



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Land of Hope and Glory?



An iconic image of British patriotic fervour in The Royal Albert Hall

**A reader's letter in our September issue questioned my gloomy view of the decline of Britain's currency, the pound sterling, since 1945 ('Youthful Travels in Europe', August 2017), asking: 'Should I change my perception of GREAT Britain that accepted me and my parents in our hour of need?' This image of a Britain that generously offered desperate Jews fleeing Hitler a safe refuge, that stood out against the might of Nazi tyranny and allowed the refugees to bring up their children in peace and prosperity after 1945 is widespread in our community. But is it really a true picture?**

I was myself brought up in an almost unquestioningly pro-British family. My parents had arrived in London from Austria in 1938. For them, the behaviour of the British civilian population during the war stood in the sharpest possible contrast to that of the Viennese; after the horrors visited on the Jews of Vienna in the wake of the *Anschluss*, my parents were profoundly affected by the steadfastness of Londoners during the Blitz, by the spirit of solidarity under fire that extended even to Jewish

'enemy aliens' and the sheer decency with which ordinary people treated one another. My parents did not take kindly to those who presumed to criticise Britain's record, and they passed that attitude on to me. It came as quite a shock to me when I started reading histories of the refugees from Nazism in Britain, for British scholars like Bernard Wasserstein (*Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945*, 1979) and, later, Louise London (*Whitehall and the Jews*, *Continued on page 2*)

### NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

The AJR is commemorating the anniversary of 79th anniversary of Kristallnacht this month with two special services.

On Wednesday 8 November there will be a service at 1.30pm at Prestwich Hebrew Congregation (Shrubberies), while on Thursday 9 November there will be a service at 2pm at Belsize Square Synagogue.

Other AJR events this month include 26 meetings of our regional groups, plus outings to the theatre and the Jewish Museum. We are also taking 15 AJR members to Israel.

Meanwhile we are very proud that one of our volunteers has won a Lifetime award, and that our Chief Executive was part of the UK delegation that recently visited Bosnia to help remember Srebrenica. We hope you enjoy reading these and other reports in this issue.

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## Land of Hope and Glory? cont.

1933-1948, 2000) painted a very different picture, as did Tony Kushner in his large-scale studies of refugees and immigrants in Britain. (Both Wasserstein and London are the children of refugees.)

It is no easy task to evaluate the experience of the Jewish refugees from Hitler in this country, starting with their initial admission to Britain. Some scholars dwell on the barriers erected to keep the immigration of Jews from Germany after 1933 to a level acceptable to public opinion in the midst of the Great Depression and to a popular press that sometimes seemed more sympathetic to 'Herr Hitler' than to his Jewish victims. Refugees were forbidden to take paid or unpaid employment, unless they had work permits as domestic servants or for positions requiring special skills; the professional bodies representing doctors and dentists, for example, accepted only a tiny number of refugee practitioners onto their registers, forcing many highly qualified refugees into the ignominious alternative of studying again, for British medical examinations. On the positive side, I prefer to point to Britain's record in the key years 1938/39, when, following the Anschluss and Kristallnacht, Jews sought desperately to escape from the Third Reich; the visa system instituted in spring 1938 enabled over 50,000 to enter Britain within eighteen months, before the outbreak of war closed Germany's borders.

The reception afforded to Jewish refugees was mixed. The Kindertransports of 1938/39 took place when most states were restricting their intake of Jews. But the treatment of the rescued children, whose parents were not permitted to accompany them, was often inadequate, or worse, as emerges clearly from the recollections of former child refugees published in Karen Gershon's *We Came as Children* (1966): 'For three years after coming to this country I did not enter anyone's home. And when I finally did it was as a domestic servant.' 'I was desperately unhappy in the first foster home to which I went as a girl of eleven. The people didn't understand me at all and the home was so different from my own.' Refugee children even encountered abuse: 'Unfortunately the husband made mildly amorous advances to me one evening, which I confided to his daughter. This, a few days later, resulted in my dramatic eviction. I was thirteen: a short, stocky, somewhat busty child and – after my

dismissal from this household – a very badly dressed one: my clothes somehow got left behind.'

Yet in the same volume one reads heartfelt tributes to British families: 'These people were simply marvellous – if standards of human decency and ordinary down-to-earth kindness are the measurements by which we judge them. These relatively simple people did not allow their traditional doubt about Jews or their current hate of Germans to deter them from taking into their modest homes us foreign-speaking and strangely dressed youngsters.' 'As a girl of ten I was taken into a wonderful foster home. I was terribly happy there and still remember this period with joy. I could hardly remember my parents being as young and carefree and gay as this lovely couple I had come to.' Probably the most representative of these testimonies are those that fall somewhere between the two extremes: 'They were in fact a truly charming and genuine family. It was not their fault that I found their life a little restrictive, a little lonely and lacking in any expression of affection, though without doubt I felt secure with them [...] They were kind, quite unselfish, anxious to make me feel one of them, though I never quite got over the feeling of being a guest.'

The welcome extended to adult refugees was often defined by ignorance and prejudice. Britain was far more homogeneous than today, immigrants were far fewer (the Irish apart), and foreigners were the butt of (even) more instinctive hostility. British attitudes to Germans and Austrians were insular and parochial. Britain saw itself as a world power, its pretensions making its citizens superior to 'mere' continentals; the average Englishman looked to Melbourne, Toronto or even Bombay rather than to Berlin, Vienna or Prague. The Olympian ignorance fostered by such attitudes allowed homeless and stateless refugees to be targetted as Germans, even though their native country had disowned them; and Jews from Germany could be reviled as Nazis, even though it was Nazi persecution that had forced them to flee in the first place.

Yet at the same time individual refugees often experienced great kindness. Laura Selo recalled in her memoir, *Three Lives in Transit* (1992), how she and her two sisters, who had come to Britain from Berlin as children, were able to stay together

thanks to the generosity of a middle-aged spinster, Miss Harder, who eked out a meagre living from a tiny tobacconist's shop near Archway, but nevertheless took in the three girls. The child psychologist Nelly Wolffheim, when reduced in desperation to advertising for a sponsor, found at the other end of the social spectrum, a wealthy lady and devout Anglican who treated her with hospitality and civility, including breakfast in bed. Elizabeth Rosenthal, who arrived alone as a child in 1939, found refuge in a northern town badly affected by the Great Depression; yet she referred fondly to 'my dear old Oldham' when interviewed many years later, such had been the kindness that she had experienced. Unlike more recent economic migrants from eastern Europe, the Jewish refugees of the 1930s were not seen by the British working class as competition for jobs; avoiding hostility in deprived areas that would today be hotbeds of prejudice.

The plight of the Jews under the Third Reich aroused considerable sympathy in sections of the British population; when the author Judith Kerr arrived in Britain, she was greeted at London's Victoria Station by a porter who, unable to communicate his opinion of the Führer to a child who could not understand Cockney, gave a mock Nazi salute, mouthed the name 'Ittla' and spat vigorously. Yet hostility to Jews was also widespread, especially among the upper classes, who saw them as socially unacceptable, among members of the middle class prone to racial prejudice perhaps from serving in British-ruled territories overseas, and among working-class toughs drawn to Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. Though systematic ideological anti-Semitism was confined to the fringes of British political and public life, there was a more widespread and persistent culture of discrimination, which took the form of quotas for Jewish pupils at public schools or the covert exclusion of Jews from golf or tennis clubs.

Arguably, it was only with the post-war arrival of waves of immigrants from the Caribbean and the Indian sub continent that the prejudice against Jews as somehow not fully British lost much of its sting. By contrast with the later arrivals, the Jewish refugees from Nazism and their children were white, largely middle-class and both willing and able to integrate into British society.

**Anthony Grenville**

# SOBERING PARALLELS

The importance and value of the AJR's work was underlined to me during the visit I made just before Rosh Hashanah to Sarajevo and Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, organised by the British NGO Remembering Srebrenica.

The genocide perpetrated there in July 1995, during which some 8,700 Bosniak men and boys were slaughtered in less than one week, has eerie echoes of the Holocaust: the dehumanisation, degradation and persecution, forcing people into secluded areas and to wear white armbands to identify them as Muslims, the separation of families and the brutal cold-blooded murder. Even the way the executions were carried out made me think about the way Jews were murdered in the Shoah; victims were duped they would be safe so as not to create panic with soldiers then removing evidence of their crimes.

Bosnia today remains ravaged by the civil war. The three ethnic groups – Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs and Bosniaks – live almost autonomously. Even though the atrocities have been formally recognised as a genocide



The house where the Mothers of Srebrenica meet. It depicts some of the victims of the genocide.

by the International Criminal Court in The Hague and by the European Union, the perpetrators continue to live alongside survivors, who are forced to relive their horrors on a daily basis. The legal terminology of crimes against humanity and genocide, that many of the perpetrators of the Bosnia civil war have been convicted of, were coined after WW2 in response to the Holocaust.

