



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Refugees and Nostalgia

Last December I went to the 90th birthday of a dear friend, a Jewish refugee from Hungary. He managed to escape from Hungary two weeks before war broke out in 1939.



My Family and I, a work from A Memory of Memories, depicting Herman's pre-war life in Poland

At his birthday dinner his wife sang a beautiful Hungarian folk song, possibly a lullaby. Most of the guests were Hungarian refugees and sang along. The atmosphere was extraordinary. You could feel the nostalgia, the power of the memories shared by almost everyone in the room. It made me think how little is written about refugees and memory.

A few days ago, the Jewish writer, Gabriel Josipovici published *Forgetting*, a book of reflections on memory and forgetting, from Homer and *Hamlet* to the Holocaust. It's a superb reminder of how many of the great works of western literature are about memory and nostalgia. The book is full of insights into the longing to return home in Homer's *Odyssey*, the way a madeleine suddenly brings Marcel's childhood to

life in Proust's *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, Claude Lanzmann's determination to make the eyewitnesses remember what happened to them in the camps in his film, *Shoah*. *Forgetting* is so good about how complicated memory is, both private memory and public memorials and statues.

The great Israeli writer, Aharon Appelfeld, wrote one last masterpiece before he died, *The Man Who Never Stopped Sleeping* (2017). The main character, based on himself, is born in Bukovina and flees for his life after the Nazis murder his mother. A few years later he comes to Palestine. He changes his name, learns a new language, Hebrew, and becomes a writer. In his dreams, he is haunted by memories of his childhood home and is visited by

Continued on page 2

A FORUM FOR DESCENDANTS

This month we look back at the fascinating lives of several Jewish refugees, including the Freud family and David Hirschfield, the 'father of canoeing'.

We also include a very inspiring account written by a member of the Third Generation, about her trip across Europe with her grandfather. Her experience demonstrates the huge appetite among descendants of Holocaust refugees and survivors to get involved. This is why, in April, the AJR is staging our first ever international forum dedicated to the Second Generation. See the advert on page 3 for more details.

We hope you enjoy our February issue and would welcome any comments.

News.....	3
The Father of Canoeing	4
Letter from Israel.....	5
Letters to the Editor.....	6
A BAFTA for the Third Generation.....	7
Art Notes.....	8
Dissent and Displacement	9
The Quiet Quaker.....	10
Commemorating Kristallnacht and the Bibrings	11
Remembering the Freuds	12 - 13
Around the AJR.....	14 - 15
Reviews.....	16
Looking for.....	17
Obituaries	18 - 19
Events & exhibitions.....	20

Please note that the views expressed throughout this publication are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

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Refugees and Nostalgia (cont.)

his parents who can't understand why he has changed his name and can no longer speak to them in his native tongue. It is an extraordinary story about losing one's past.

In 1940 my father arrived in Britain. He had left Warsaw in 1938 and escaped Belgium, then France, before arriving in Britain. At a detention camp he met up with an old friend from Warsaw, the Yiddish poet, Itzik Manger. My father painted Manger's portrait. When Manger died in 1969, my father wrote about their encounter: "The unceasing talker he was, it was a tonic to my nerves merely to listen to the purity of his Yiddish. There he talked and I painted. Nostalgia, like an insatiable thirst, burnt in my throat. We were both mad. The window was open, and in the distance the London docks were on fire..."

Two things stand out from this account. First, "nostalgia". One way of talking about the paintings and drawings my father first made when he came to Britain during the war is that they are full of, bursting with, nostalgia, a yearning for the world of his childhood.

The second thing that stands out is the phrase, "We were both mad." In all the literature about Jewish refugees who fled to Britain in the 1930s and '40s – before and after the Holocaust – this is one word you will rarely find. "Mad". Nostalgia, yes – but also, the dark, mad side of nostalgia.

Soon afterwards my father arrived in Glasgow. He met a journalist in a library in the Gorbals and asked him where he could find someone who spoke Yiddish. He was directed to the Jewish sculptor, Benno Schotz. They became lifelong friends. As with Manger, it was so important to my father to be able to speak Yiddish again. For the rest of his time in wartime Glasgow, he drew and painted images from the Jewish world of his childhood in Warsaw, a world that was being destroyed as he was recreating it. He later called these drawings of Jewish life, "Memory of Memories".

