett, leader of the Jewish Home Party in Israel, has banned a book from schools in Israel because the subject matter is a love affair between a Jew and a Muslim. Surely this was a mistake. The book, *Borderlife* by Dorit Rabinyan, has

inevitably become a bestseller. David Azoulay, Minister of Religious Affairs in Israel, has called Reform Jews 'a disaster for the people of Israel'. What an offensively mistaken remark! Rabbi Yitzchak Schochet of Mill Hill has suggested that examination times be changed for Jewish students at Shavuot simply because some imams had suggested a change for Muslim students at Ramadan. Trying to copy the Muslims of today is surely another mistake. Then there is the Chief Rabbi of the Belz Chassidim, Yissacher Dov Rokeach. He doesn't want women to drive their children to school because driving isn't a function a woman should perform. Need I say more? Lastly, there is Aaron Cohen of the United Synagogue, who criticises Muslims for

their treatment of women but won't let his wife sit next to him in synagogue!

Incidentally, it's great news that women are now allowed to pray at a certain part of the Western Wall. Congratulations to Progressive Judaism – Conservative, Reform and Liberal – for achieving this.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts



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