Families of the victims are not permitted to leave flowers as a symbol of remembrance and the places of execution are not marked. Organisations such as Mothers

of Srebrenica are actively discouraged from pursuing justice and there is no state funding for the International Commission for Missing Persons, which is endeavouring to identify the victims from remains disinterred from mass graves surrounding Srebrenica.

Holocaust survivors in Sarajevo receive Homecare and Emergency Funds via the Claims Conference just as we disburse. However we are able to supplement greatly the grant we receive with our own Self-Aid, as well as the provision of all of our holistic social, welfare and volunteer services that transform and improve lives.

Ironically, some of the people we assist experienced the siege of Sarajevo and the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, having lived under fascism and then communism, before being given refuge here thanks to World Jewish Relief.

I was also privileged to meet the President of the Jewish community, Jakob Finci, and visit the cemetery and old synagogue in Sarajevo, which is situated just 150 metres from a mosque and a cathedral. The old synagogue was used to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, when no doubt congregants were reminded how Jews found sanctuary in the city during Ottoman times, having fled the Inquisition in Spain.

**Michael Newman**



Michael Newman and fellow delegate Dame Helen Hyde pictured with Jakob Finci, president of the Bosnia Jewish community, outside the Jewish cemetery in Sarajevo.

# The Barmitzvah Book

One Thursday while I was on holiday my son phoned me and said the AJR had rung. It seemed that a man named Sebastian from the Berlin City Library was trying to contact me. Apparently a book had come to light with my father's name – Heini Dann, son of Oskar and Irene Dann – written inside.

The volume was found in a depot among unprocessed stacks of books and it is possible that it was part of a larger acquisition by the Berlin Library in 1943. Of the 40,000 books that had been looted from the last homes of Jewish Berliners only about 2,000 had been processed by 1945.

In the book there is a label dedicating this volume to Heini Dann (my Dad). The book was presented to him at his Barmitzvah on March 6th 1937. The donor is the Jewish community of Berlin; it is stamped and signed by Heinrich Stahl, who was then the head of the community. My dad's Barmitzvah was held at Hermann Falkenburg Synagogue in Berlin.

My Dad came to the UK on a Kindertransport the following year, losing all contact with his family. In 1956 he posted a search notice in the AJR Journal, looking for information



Henry (Heini) Dann meeting Prince Charles in November 2008

as to the whereabouts of his mother and sister, whose last known address was in Golzow. His father Oskar had died in 1933 and it transpired that his mother Irene had been imprisoned in Sonnenburg in 1937 before being murdered in Auschwitz. His sister Ruth was also murdered in Auschwitz, in 1942.

There is no doubt that my Dad is indeed the Heini Dann mentioned in the book. Through an enquiry at the archives of Centrum Judaicum in Berlin I ascertained that there was a Heini Dann, born 13 January 1924 in Golzow: his last address in Berlin was Schoenhauser Allee 164, just one

building away from where he was Barmitzvah. It proved that the book was lost as a result of Nazi persecution.

The Berlin City Library was able to trace me as a result of the search notice that my father had placed in 1956. I now have the book (a Chumash) in my possession, and it is in the most amazing condition. It is something to pass down to my children and in turn to their children.

I'm so grateful to have something so special of my Dad's. I'm writing this with tears in my eyes. "For ever in my thoughts; rest in peace my darling Daddy".

Jeanette Lewis

**NOTE FROM EDITOR:** *The return of this book forms part of a large-scale exercise by German libraries and other institutions, aimed at discovering the provenance of books in their holdings that might have belonged to Jewish owners and have been seized by the Nazis. It follows on from similar attempts to establish the ownership of looted works of art and return them to the rightful owners, sparked off by such notorious cases as that of the Klimt portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer ('The Woman in Gold').*

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# LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## WINDS OF CHANGE



The latest event on the world stage, the not-very-stellar re-election of Angela Merkel and rise of

the AfD party in Germany, seems to fit into the pattern that has characterized elections all over the world in recent years, with the rise of right-wing parties.

Some people think it started with Brexit, followed by Trump, but in actual fact it started much before that, right here in Israel, with the ongoing re-election of Binyamin Netanyahu and the Likud party, recently bolstered by other, even more right-wing parties such as Jewish Home.

Support for Israel's Labour party, which represented the generation of pioneers and socialist idealists who toiled and fought to establish the state of Israel, has declined steadily in recent decades. This has been due in part to lack-lustre leaders as well as to disillusion with the ideology

– or lack of it – advocated by the party. The party seems never to have really recovered from the mortal blow delivered to it by the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, though the shift to the right began with the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and its aftermath.

As is the case elsewhere in the world, the right wing in Israel tends to be supported by those segments of the population that are largely poorly educated and ready to swallow populist slogans trumpeted by cynical politicians and the public relations firms they employ. In Israel there is the additional element of apprehension regarding the Palestinian population and the intentions of the neighbouring Arab countries. One cannot deny that there is a basis for some of these fears, as concerted military actions from the outside and occasional terrorist attacks from the inside have shown in the course of Israel's history. The arrival of over a million immigrants from the former USSR has also bolstered the right-wing electorate. The ideological right wing in Israel claims the monopoly over advocating the right of Jews to have a country of their own, even though this was the guiding principle behind the actions of the socialist pioneering generations.

The right-wing tendencies that have emerged in Israel, as well as in countries that once advocated egalitarian ideas, tolerance of 'the other' and the provision of welfare for those unable to support themselves, have served to bring to the fore the baser aspects of human nature. The Biblical tenet of loving one's neighbour as oneself has been supplanted by the concept of cut-throat competition and survival of the fittest. Xenophobic and beggary-neighbour behaviour is tolerated if not condoned, and the general atmosphere is clouded by public assertions that would have been unacceptable less than a decade ago.

Tensions within Israeli society are being exacerbated by irresponsible politicians, and utilised by some of them to further their own interests and careers. It is pitiable to see how far Israel has moved away from the high ideals that once characterised it and to observe the antics of the individuals who now represent the electorate in the Knesset. But they are able to say in their defence that they are simply emulating the example of our cousins in other supposedly enlightened countries. Although there is some truth in this, it cannot be denied that we were there first.

## BEREAVEMENT

**Dr Frederick Kurzer, FRSC**

Born 24 May 1922 in Karlsbad, Czechoslovakia. Died peacefully in London 11 October 2017, aged 95. Formerly Reader in Chemistry at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine.

Mourned by his dear friends Stanley and Jennifer Langer.

## GERMANY JOINS UP

The German Government has now endorsed the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism, first adopted by the UK in December 2016. Ambassador Felix Klein, Head of the German Delegation to the IHRA and Special Envoy for Relations with Jewish Organizations said "We are proud to join Austria, Israel, Romania, and the United Kingdom in affirming that there is no place for antisemitism in any society and we call on other states to follow."

## ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at 3pm on Monday 6 December 2017 at Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.

All questions for the chair should be submitted by Friday 3 November 2017 to the Chief Executive at the same postal address or by email to michael@ajr.org.uk. If you wish to attend please contact Karin Pereira on 020 8385 3070 or at karin@ajr.org.uk.

# Letters to the Editor

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

## THANK YOU AJR

I should like to all the AJR helpers for a very enjoyable lunch and entertainment at the September Serenade. Everyone was very kind and helpful and the venue really nice and friendly; I enjoyed the entertainers more than ever before – and to top it all I was the one who got the plant from the table centre! I am so looking forward to next year and I thank everyone again for all their hard work.  
*Mrs. Charly Fraylich, Kenton, Middx.*

## NURSE, NURSE

Your June issue featured an advert looking for Jewish Austrian/German refugees who became nurses. It was part of a research project by Dr Jane Brooks of the department of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, University of Manchester, concerning “Jewish refugees and the British nursing profession, 1933-1948”.

I contacted Dr Brooks and was interviewed over Skype. It brought back many memories of my year at Croydon General Hospital where – even though I spoke no English – I was hired!

Coming from a cultured, middle class family in Vienna I was in no way prepared for the rigours, discipline or hierarchy of life in a British hospital at that time. One's uniform had to be starched and impeccable. You didn't answer back and accepted all duties uncomplainingly. Without the support of an amazingly empathetic Matron I would not have survived one day! The irony is that after passing my first level nursing exam and finally becoming useful, I was obliged to leave as we were designated 'enemy aliens'.

Dr Brooks, who can be contacted via [jane.brooks@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jane.brooks@manchester.ac.uk), hopes eventually to use the memoirs in an exhibition and a book. Thanks to the AJR I have now become “famous”!  
*Kitty Schafer, Toronto, Canada*

## BRUSSELS SPOUTS

A passage in Anthony Grenville's article “Youthful travels in Europe” (August

2017) wondered: “What memorials ... would Brussels erect to our present politicians, especially after its very name has been used almost as a term of abuse by the more casually xenophobic elements of the British right-wing press?”

I wonder whether there is, or was, a Jewish political default view, which seems decidedly left-leaning and Labour-supporting (though somewhat eroded by its recent anti-Semitism troubles), and which tended, I suspect, to be anti-Brexit and pro-EU?