In her memoir, the Polish Jewish refugee, Mira Hamermesh, describes going to the Academy Cinema in London in 1959. She had gone to see the film *Generation* directed by Andrzej Wajda. Watching this Polish film overwhelmed her. The past

erupted into her life, it "had torn open old wounds. My feet carried me through London streets, but my head remained in Poland... It exploded my defence system, a makeshift survival kit devised to release me from my accountability to the dead." "The Academy Cinema," she writes later, "had opened a door to ghosts."

What do these very different stories tell us about memories, displacement and loss? First, how many things can bring back memories of our past. A childhood song, a favourite dish, small objects, images of home, words spoken in Yiddish, a film... All of these can bring back powerful memories for those driven from their homeland, fleeing for their lives.

Second, how the world of our childhood never leaves us. We may learn new languages, assimilate to a very different culture, live surrounded by different landscapes and objects. But as in Appelfeld's book or Mira Hamermesh's account, we are haunted by the past, by those we left behind.

We forget that *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines nostalgia first as "Acute longing for familiar surroundings, esp. regarded as a medical condition; homesickness." Nostalgia was a form of sickness. Longing for the past can drive us mad.

That's a medical take on nostalgia. But Mira Hamermesh's language is more powerful. A sudden memory "had opened a door to ghosts." Many refugees are haunted by the past. That is what makes Appelfeld's book so powerful.

There are so many fine books and documentaries made about refugees. Few of them, though, talk about memory and fewer still talk about the dark side of memory and nostalgia, how we are haunted by the past, by the dead.

I think of Appelfeld's hero walking around Israel, his mind full of memories of his childhood home and those who had been killed, or of Mira Hamermesh walking around the West End in 1959 seized by thoughts of her parents killed in Poland, or my father walking around Glasgow in 1940 looking for someone with whom he could speak Yiddish.

The key image is of loneliness. All these people are solitary, walking around

foreign cities, their minds full of people and languages they once knew. It is no exaggeration to say these three people have been driven mad by grief for the past.

But there is another side to memory. Think of the Hungarians singing together in a restaurant in north London. They are not alone, they are sharing a meal and a familiar song. Memory has a dark side, but it can also have a very positive side, bringing people together in a community. They have not returned home, like Odysseus. They have built a new home in Britain, a country which offered a kind of welcome.

New histories of Jewish refugees must tell both these stories. How so many built new lives, new families, and remembered old songs and old dishes. But how many did this, while at the same time finding it so hard to let go of the dead.

David Herman




FOUNDATION

REMEMBERING & RETHINKING

The international forum on the Second Generation

will take place on 21 & 22 April 2020 at Stamford Bridge, London, in partnership with the Chelsea Foundation.

Sessions will explore a range of different issues around what it means to be Second Generation and the future of Holocaust remembrance.

Topics will include psychology, identity, genealogy, legacy and memorialisation. It will be of interest to members of the Second Generation and their families, educators, academics and anyone with an interest in educating about and commemorating the Holocaust.

Further details and ticket information will be published on the AJR website in due course.

PLAQUE FOR OTTO SCHIFF

The AJR has unveiled a commemorative plaque in honour of the founder, chair and director of the Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC), Otto Schiff CBE, at Woburn House, Tavistock Square in London which served as the Committee's HQ from 1933 to 1939.

Otto Schiff was born in 1875 in Frankfurt and was the nephew of banker Jacob Schiff. In 1896, aged 21, he came to London to become a partner in the merchant banking firm Bourke, Schiff and Co. His brother Ernst followed some time

later and during WW1 the brothers ran shelters for Belgian refugees.

In 1922 Otto became President of the Jews' Temporary Shelter, leading naturally to his position as head of the JRC, which later became the German Jewish Aid Committee and today is known as World Jewish Relief. Otto Schiff was instrumental in setting up the necessary support infrastructure to maintain the Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain and received the CBE in recognition of his role.

Guests at the December unveiling of the AJR plaque included The Lord Sassoon, one of Schiff's six great nieces and nephews, The Rt



VIP guests at the December unveiling

Hon. the Lord Pickles, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Post- Holocaust Issues. AJR Trustee Frank Harding, who devised the plaque scheme, said "Otto Schiff was a tireless humanitarian who devoted much of his life to assisting refugees escaping oppression and war and we are delighted to install this permanent recognition in his honour."

MEMORIAL DEADLINE



Latest design for the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

There are just a few days left to log support for or comments about the plans for the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre which is proposed to be built at Westminster.

In November the Government notified Westminster Council of its decision to call in the planning application, to ensure it becomes a national rather than a local decision. In the meantime the deadline for comment via the Westminster Council site is 10 February - see www.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications reference 19/00114/FULL

Teaching Recommendations

The 34 member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) have adopted refreshed *Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust*.

Based on the IHRA's original guidelines formulated close to 20 years ago, the refreshed Recommendations reflect current societal needs and the latest educational research. Designed for policymakers, textbook editors, curriculum planners, school administrators, educators and teachers, the Recommendations provide a basis to:

- develop knowledge of the Holocaust, ensuring accuracy in individual understanding and awareness about antisemitism and its possible consequences
- create engaging teaching environments for learning about the Holocaust
- promote reflective thinking including the ability to counter Denial and Distortion
- contribute to Human Rights and genocide prevention education.

The English version can be found at <https://holocaustremembrance.com/educational-materials>

Dutch Railways Compensation

Holocaust survivors and the families or heirs of Holocaust victims, who were transported to concentration and extermination camps during WW2 by Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS), the

Dutch state railway company, may be eligible to receive a lump sum payment from a fund established last year by NS. For more info see <https://commissietegemoetkomingns.nl>

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The Alfred Landecker Foundation is partnering with the Claims Conference to provide €5 million (\$5.5 million) to be used for emergency assistance for the most vulnerable Holocaust survivors worldwide.

See <https://www.alfredlandecker.org/121219-press-release>

The Father of Canoeing

Judie Cole remembers how her father, who left Germany in 1933, turned his Berlin hobby into his London livelihood.

My father, Fritz Otto David Hirschfeld, was born into a comfortably off family in Berlin on 1 April 1900. He was the youngest of three children. The eldest, Erna, born in 1890, committed suicide in 1916, suffering from a paranoia of perceived dirt and contagion, although her parents tried all the treatments then known, such as spending time in Switzerland's 'clean air'. His elder sister, Leonie, was born in 1894, and came to the UK in 1936; her two children followed, one as a Kindertransport child.

The family, while in Berlin, was a pillar of the community, involved in various charities. These included the Jewish hospital, founded in the mid-18th century. It is still there and today supports the local, mostly Turkish community. My parents thought of themselves as assimilated and had a traditionally liberal outlook on Judaism. They lived in the Fasanenstrasse, a good address, until they sold the property, presumably as a result of the Wall Street crash of 1929.

Fritz (he used 'David', once he started living in the UK) was educated as an engineer and specialised in front-wheel-drive motors: he was in college in Berlin for two-and-a-half years and did apprenticeships for a further three years. Thinking it wise to spend some time in Britain and observe developments in Nazi Germany from there, my father came here in the middle of 1933 and found a job in Newcastle at Armstrong-Saurer, a UK/Swiss engineering company which needed a technical translator and a qualified engineer. After a couple of years, the firm reorganised and David found himself out of a job. He decided to stay in the UK, and started producing folding canoes, a novel product in Britain, though not in Germany. The family,

when they lived in Berlin, would spend weekends canoeing and boating on the many lakes surrounding the city.