Certainly, a Socialist view must have seemed reasonable in the early twentieth century, when the discrepancy between rich and poor was so marked, and many Jews were very poor. But times have changed and now, in our fragile society, is a respect for freedom under the law not more important? Surely the Conservative Party of today – which seems more like the Liberal party of Gladstone – chimes more with the need to support the rule of law and order to enable us to regain our sovereignty and thus decide which laws we want to live by?

Similarly, much emphasis is given to the plight of today's refugees and their desire to come to Europe. The left wing believe we should welcome them all because of the plight of Jewish refugees in the past. But is there really equivalence where many of the refugees are economic migrants rather than asylum seekers, and is there a danger, as Germany has found, that over-generosity leads to considerable problems because of cultural differences?

I don't suggest there is an easy answer to any of this, but I do wonder whether the left-wing views of many correspondents to the Journal in the past and today, could be explained from an historical perspective. Perhaps Dr Grenville could write one of his excellent articles on the subject?  
*Philip Goldsmith, London, SW6 2JR*

*Anthony Grenville responds: 'The passage about Brussels quoted in this letter is the result of a personal experience. At a social gathering, my wife told someone that she came from Brussels. He replied: "We*

*won't hold that against you". I have been sensitive about the abuse of the name Brussels ever since. Would this gentleman have held it against me that my parents were Jews from Vienna?'*

## NOT WRIGHT?

Regarding your article on Samson Wright (September 2017) may I point out that Alfred Schweitzer became a reader in physiology at Leeds University where I was a student at the same time (not University College). He was an organist, specialising in Bach. I asked him to give a lunchtime talk in the union and advertised him thus: 'Albert Schweitzer will give a talk on ...Bach...' which caused a huge stir in the university from the Vice-Chancellor downwards. In the end I had no choice but to cancel the talk with much embarrassment.  
*Rudi Leavor, Bradford*

## GRATEFUL READING

This morning I received your September issue of the AJR Journal and have been reading it ever since. Now it is lunch time and I am going to put it aside as I have loads to do.

These lines are to thank you deeply for sending me the magazine as, on reading it, I still feel part of the Kindertransport which brought me to England in 1938. As far as I know, there is no other Kindertransport Kind in Buenos Aires. I am so glad to read about all the great things you do and sorry not to be able to take part in any of them.

I have never stopped being grateful to England, to its people and to the wonderful family where my brother and I lived for eight years. I wrote a book about it in Spanish. Years later, it has now been translated into German and an editor is interested in publishing it.  
*Lisa Leist de Seiden, Argentina*  
*PS I pass your magazine on to two Argentinian friends who enjoy it too and usually ask me lots of questions, some of which I can answer.*

## THERESIENSTADT

In your September issue Dorothea Shefer-Vanson reviewed the English edition of

H G Adler's "Theresienstadt 1941-1945". My comments are based on my stay there (13 July 1943 – 12 October 1944) before I was sent to Auschwitz (where my parents were gassed on arrival) and then to Friedland, a slave labour camp.

Our personal experiences were bound to differ. Adler was 31 when he entered the ghetto, I was 14. Adler spoke German. I spoke Czech and the two groups never met.

From my recollection there were few "Prominente", or privileged, but a great many "Mischlinge" (ie where one parent was a Christian/Aryan). When they reached the age of 14 the children of such marriages were sent alone to the ghetto, but were exempt from further transportation to the East. That exemption was lifted for the final clearance of the ghetto in October 1944, when 10 transports took 18,402 inmates to Auschwitz before the gas chambers were demolished. Even so, many Mischlinge remained and survived.

By the time we arrived a spur line had been built between the nearest railway station at Bohusevice and the ghetto so we were spared that long walk. But many elderly people quickly starved to death. They received just one portion of food (usually thin soup) per day, unlike those who worked, whose two portions just about kept the body ticking over.

Accommodation was very cramped. For weeks my father and I slept in the loft of one of the many military brick barracks. However, I have no complaints about the medical care. An eye condition was treated by an ENT surgeon and I spent several weeks in a children's hospital with suspected kidney inflammation for which I was given white bread (a luxury if ever there was one).

The unknown destination which everybody feared was not Auschwitz, at least not initially. The first 34 transports (42,004 men, women and children of whom 230 adults survived) were sent to places like Sobibor, Trostinec and Treblinka. Only after

Auschwitz became fully operational, in October 1942, was everybody sent there (44,884 people of whom 2,925 survived).

The "vibrant cultural and artistic life" must be taken with a pinch of salt. There were lots of talks and concerts but, as the workers were tired, only the elderly attended to escape from their depressing rooms. I shared a small room with six other boys, one of whom was a violin prodigy, Paul Kling, a Mischling who became Professor of Music at the University of British Columbia. It suited the Germans to have music performed; they even handed out some from their vast store of looted Jewish instruments (but kept the rest to this day). It was a delight to hear Paul practise as we were excluded from attending public performances and had to hand in radios, gramophones and records. I went to only one of Paul's performances (a quintet by Schubert). It was held in a barrack loft, no seats, just huge roof beams. Making music counted as work, which meant extra food.

Theresienstadt/Terezin was a miserable place, parents separated from one another, children separated from both but we still had our own clothes, walked around freely, didn't spend hours on an Appellplatz being counted, no electrified barbed wire. In fact, it was a transit camp. Of the 139,517 people who were incarcerated there 33,519 died. Of the 106,000 people remaining, 82% were sent on to the East and of those only 3,155 saw liberation.  
*Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath, Suffolk*

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#### EU RESPONSES

Marc Schatzberger's and Mike Joseph's responses to our letter about Britain's position in the EU misses the point. Both writers have focused on one issue; immigration. Both appear concerned that Britain would put greater restrictions on refugees when we leave. This is not the policy of the Leave Campaign or any political party as far as we know. What is advocated is a continued acceptance of genuine asylum seekers under the Dublin Convention, whereby asylum seekers seek refuge in the first safe country. No nation

can be expected to welcome all who knock on their door. Neither the EU nor the UN had policies in place before countries like Greece and Italy were overwhelmed. As for other immigrants, these would be allowed in in accordance with our own economic needs. Eminently sensible.

To suggest that people with a Jewish background should not hold these views is an emotional, unpragmatic response. Do Messrs Schatzberger and Joseph really want our borders open to all who want to come? One has to consider present circumstances as well as history.

We are far from alone in our views. Stephen Pollard, Editor of the JC, supports leaving and had previously interviewed Nigel Farage of UKIP at a very well attended and receptive meeting at the Hasmonean School. Jews would not be Jews if they did not hold a variety of opinions.  
*Janet Clarke and Anthony Portner*

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Why should correspondents such as Marc Schatzberger and Mike Joseph (October 2017) be surprised that some AJR members oppose British membership of the European Union, and look forward to our exit from the Brussels Empire?

That we were immigrants and refugees – or are the children of refugees – doesn't blind us to the fact that the ultimate objective of the EU project is the creation of a country called Europe. It's set out clearly in the treaties of Rome, Maastricht and Lisbon, and Mr. Juncker's recent 'State of the Union' speech left nothing to the imagination. There's also no doubt, thanks to Mr. Juncker, about the EU's idea of democracy: "There can be no democratic choice against the European treaties".

It remains to be seen whether the treaty-by-treaty journey to European union, led by autocratic federalists, has to a large extent been responsible for the growth of anti-EU parties – some of them profoundly unpleasant – from Britain to the Urals and Scandinavia to the Mediterranean.  
*David Kernek, Bath, Somerset*

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# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

She was the sculptor commissioned to create a Holocaust Memorial in Vienna's Judenplatz in 2000, site of a former synagogue to commemorate the 65,000 Austrian Jews who died in the Holocaust. Now a new exhibition of Rachel Whiteread's work has opened at Tate Britain, using some of the metaphors involved in the Vienna Memorial.

Whiteread reads meaning into solid, empty structures, and the spiritual message of the Vienna piece was its form as a library with the spines of the books turned inwards. It is windowless. Nothing opens. The double doors are closed. The books are the ghosts of Hitler's victims, but the sculpture evokes two things. One is Hitler's desire to make a museum out of a dead people. The other, which the artist has so sensitively grasped, is the fact that the Jews are the people of the Book.

In the most substantial survey of the artist's work to date, Tate Britain has brought together three decades of her work, and she has expanded on her theme of books by creating a large three tier library based on the same idea of



Jasper Johns, Spring, 1997



Rachel Whiteread, Untitled (One Hundred Spaces), 1995

the inverted spines she created for her Holocaust Museum. Books arranged like this suggest pages which can be flipped open; lives which can be read, but here, as in Vienna, the books are solid ghosts which can neither be opened nor read.

Jewish thought and the movement of successive waves of immigration have both had impact on Whiteread's vision. She moved her family and studio into a disused synagogue in East London and began casting its interior staircase. To her, its worn steps, scratches and chips represent the endless arrivals and departures of immigrant life on which London is built.