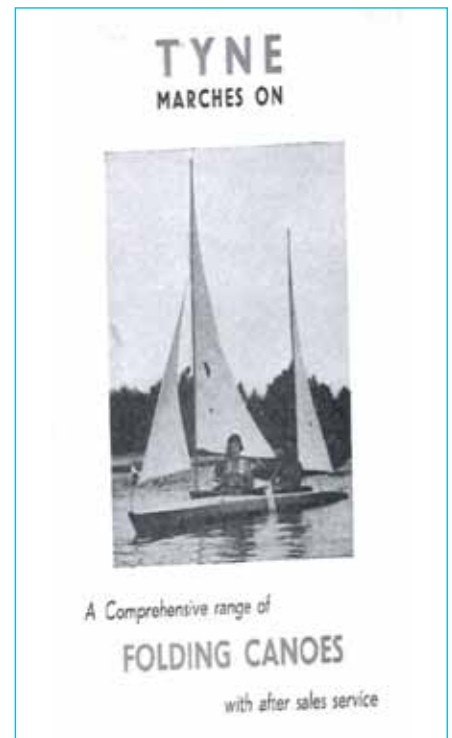
The production of canoes involved building a wooden skeleton of frames and rods, covered by a heavy cotton duck canvas deck and with a rubberised keel. The equipment could be collapsed and packed into two bags that were easy to transport. David started Tyne Folding Boats in 1935, in a small workshop in south-west London; he eventually had twelve permanent staff. He supplied canoes to, among others, Gamages (a department store long since gone), Hamleys, St Donat's Castle outward-bound school in Wales. He worked with the British Canoe Union, and supported the Olympic team's canoeing coach. My father became known as the 'Father of Canoeing in Britain'.

Interned as an 'enemy alien', David was released after several months, thanks partly to the efforts of his sister; she wrote to the Home Office insisting on David's value in supporting manufacturing. For the war effort he deployed six Singer sewing machines he had been using. He provided the army with canoes for operations on the Nile. In the film *Cockleshell Heroes*, Tyne canoes were used to portray a military manoeuvre against the German navy on the French coast. When he was 72, he sold Tyne Canoes; Tyne plans to build one's own canoe are still used.

My father was a keen canoe-camper and for some years was president of the Canoe Camping Club. After retiring in 1972 to a house near the Thames, he continued canoeing daily. He used to canoe to a local island, Raven's Ait, to help Sea Cadets repair their boats. In that



Fritz Otto
David
Hirschfeld



Sales leaflet for David Hirschfeld's company, Tyne Folding Boats

role he was on TV in the 1950s, when he appeared in *What's my Line*. The panel had to guess what he had done: it was to paddle across the Channel. David undertook many canoeing trips abroad – to Finnish Lapland, Greenland, Canada and other places. I was lucky enough to do one or two trips with him.

David married my mother, Liselotte, in 1943. She was seventeen years his junior and had come from Nuremberg, also in 1933, to work as a midwife. Their first child, Helen, was autistic, though this was not confirmed to them until she was more than two years old. This led my parents to become active members of Mencap; my father was the charity's president for seventeen years.

He was canoeing with a friend on the day he died in March 1986.

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



BOUGHT, BORROWED OR STOLEN? ART FROM THE GURLITT TROVE



At an exhibit entitled 'Fateful Choices: Art from the Gurlitt Trove,' the Israel Museum's Curator of European Art,

Shlomit Steinberg, gave a fascinating talk about the history, geography, sociology and provenance of the huge collection of paintings, drawings, prints and lithographs found in 2012 in an apartment belonging to Cornelius Gurlitt, an elderly recluse living in Munich and virtually unknown to the German authorities.

By chance, the strange gentleman who occasionally travelled by train to Switzerland was stopped for ticket inspection. He had not broken any law, he protested, when asked to clarify why he was carrying a large sum of cash. Upon further investigation it transpired that he had never paid taxes, never worked, never registered at a university, never bought or sold an apartment, never married and never registered the birth of a child. Thus

he had remained 'under the radar' of the authorities throughout his adult life.

When the tax inspectors looked further into the activities of the mysterious individual, it transpired that in addition to two apartments in Munich he owned another one in Salzburg, Austria. These were all subsequently found to be crammed full of art works of every conceivable kind and genre. Further investigation revealed that Cornelius' father, Hildebrand, had been a gallery owner and art dealer, a known figure on the German art scene, from the 1920s until his death in 1956. On his trips to Switzerland he would sell a painting, drawing or print to art dealers.

In the global media the collection was touted as 'Nazi looted art,' but that is not completely true. Some of the art works were paintings and drawings made by artistically talented members of the Gurlitt family. As an art dealer in Weimar Germany, Hildebrand had accumulated a diverse collection of works, some of which were presumably sold legitimately to art collectors. After the Nazis' rise to power there were opportunities for buying works defined as 'degenerate,' and Hildebrand was not slow to benefit from this. In addition, persecuted artists or Jews sold art works in order to cover the heavy cost of leaving Germany. German Jews were required to submit a detailed list of all the furniture and objects in their possession, enabling many works of art to become the property of the state.