Whiteread's hallmark interest in boxes suggests that the emptiness and the possibilities within enclosures came to her while clearing out her late mother's house. Her latest innovations are sheds – her silent sculptures – hidden in secret places. Her most recent, a chicken shed, is on display in the Tate Britain gardens. (Until January 21, 2018)

Her hot water bottles in different coloured resins, wax, dental wax, plastic, suggest the human torso, and castings of the undersides of mattresses, human indentation. She has done the same with chairs, cast in resin, and her nine concrete tables, which represent bureaucracy. For the first time Whiteread is experimenting in papier-mâché which are hung on the walls and betray other minute coloured objects within it. It is a true inside-out story.

Her most famous sculpture was "House", a casting of a bomb-damaged house interior in East London. The house eventually had to be destroyed because

of local campaigners who wanted the land to build homes.

In 2008 Jasper Johns said: "One hopes for something resembling truth, some sense of life, even of grace, to flicker, at least in the work". Now the Royal Academy of Arts is taking that statement literally in its first comprehensive exhibition of the artist's work in the UK in 40 years, which includes 150 sculptures, drawings and prints. He is regarded as having moved Abstract Expressionism to a new dimension with his array of textures expressed in motifs, flags, targets, numbers, maps and light bulbs in brilliant colours, and his work has made him one of the leading American contemporary artists since he arrived in New York in the 1950s. His artistic curiosity has allowed him to develop new themes and the use of objects from his studio and even human castings. During the 1960s he explored print-making of which he is now considered a leading exponent. His abstract patterns known as cross-hatchings, which he developed in the 1970s, and the deeper existential themes of memory, sex and mortality engaged him from the 1980s onwards. (Until December 10, 2017)

## Annely Juda Fine Art

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

**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**



# Someone to be proud of

Robert Voss, whose parents both escaped Germany in 1939, has recently been appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire. AJR member Peter Phillips, a regular contributor to this Journal, went to interview him for us.

Robert Voss lives less than a mile from me and we belong to the same golf club (he is a far better golfer than I but, sadly, most people are!) Yet I don't know Robert well. We were, until this interview, on what is called "nodding terms".

I didn't actually realise Robert is Jewish until seeing him on BBC1 last May in the programme *British Jews: German passports*, debating whether one might want the return of a German or Austrian passport if one was entitled. Of the three people interviewed Robert was the only one who said "no". His grandparents were murdered by the Nazis. Robert is puzzled why he should want a passport delivered by a nation with blood still on its hands.

Robert, now 64, was born in England. He worked as a metal trader, and chaired the European Metal Federation in Brussels for twenty years. For his services to British industry, as well as voluntary work, he was awarded the CBE in 2014. He is a Governor of the University of Hertfordshire, and a member of the British Holocaust Memorial Foundation Survivors' Testimony Committee. This August he was appointed "Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Hertfordshire", having been a Deputy.

The role of Lord-Lieutenant is to be the monarch's personal representative in Hertfordshire. He succeeds the Countess of Verulam. Robert is the first holder of this position not to have been born into the aristocracy, and a Jew at that (Lord Rothschild was a Lord Lieutenant, but then he was also a Rothschild!)

Robert was brought up in a typically English middle-class way, having won a scholarship to University College School, one of the top independent schools in London. But his family also brought

him up as a Jew. He reads Hebrew fairly fluently, unlike many Jewish men and women of his age, and he and his wife Celia are active members of Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue.

Robert is hugely grateful to the UK for giving refuge to his parents, acknowledging that without this he would not have been born. So I was interested in what he felt about the current refugee problem, even though Hertfordshire itself – being too far from London and not near enough to the sea – does not have many refugees. His answer was exactly what I had hoped for: "If the refugees are fleeing for their lives we have to take them in for humanitarian reasons. If they are fleeing for economic reasons we may need to think carefully".

I agree with this wholeheartedly. The British Isles are too full to give a home to "economic" migrants. "But all Jews were allowed in from Germany and Austria without asking about their wealth," you may argue. Yes, but they were all fleeing for their lives and also they had to have a guarantor in this country before they were let in.

As Lord Lieutenant Robert is responsible for all religions in Hertfordshire, and is a great believer in interfaith relations. He visits churches, mosques, synagogues and temples. As part of his duties he hands out British Citizenship Certificates. Whoever was Lord Lieutenant of the county in which you lived was the person who gave us or our parents our certificates of Naturalization. Now in Hertfordshire it is one of Robert's duties. I am delighted that such a task has been bestowed on a Jew.

By coincidence, Hertfordshire has more Jews living in it than any other county. Half of Radlett is probably Jewish as



is a third of Bushey Heath. Perhaps it is therefore right that the Lord Lieutenant should be one of us! Robert, however, would be quick to point out that the northern and eastern part of Hertfordshire is very different. You'll find there lots of farmland and small industries – no synagogues or kosher meat shops!

Besides handing out medals, important documents and being available when Royalty calls, what else does the Lord Lieutenant do? Lots! He and his deputies have about 350 engagements per year. "I thrive on hard work", said Robert. "I get bored very easily. My ultimate aim is to take the lieutenancy to the people of Hertfordshire. I shall do this for the next ten years and so give back something to the country that saved my parents".

Pride may be a sin. But I'm proud of Robert Voss.

**Peter Phillips**



# REVIEWS

## A HORSE WALKS INTO A BAR...

By David Grossman

(published in Hebrew by Hasifriya  
Hahadasha)

I read the original Hebrew version of David Grossman's book, the English translation of which was awarded the prestigious Man Booker International prize. But I must admit that getting to the end of the book was a hard slog, despite the fact that the Hebrew Grossman uses is pretty much the language of everyday speech.

His main protagonist, Dovele – a rather unfunny standup comedian on a stage in a provincial Israeli town – rambles on and on, taking his audience on the bumpy ride that is the story of his life. Unfortunately his physical and psychological attributes contain nothing to endear him to either his audience or to the reader.

The evening's performance goes from bad to worse, with the 'comedian' meandering around any subject that happens to pop into his head. The narrator describes the growing impatience of his audience, which gradually trickles away as the performance continues. In the end only a handful of people are left. The narrator, who knew Dovele when they were both young, now feels guilty at not having shown him more support in his time of need.

But is the real object of the book to make the narrator – and the reader – feel guilty? I've always said it's guilt rather than love that makes the world go round, but this seems to be taking things a bit too far. The book is essentially a typically British kind of joke, known as a shaggy dog story, that has got out of hand.

No-one feels like laughing at the end of Grossman's book. Nor does one even feel like crying. There's just a sense of emptiness, an exaggerated awareness of the senseless futility of life, and that you, the reader, have just wasted several precious hours in reading this sad book about a sad life in a sad place. I was reminded of a short story by, I think, Somerset Maugham, about a young boy at a British public school who is called to the Headmaster's study to be told his revered father has been killed. Imagining

some heroic deed he asks whether he was shot through the heart, only to learn that a balcony had collapsed in a Naples street and a pig had fallen on his father.

Now that's a story well told, within reasonable limits of time and energy, which does not leave the reader feeling he/she has wasted his/her time. But that's British humour for you, and that simply can't be beat. It seems the Man Booker International jury lost it.

*Dorothea Shefer*

## A ROCKY ROAD: A Memoir Abraham Levy with Simon Rocker Halban Publishers £20

A fascinating memoir of a distinguished man who, while born in a peaceable British-owned territory, experienced the status of a refugee as a baby and small child when the Jews of Gibraltar were advised to leave in 1940, as the British feared Hitler might take over the territory with Franco's blessing. At that point the youngest child of three – he was later to have two younger siblings – Abraham Levy and his family were sent to Madeira, expecting to stay for one year but in fact remaining there for five.

The Jews of Gibraltar had been settled for numerous generations. Some had already been dispatched to England during the war, and Levy and his elder brother were sent by their father to the newly established Carmel College in Berkshire to further their Jewish and secular education. For A levels Levy went on to Jews' College, affiliated at that time to London University, and then did a degree in Semitics. His doctorate, some years later, was from University College, London.

He had already formed a connection with the Lauderdale Road branch of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' congregation where he went on to become student rabbi and later principal rabbi. He also made some important friendships, among them Rabbi Lord Sacks, then future Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue, who is referred to affectionately throughout the book as 'Jonathan'.

Interspersed are intriguing portraits of famous Sephardi Jews who contributed greatly to their new homeland and, on another level and one reason for the book's title, the many feuds which have infected

British Jewry. The Sephardi tradition is orthodoxy with tolerance, but even within the Sephardi world, as the book makes clear, not everything has been smooth.

Following the creation of the State of Israel, numerous Jews left the Middle Eastern countries where their ancestors had been settled for generations and many found their way to Britain. Although Sephardis, their traditions were not identical to those of the Spanish and Portuguese, but they were eventually integrated into various of the community's congregations. Whether these migrants might be considered 'refugees' is an interesting question.

For Rabbi Levy, Jewish education is of primary importance and one of his proudest achievements was the establishment of the Naima Jewish Preparatory School. He also determined to foster higher learning and, after several 'ups and downs', the Judith Lady Montefiore College, of which he is the Honorary Principal, reopened in 2005 as a centre for higher Torah education.

The many anniversaries commemorating the history of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews have been another source of pride. Initially there was 'Sepharad 1992', the quincentennial of the expulsion from Spain. There have also been anniversary celebrations honouring the return of Jews to England in 1656 and the founding of the Bevis Marks Synagogue, the 'Cathedral Synagogue' of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews congregation in 1701.

The book is dedicated to Estelle, Abraham's wife, who, it is clear, has given him much joy, as have his son Julian and his family.

Not to be forgotten is the fact that while Rabbi Levy has accumulated a huge amount of personal, communal and historical facts, the book was beautifully written by the distinguished journalist, Simon Rocker, the Judaism editor of the Jewish Chronicle, who also contributed much about Anglo-Jewish affairs.

*Emma Klein*

**Have you read any books recently which you think are worthy of a review in these pages? Or would you be interested in reviewing new books that are sent into the AJR office? If so please email our editorial team on [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)**

# Do not ask

by Avram Schaufeld

Do not ask  
 How did you survive?  
 Because this is a question that causes me pain  
 and brings back memories...  
 I know that you mean well and are sympathetic  
 and would like me to talk to your youth group  
 or your son who is writing a paper on the Holocaust  
 and I could help him with the subject which is part of his exams.  
 You add with a smile, that no amount of reading is the same  
 as talking to a survivor.  
 From your eager expression I can guess  
 what you expect me to tell him.  
 About our bravery and how our faith in God  
 helped us to survive.  
 I lie and say I am too busy  
 that I have other commitments  
 and quickly take my leave and turn away  
 So that you cannot see the hurt in my eyes  
 Do not ask me why...

**NOTE FROM EDITOR:** Avram Schaufeld passed away this July. His obituary appears on page 18.

# MANCHESTER MUSEUM BOOST



The AJR is helping to fund a major expansion of the Manchester Jewish Museum, last year listed by The Times as one of the UK's top 10 small museums.

The £5m project will see the museum, housed inside a former synagogue, double in size, with new galleries, learning spaces, shop and café built in an extension alongside the existing historic building. The Grade II listed synagogue, meanwhile, will be repaired and restored.

Building work will commence towards the end of next year, and the newly developed museum will open in Summer 2020.

The AJR is the second largest contributor after the Heritage Lottery Fund, which last month announced a £2.89 million grant towards the project.



*"These papers are a piece of family history which I will treasure forever"*  
Jerry Springer

## Piece together your family history

In the 1930s and 40s, World Jewish Relief rescued tens of thousands of people from the Nazis. We have the digitised family records of those we helped. Now we want to give them back to you, for free.

Find out if we helped your family at:  
[www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives](http://www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives)  
020 8736 1250

# ULM PAYS TRIBUTE TO ANNA ESSINGER

**On the day in 1933 on which Anna Essinger was ordered to fly the swastika flag from her school building this farsighted and redoubtable woman moved her co-educational avant-garde boarding school for predominantly (but not exclusively) Jewish children from Ulm in southern Germany to an 18th century manor house on the Kent North Downs.**

Thus Bunce Court School was established. Anna Essinger thereby saved the lives of many Jewish children and in 1939 she also took in some 50 Kindertransport children. I was one of those lucky ones.

Several of the teachers and some of the older boys and girls assisted her in this undertaking. The staff – many themselves overqualified refugees (the boiler man had been a notable theatre director and one of the gardeners a gifted pianist) – were known by their first names or by nicknames and they acted in loco parentis, taking great care of the children's emotional needs.

In Germany Anna Essinger is well



Leslie Brent confers with Eva Schmoll, the outstanding head teacher whose retirement was also celebrated on the day of the prize-giving.

remembered as an educational pioneer who introduced a progressive, child-oriented form of education into the rigid and disciplinarian German educational system after World War 1. Two schools have been named after her in Ulm, and I was asked to speak about her during the course of the day's celebration of their new name.

The Berlin-based Cajewitz Foundation has also set up an annual prize to recognise those who have made an outstanding

contribution to the schools and their wider communities. That my name should be associated with this new 'Anna Essinger – Leslie Baruch Brent Prize' is an embarrassment to me but nonetheless a huge honour.

Anyone wishing to know more about Anna Essinger may be interested to read my autobiography 'Sunday's Child? A Memoir' (2009).

**Leslie Baruch Brent**

## A successful conference

The AJR supported a three-day international conference on 'Emigration from Nazi-occupied Europe to British Overseas Territories after 1933', held from 13-15 September 2017 in Bloomsbury. It was the eighth triennial conference of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, Institute of Modern Languages Research, in the University of London's School of Advanced Study. The conference was also supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Martin Miller and Hannah Norbert-Miller Trust.

Jointly organised by Anthony Grenville

and Jana Buresova (London) and Swen Steinberg (Dresden), this was the first ever conference covering the entire field of emigration from Nazi Europe to the territories of the former British Empire. Fittingly, it was held in London, the central hub of the Empire and the city from which many refugees from Nazism re-emigrated to British-controlled lands overseas. Twenty-two papers examined emigration to the Indian sub-continent, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Africa, as well as lesser known places of refuge such as the West Indies, Singapore, Shanghai and Mauritius, and of course Palestine. The conference

speakers likewise came from across the globe, from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, India and Israel, as well as from Germany, Austria, France and the UK. On the evening of 16 September the Wiener Library kindly hosted an event for participants to hear testimonies about emigration and the work of World Jewish Relief.

It is appropriate that the AJR, now almost the last remaining national organisation founded by the Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, should be associated with this landmark conference.

# Truly life changing

*The evil that men do  
lives after them,  
The good is oft interred  
with their bones.*

**Shakespeare's words may be true, but I always sing the praises of the wonderful people who saved my life. They were Alice and Angus Argles and they had seven children of their own. The youngest was Margaret, the only one of the immediate family still alive and now living in Australia. We are still in constant contact and she refers to me as her Jewish brother. Margaret is writing a book about her family and this is an extract from it:**

"Mum and Dad were very active in the international Christian movement Toc H and its work to improve the lives of children. In 1938 Toc H opened a hostel in Manchester called Kersher House. Dad appointed Arthur Israel, later known as Isdale, to run it.

"Uncle Arthur was a very special person and we all loved him dearly. He had originally obtained a visa to England to sell an innovative bar of soap (it had a picture on it, which never came off). He was reluctant to return to Germany, well aware of what was happening there, which is why he went to Manchester. He told mum about his cousin Hedy Oppenheimer, who was in her last year of medical school but unable to finish her degree and trapped in Austria – could they help? Hedy arrived to live with us late in 1938.

"My parents sponsored about 30 other children, paying £50 per refugee – a huge sum of money in 1939 – to the Government to guarantee that they would not be a burden on the state. Dad found homes for most of them, supplementing their expenses, and we kept ten at our own home in Staffordshire, Sharpcliffe Hall.



The Argle family home Sharpcliffe Hall near Leek, in Staffordshire, which has now been converted into flats.

"In Spring 1939 we went to London to pick up Uncle Arthur's nephew, four year old Leo. Mum and Dad were concerned that Leo was a very German name and wanted to make life in England as easy as possible for him. I was a great fan of Mickey Mouse, so called him Mickey; I hope he believed it had nothing to do with his big ears!

At first Mickey was very unhappy. Mum used to nurse him to sleep every night, but he woke up crying 'Ich will meine liebe Mutter'. His brother died in Auschwitz in 1942, his grandparents in Theresienstadt and his parents and sister in concentration camps in Eastern Europe.

"Mickey and I were treated like brother and sister, and when he turned five the private school that I attended very generously decided to offer him a free education. But in 1944 Mickey was taken from us. I had started boarding school and one holiday got home to find all the Jewish children had been replaced with evacuees.

"Uncle Arthur knew that Mum wanted to adopt Mickey and had taken him to a hostel in Withington. Being his only surviving relative apart from Hedy, and us not being Jewish, he felt he had good reason. Mum was very upset, although Mickey kept in touch and always thought of her as Mum. She loved him as much as

her own children.

"In January 1961 Mum and I were invited to Mickey's wedding in London to Ruth Icigson. It was the most beautiful wedding I have ever attended. Uncle Arthur made my mother the guest of honour and said that if it had not been for her love, kindness and affection this wedding would not be taking place."

At school recently my youngest granddaughter was asked to write about someone who had made a difference to her life. She headed her piece "Mrs Alice Argles" and wrote "This lady saved my Grandpa from the Nazis in Germany. After the Night of Broken Glass, when all the synagogues were burned to the ground, Jewish shops smashed and Jewish books destroyed, the Parliament in London had a debate and allowed children up to the age of 17 to come to England. A lot of children came by train and boat and this became known as the Kindertransport. Some children went to Jewish hostels, and some went to families. I know my Grandpa – who at the time was only four years old – stayed with this family until he was eleven years old. He is still in contact with one of the daughters named Margaret who now lives in Australia. So surely Mrs Argles must be the person who made a difference in my life."

**Leonard Kaufmann**

# Around the AJR

## EDINBURGH

We were told by Françoise of Jewish Care Scotland (based in Glasgow) that the organisation hopes to establish a similar group in Edinburgh. Then we heard a brief overview of the life and work of Miriam Vickers, given by the artist herself. She elaborated on aspects of the horrors that took place across Europe seven to eight decades ago, which influenced her work at different stages of her life. She laid bare a very personal journey which was extremely poignant.

A wonderful afternoon tea topped the proceedings. This was togetherness, learning about one another; this was shared reminiscing about places and people; plans being made and a wonderful, friendly energy that made it difficult to leave when one had to.

*Alex McNeill*

## BIRMINGHAM: ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY

Despite grey weather the staff of Andrew Cohen house shone and made us welcome. Stories abounded of how members came to be settled in Birmingham, and how much has changed.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## EALING: THE JEWS OF GOLDERS GREEN

Dr. Pam Fox gave an interesting illustrated talk based on her book of the same title. Jews began to settle in the area in 1907 because of its diversity and tolerance.

*Leslie Sommer*

## ESSEX: THE HISTORY OF THE JFS

David Harris, former Deputy Head, gave a succinct talk on the school, from inception to the present day, from Camden Town to N.W.London. He mentioned many well-known former pupils.

*Meta Roseneil*

## GLASGOW: EARLY YOM TOV LUNCH

27 members attended an early Yom Tov lunch at Mark's Deli. It was a lovely get-together for all the members to socialise.

*Irene Drecksler*

## GLASGOW BOOK CLUB: SECOND GENERATION

I used to accompany my late mother to this lovely and friendly monthly event. The books chosen vary considerably and hopefully more 2nd and 3rd generations will join us.

*Ruth Stewart Ramsay*

## LIVERPOOL: CST ESSENTIAL

David Coleman, Regional Head of Merseyside Community Security Trust (CST) spoke about its essential role, emphasising the importance of personal and community awareness at all times, and the ongoing need for volunteers.

*Julian Verbov*

## NOVEMBER GROUP EVENTS

As the exact timings of these events are often subject to last minute changes we do not include them in the AJR Journal and suggest you contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

Book Club	1 November	Social get-together
Ilford	1 November	Lynne Bradley – The life and films of Danny Kaye
Pinner	2 November	Jonathan Lewis' speciality is on "Jewish Chaplaincy in the British Armed Forces from 1892 until today"
Cambridge	2 November	David Barnett – The Balfour Declaration
Glasgow	5 November	Concert at the Royal Conservatoire
Hull	5 November	Lunch at East Park
Ealing	7 November	Social discussion group
Welwyn Garden City	9 November	Social get-together
Edinburgh	12 November	Social get-together
Essex (Westcliff)	14 November	Desert Island Discs – members' favourite music
Bradford	14 November	Social get-together
Radlett	15 November	Dr. David Barnett – The Story of Adam Worth
Bromley	16 November	"Watermarks" – DVD
Glasgow	19 November	Antiques Road Show with Edward Green
Brighton	20 November	Social discussion group
Edgware	21 November	Marcus Ferrar – Author of "The Budapest House"
Glasgow Book Club	23 November	Social get-together
Oxford	23 November	Social get-together
Kensington	27 November	Social get-together
N.W.London	27 November	Jackie Briggs – Discovering your children are gay and how to cope
Norfolk	28 November	Social get-together
Didsbury	29 November	Social get-together
Marlow	30 November	"Churchill's German Army" – DVD
Muswell Hill	30 November	"The Sturgeon Queen" – film
North London	30 November	Charlotte & Tony Balazs – The Cosmo and Dorice

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**Child Survivors' Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld  
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

**MUSWELL HILL: AN INTERNATIONAL JEWISH CRIMINAL**

Dr. David Barnett gave a delightful, engaging and entertaining talk on the 19th century life of an endearing rogue and criminal mastermind, Adam Worth.  
*Katie Cohen*

**NEWCASTLE: AN AFTERNOON AT THE BISCUIT FACTORY GALLERY**

The gallery curator gave a brief talk on the history of the gallery, which houses handmade glass, jewellery, etc., by emerging and resident artists.  
*Agnes Isaacs*

**NEWCASTLE: "KEEP QUIET" FILM ABOUT DEPUTY LEADER OF 'JOBBIK'**

The antisemitic Hungarian, Csanadi Szegedis, discovered his grandmother was an Auschwitz survivor who hid the number on her arm. He converted to Judaism.  
*Agnes Isaacs*

**NORTH LONDON: HUMAN RIGHTS**

We had an interesting talk by Margaret Passmore about the furthering of Human Rights, and the Holocaust by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.  
*Elsa Shamash*

**NORTH WEST LONDON: JEWISH NEWS SIMCHA PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR**

Paul Lang spoke about his life as a professional photographer which he enjoys so much that he does not regard it as work. He estimates he has taken more than a million pictures at over 1500 functions.  
*David Lang*

**PINNER: BEHIND THE SCENES AT BBC NEWS**

Rob Nothman gave a fascinating insight into the preparation of BBC news programmes. It proved to be a much more complicated process than any of us had imagined.  
*Robert Gellman*

**RADLETT: THE JEWS OF GOLDERS GREEN**

An interesting talk was given by social historian Pam Fox and it was illustrated with very entertaining readings by Pam's husband, Michael.  
*Elfriede and Fritz Starer*

**SURREY: THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF GOLDERS GREEN**

Social historian Pam Fox gave a potted history of how the Jews of this area started, flourished and diversified over time.  
*Janet Clarke & Anthony Partner*

**WESSEX/BOURNEMOUTH: "THE STURGEON QUEEN" – DVD**

After a delicious lunch we saw the story of the smoked salmon dynasty Russ & Daughters of New York. The afternoon was a lovely, and very Jewish, melée of food, culture, religion and commerce.  
*Susie Ellis*

# AT YOUR SERVICE: Computer Help

The AJR has a special team of volunteers who are dedicated to helping our members keep up with the digital age. The team, which is co-ordinated by Claude Vecht-Wolf, currently helps over 30 AJR members with their computers on a regular basis.

"Many people, old and young, have trouble keeping up with technology," explains Claude. "But computers can provide fantastic new ways to communicate, once you learn how to use them. Many of our members now regularly use e-mail and Skype to keep in touch with family and friends. They can be a vital life line, especially for someone who has difficulty getting physically out and about."

Many of the users have specially-adapted computers provided through Natpoint, who took over the SPF Connect project when the Six Point Foundation was closed down earlier this year. The AJR refers clients and provides volunteers to help our members learn to use them effectively. To date over 250 'free' computers have been installed at AJR



Eric Erber, who is in his 90s, has been receiving computer help from an AJR volunteer for some time. He says he finds it extremely useful and that his confidence in using technology has been restored, partly due to the simplified home screen that Natpoint provides

members' houses, and with the project set to run until 2020, there are still some up for grabs.

Simplicity is the key, according to Claude. The SPF computers present users with a stripped-down version of 'Windows' which has just four simple choices: calling, email, web browser and news. These functions allow users to do pretty much everything they need to, without bombarding them with unnecessary options and information. The screens are all operated by touch, making them very easy for people who are unfamiliar with keyboards and computer mice.

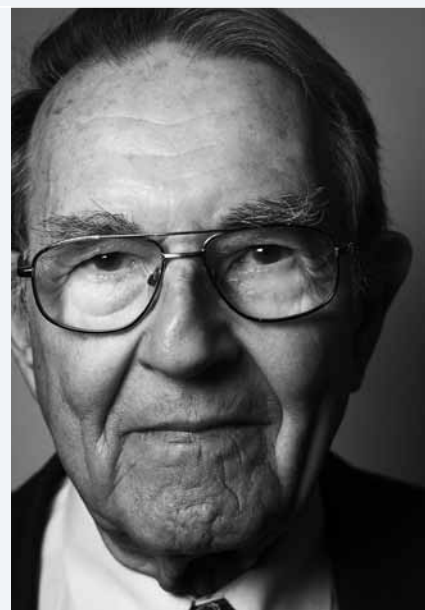
AJR volunteers come to members' homes to

help them learn to use their computers effectively. The volunteers – who range in age from 16 to over 60 – are all trained by Claude and provided with detailed checklists of what to cover. Service users are also given a separate helpline number, operated by Natpoint, which they can call anytime they need technical support.

"Over 30 members receive regular (usually weekly or fortnightly) help on using desktop computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones," says Claude. "They are learning to use email, Skype, Google Maps, browse the internet and troubleshoot issues on their phones, tablets and printers. Our oldest recipient is 97!"

# MY EARLY DAYS

**Dr. John Goldsmith worked as a consultant physician and nephrologist at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. The following is an excerpt from a paper he published on his early life, to mark his installation as a Life Member of the Liverpool Medical Institution:**



Dr Goldsmith then and now

*"I was born near Düsseldorf; my mother was a dental surgeon and my father (who wanted to become a cellist) was obliged to enter his family's grain importing business. The marriage did not last and my mother married a fellow dentist. I attended a small Jewish school near the Dutch border just as Hitler's anti-Semitic rants were filling the airwaves. In May 1933 my stepfather, who had unwisely failed to keep his left-wing political views to himself, was imprisoned on some totally fictitious charges; when the charges could not be substantiated he was released. He and my mother fled to another dentist's house but on 13 May four masked men forcibly entered this house and dragged my stepfather into a waiting car. Two days later his tortured and shot body was found floating in a reservoir.*

*The British Government allowed a small number of German and Austrian refugee dentists to settle in the UK*

*without having to requalify and my mother was one of these fortunate few. She was introduced to the Cambridge mathematician Charles Burkill, whose wife (an immigrant from Odessa) worked tirelessly on behalf of Jewish immigrants. She negotiated my admission to The Leys, a public school in Cambridge, where I joined the chapel choir as a treble (though I did not understand the hymns!) and she helped my mother open a dental practice in our flat.*

*On my 16th birthday I was interned on the Isle of Man as an 'enemy alien'. As many of the refugees had been academics, voluntary lectures and schooling soon evolved. Then I was interned in Canada, where camp conditions were extremely primitive. After nine months, I was allowed to return to The Leys, which had been evacuated to the beautiful Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry. I took the School Certificate exams and was accepted at Guy's Hospital in London to study medicine. This stood me in good stead when I volunteered for the Royal*

*Army Medical Corps and was posted to Egypt.*

*On return to Britain I took up a post at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, which became the launching pad for a career specialising in Nephrology (diseases of the kidneys). In 1961 I was appointed Consultant to the Artificial Kidney Unit at Sefton General Hospital in Liverpool, which later merged with the New Royal Hospital. In the 1980s I was appointed General Manager of the hospital, until my retirement in 1989.*

*My interest in medicine continues but I ceased doing clinical work from the age of 70 and now, at the age of 93, I can look back on a long and satisfying career."*

**Dr John Goldsmith still lives in Liverpool where he is an active voice in local Holocaust education. He has long been an active member of the AJR, who provide him with a computer and a regular computer volunteer. He has three children and nine grandchildren.**

## KINDERTRANSPORT GROUP LUNCH MEETING

Following our usual very good lunch, arranged by Susan Harrod, we were delighted to welcome Rabbi Geoffrey Shisler as our speaker. Born in 1947, he was amongst the youngest present in the room. He retired three years ago from a varied career as a Chazan and a Rabbi. It began with being the Chazan at a wedding when he was just fifteen years old and ended when he retired as

the Rabbi of the New West End Shul in 2014. As it was nearing Rosh Hashanah Rabbi Shisler blew the Shofar for us. He also played for us on his computer several secular and Synagogue musical pieces, ending with one of his own compositions conducted in Canada by Stephen Glass, son of the AJR's Myrna Glass. Small world!  
*David Lang*

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# LOOKING FOR?

The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and others looking for people or for help in particular subjects. Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you can help.

## CAROLINA/CAROLA COHN

In Sobibor in 2016 historians found a silver amulet engraved "Mazel Tov". It belonged to Carolina Cohn, born 1929 in Frankfurt. The city of Frankfurt is now arranging Stolpersteine (commemorative plaques) for Carolina/Carola Cohn and her family and would very much appreciate knowing more about her friends and classmates. Does anybody have school photos of that period? Carolina would have started her school career in about 1935, perhaps at the Samson Raphael-Hirsch School or at the Philantropin School.  
*till.lieberz-gross@unitybox.de*

## PORCHESTER PLACE

David Levin is looking for information about a boarding house at 19 Porchester Place, London W2, that was owned by Mr and Mrs Locke and served German Jewish refugees in the 1940s. David's mother and two Jewish refugee friends from Frankfurt lived and worked there in 1940-1941.  
*levinsdavid@gmail.com*

## SALLY WITTELSON

Dr. Michael Uhl, a German historian, is seeking information on Sally Wittelson who was born 23.12.1907 in Leipzig and emigrated to Czechoslovakia in 1934. He was interned in Camp Vernet in France in 1942 before being deported – together with his wife Betty Rosenfeld – from Drancy to Auschwitz and killed. Sally's brother Nathan, sister Helene and mother Rosa all emigrated to London and are now deceased.  
*michaeluhl@aol.com*

## MARIE SCHMOLKA

Anna Hájková and Martin Smok are in the process of setting up a memorial foundation in the name of Marie Schmolka née Eisner (1893 Prague-1940 London), the Zionist and social worker who organized emigration from Czechoslovakia in the 1930s. They are looking for anyone who knew her or has information about her as well as on Elizabeth Wolff-Fürth, the sculptor who cast Schmolka's death mask. They are also looking for details about the Marie Schmolka Society (the name of the Czechoslovak WIZO in Great Britain) that continued until at least 1990. Leading members included Nelly Engel, Malka Lodski, Anita Mervyn, and Anita Dawidowicz.  
*Anna.Hajkova@warwick.ac.uk or Dr Hájková, History Department, Warwick University, CV4 8UW*

## INGE AHRENDTS

Peter Luthje in Finland is researching his family's WW2 history. His late mother Maija (Katri-Maija) Vahermo studied German language in Berlin 1938 for three months at age 19. She lived in the Berlin-Wannsee area with a German-Jewish family called Ahrens or Ahrendts whose two daughters were a similar age. The daughters – one of whom was called Inge – subsequently escaped to England, but their parents died in a concentration camp. Peter would love to receive any information about Inge or her sister.  
*peter.luthje@pp.inet.fi*

## CLARA PHILIPSBORN

Judith Berlowitz is hoping to discover what happened to her relative Clara Philipsborn, who was born in Kiel, Germany, in 1890, and then moved to Spain in the 1930s. In 1939 she came to London and lodged at 8 Lees Place and is believed to have eventually married someone with the surname of Gonzalez. Family rumours have Clara spending her final days in South America, possibly Lima. There may also be connections with the Communist Party.  
*jberlowitz331@gmail.com*

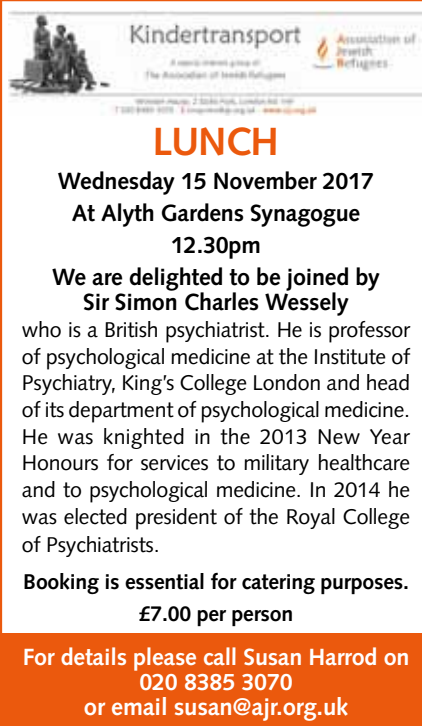
## KURT ASCH

David Asch is looking for any information on his father Kurt, who was born in Oberhausen and came to England in 1939, possibly via a Kindertransport, and is believed to have attended school in Yorkshire. Kurt's own father, Arthur, was a judge in Düsseldorf. Unfortunately Kurt died in 1989, before David had chance to personally ask him all about his life and history.  
*david@davidasch.net*

## OLD TESTIMONIES

The Wiener Library is searching for people who gave eye witness testimonies about the Holocaust to the library in the 1950s and 1960s. We are developing a substantial new project based on these testimonies and are trying to trace their authors and/or descendants. If you think you or a family member may have given testimony, please contact the Wiener Library at *info@wienerlibrary.co.uk* or 020 7636 7247.

If you would like to place a search notice in a future issue of the AJR Journal, please email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk) including the words **SEARCH REQUEST** in the title of your email.



The poster features a header with the text "Kindertransport" and "Association of Jewish Refugees". Below this, it reads "A special dinner given by The Association of Jewish Refugees". The main text of the poster is: "LUNCH Wednesday 15 November 2017 At Alyth Gardens Synagogue 12.30pm We are delighted to be joined by Sir Simon Charles Wessely who is a British psychiatrist. He is professor of psychological medicine at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London and head of its department of psychological medicine. He was knighted in the 2013 New Year Honours for services to military healthcare and to psychological medicine. In 2014 he was elected president of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. Booking is essential for catering purposes. £7.00 per person For details please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

# OBITUARIES

## Hella Marie Daltrop

20 February 1922 – 1 August 2017

**Hella was born in Schwerin, Germany, of Polish parents. Her father left Poland after WW1 and became known as the best tailor in town. All the high ranking civil servants were his customers.**

Those same civil servants joined the Nazi party. In 1933 one of them advised Hella's father to remove his children from higher education before they were expelled. Hella and her older brother were sent to a state school for poor families and their parents decided they needed to leave Germany. It took them five years to obtain visas for England where Hella's uncle was living.

After Kristallnacht, two policemen arrested both of Hella's parents. Hella's

mother was released but they took her 18 year old brother in her place. Hella's mother was privately advised by the police to go to England immediately to guarantee their release. Miraculously this happened: Hella and her family were on their way to a new life in Birmingham.

In May 1941 Hella became a corporal in the ATS office then a sergeant, ending her 5 year army career as chief clerk to the Assistant Director of the ATS.

Back in civilian life in Birmingham, Hella finally found a job she really loved, becoming Office Manager for an import-export company. She was a treasured employee and her bosses visited her with bouquets for many years after she retired.

Hella met Rolf (born in Hamburg) in



the late 1930s at the German Jewish refugees' club in Birmingham. They married in 1950 and were very happy. Sadly, Rolf passed away three months before their diamond wedding anniversary.

Hella was a loving aunt to Alan, Lyn, Jan and Brian, and was fascinated by their trip to Schwerin in 2012 to trace her family's roots. Her good friend Hilary Stone gave a poignant and loving eulogy at her funeral.

**Sandra Alexander**

## Avram Schaufeld

Born Chorzow, Poland, on 30 April 1926, died London 30 July 2017

**Avram Schaufeld, born Alfred, was one of life's true gentlemen. Famous for his great humour, he performed no end of kindnesses for his friends and neighbours. His wife Vera proudly states, "You couldn't hope to meet a kinder man anywhere".**

He had many fond memories of growing up in a large Jewish family. But there were also horrors. Forced by war to curtail his education at just 13, he worked in a German clothing factory in Sosnowiec, and later became an inmate of Sakrau, Graeditz, Blechhammer, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald and Langenstein Zwieberger camps, until his liberation by American soldiers in 1945.

After hospitalisation and nearly three years in displaced persons camps, Avram came to Britain under the European Voluntary Workers Scheme and became a miner in Scotland, where his English language skills developed. In 1949 he emigrated to Israel

and met Vera – who was originally from Prague – at Kibbutz Nitzanim on her first night there, when he excused himself from dinner to go and milk his "sheeps". Not only did she correct his grammar, she insisted he show her, doubting it was possible. They were married for 64.5 years.

In 1954 Avram and Vera returned to Britain and settled in Wembley. Avram was determined to study a vocation and decided on physiotherapy. He worked in various hospitals across London, ending his career managing a team of 14 physios at Manor House Hospital. After retirement he remained engaged with the NHS, inspecting local GP surgeries and interviewing patients about their care in hospital.

Avram was a gifted linguist, fluent in English, German, Yiddish, Polish and Hebrew, and comfortable in Russian and French too. He and Vera travelled all over the world, and Avram played the harmonica and loved gardening. His sense of humour was reflected in his favourite sayings ("You can't dance at two weddings" and "Don't fall off



the narrow bridge"), but belied the darker thoughts that were a legacy from the Shoah, but which only really came to light in the very final years of his life.

Both Avram and Vera were very active within the AJR. Avram took notes for the Wembley group, and they regularly took part in outings and trips. He also did a lot of outreach work in the field of Holocaust education, despite initially finding it difficult to speak about his experiences.

Avram and Vera have two daughters, Rachel and Judith, who between them have given them four wonderful grandchildren.

**Jo Briggs**



## AJR FILM CLUB

Our next film showing will be at Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North, Whetstone N20 9EZ

on **Monday 13 November 2017 at 12.30pm**

Lunch of smoked salmon bagels, Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be served first.

## SUFFRAGETTE

In early 20th-century Britain, the growing suffragette movement forever changes the life of working wife and mother Maud Watts (Carey Mulligan). Galvanized by political activist Emmeline Pankhurst (Meryl Streep), Watts joins a diverse group of women who fight for equality and the right to vote. Faced with increasing police action, Maud and her dedicated suffragettes must play a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse, risking their jobs, homes, family and lives for a just cause.

**£8.00 per person**

**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL**

Please call Susan Harrod on **020 8385 3070** or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)



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**WEDNESDAY 22nd November at 2.30pm**

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**For details and application  
Please contact Susan Harrod on  
020 8385 3070 or [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**

## AJR ANNUAL CHANUKAH PARTY All Welcome



Thursday 14th December 2017  
at North West Reform Synagogue  
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN  
Cost £10.00 per person payable on the door  
(Places must be booked in advance)

Starts at 12.00pm Ends at 3.00pm

A welcome by The Chief Executive of AJR  
Michael Newman

Delicious two course lunch

A performance by magician Zap, who will perform table magic to amaze and entertain you during lunch.

After lunch we will have further entertainment by Nick Dobson and his group of singers – a selection of favourite songs to get your toes tapping and singing along to

It is essential that we know exact numbers for catering. Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

## [www.fishburnbooks.com](http://www.fishburnbooks.com)

### Jonathan Fishburn

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

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## WHY NOT TRY AJR'S MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE?

The AJR offers a kosher Meals on Wheels service delivered to your door once a week.

The meals are freshly cooked every week by Kosher to Go. They are then frozen prior to delivery.

The cost is **£7.00** for a three-course meal (soup, main course, desert) plus a **£1** delivery fee.

Our aim is to bring good food to your door without the worry of shopping or cooking.

For further details, please call  
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## VOLUNTEER AWARDS



AJR volunteer Lilian Levy before the awards ceremony

A group of AJR volunteers and staff had the great privilege of attending the inaugural Jewish Volunteer Network dinner last month to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the charity's establishment.

We were especially proud that the Lifetime Volunteering award was presented to Lilian Levy, who has been a tireless supporter and friend of the AJR's for many years. Lilian managed the archive of Jewish Refugees Committee when it was housed in our offices, and now volunteers for our editorial and publishing teams on a weekly basis.

Other AJR volunteers at the dinner included the gentleman who serves on one of our Claims Conference advisory committees to the lady who reads the AJR Journal onto CD, to the young lady who befriended two members in Newcastle and is now looking for volunteering opportunities with us in London. We were further delighted to watch two of our volunteers be inducted into the JVN Hall of Fame.

Much credit goes to our Head of Volunteering, Carol Hart, for building such a strong relationship with all our volunteers and with the JVN.

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

HASHAVA – the Holocaust Restitution Company of Israel – has formally closed its gates.

Founded in 2006 on the 70th anniversary of the Shoah, HASHAVA has concentrated on locating monies invested into Eretz-Israel by European Zionists who sadly never reached its shores, and restituting these assets to their heirs and other worthy recipients.

During HASHAVA's eleven-year lifetime it has restituted assets worth an astonishing NIS 718 million (approximately £152 million) to heirs, and delivered a further billion NIS to needy Holocaust survivors.

Writing his final report for HASHAVA its CEO Dr Israel Peleg said he was "...hopeful that the work of the Restitution Company to right the wrongs of history will be entered, even as a mere footnote, into the most painful chapter in the history of the Jewish People, a chapter which will certainly one day become another Haggadah that will be passed down from generation to generation – The Holocaust Haggadah – which will add another layer in the chronicles of the entire Jewish people."

## THE ESSENTIAL LINK



Despite saving the lives of thousands of Jews, taking an integral role in the Kindertransport and with contacts in British Intelligence, Wilfrid Israel is a sometimes forgotten hero. The wealthy owner of one of Berlin's largest department stores, Israel was a deeply enigmatic figure. A new documentary –

*Wilfrid Israel: The Essential Link* explores his remarkable rescue operations, and is based on 'Wilfrid Israel, German Jewry's Secret Ambassador' (1984), the biography written by Naomi Shepherd which has just been reissued as an e-book.

The UK premiere of the documentary, sponsored by AJR, is screening on Sunday 26 November 4.30pm at the Regent Street Cinema as part of the Jewish Film Festival. There are also screenings in Leeds & Manchester. Full details on <http://ukjewishfilm.org/event/wilfrid-israel-essential-link-2/>

## ROMANTIC VIENNA

On Sunday 12 November, to coincide with the weekend of remembrance, Belsize Square Synagogue is hosting a concert of music from Vienna. It promises to be an evening of beautiful memories and romantic moments. More info from 020 7794 3949 or on [www.synagogue.org.uk](http://www.synagogue.org.uk)



## KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATION

AJR member Ruth Jacobs will be among the speakers at the Kristallnacht Commemorative Service at Belsize Square Synagogue on Thursday 9 November. The service will commence at 2pm and be led by Rabbi Stuart Altshuler. To book please email Rosemary Peters at [rosemary@ajr.org.uk](mailto:rosemary@ajr.org.uk).

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