Hildebrand Gurlitt was appointed an official art dealer on behalf of the Nazi regime and acquired works of art in Paris. These were destined for the museum Hitler intended to build in his home town of Linz, Austria, or to be sold to foreign buyers to obtain much-needed foreign currency for the German war effort. After the war Hildebrand was investigated by the American authorities, was eventually exonerated of having collaborated with the Nazis, and the collection, which contained works by such artists as Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Liebermann, Toulouse-Lautrec, Courbet, Cézanne, Munch and Manet, was restored to him. After his death in 1956 as the result of a car accident, the collection passed to his widow, Helene, and subsequently to their son, Cornelius.

Cornelius Gurlitt died in May 2014, bequeathing all his property to the Museum of Fine Arts in Bern, Switzerland. Since then the collection has been exhibited in several European cities. Some pictures have been identified as having belonged to Jewish families and restored to their heirs. The exhibition currently on show in the Israel Museum will be followed by others elsewhere to enable as many people as possible to view it and, if their claims are confirmed, to regain ownership of works that once were theirs. The emphasis is now on using due diligence to establish the provenance of the works of art in the collection.



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ANNUAL TRIP TO EASTBOURNE

Sunday 28 June – Sunday 5 July 2020

We will once again be running our Annual Trip to the Lansdowne Hotel in Eastbourne, accompanied by Carol Rossen and other AJR Staff.

We will be travelling there and back by coach from North West London as in previous years.

Our stay will include, Dinner, Bed and Breakfast

Single Room from £406 per person for the week

Twin/Double Room (based on 2 people sharing) from £812 per room for the week

Supplement payable for sea view on single and double rooms

Make new friends and meet up with old friends.

Spaces are limited please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070
or email susan@ajr.org.uk to receive an application form and full details.

Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

A SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT PROTEST

One of your January articles commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz referred to the infamous gate with its obscene proverb 'Arbeit macht frei'. It may not be generally known that the *B* in *Arbeit* is inverted, i.e. with the larger loop above the smaller lower loop, making it look lopsided vertically. The story goes that Polish prisoners were ordered to construct the gate and, seeing the lie in the words, decided the only way they could defy their sentiment was to introduce a deliberate mistake.

Rudi Leavor BEM, Bradford

'SAY NO TO ANTISEMITISM'

As a refugee from Berlin in April 1939 I welcome the initiative to involve our descendants in the remembrance of the Holocaust.

I note the key theme of the AJR's two-day conference for the Second Generation at Stamford Bridge in April is *Remembering and Rethinking* and that it is sponsored by the Chelsea Foundation as part of its *Say No to Antisemitism* campaign.

While we need to remember and reflect on the horrors mankind can inflict on its own kind I would urge the next generation to reflect on the spirit of the PRAYER FROM THE CAMPS, reprinted on page 19 of the January issue of the *AJR Journal*.

As Jews, with centuries of persecution culminating in the Holocaust, we have a deep knowledge and hopefully an understanding of what denigration, discrimination, oppression, genocide and dispersal can do to individuals and communities. We should be the first to recognise and call-out when 'others' are subjected to treatment which offends against all the ethical principles of Judaism. Yes, say NO to Antisemitism, but with equal force, the next generation must reject and fight the kind of thinking and actions against the other epitomised by antisemitism.

Frank Lane OBE, Totnes, Devon

A NATIONWIDE PLEA

In a letter last November Victor Ross pointed out (quite correctly) that Gloria Tessler's "Art Notes" are amongst the highlights of the *AJR Journal*. I follow her recommendations faithfully - the latest being the excellent Dora Maar exhibition at the Tate Modern in London, which was well worth seeing.

BUT our Gloria is quite obviously London-based and so the *AJR Journal* is rarely able to review exhibitions in other part of the country. I wish to make a plea, through your Letters pages, for AJR members and friends nationwide to review special events and shows in their local galleries and museums.

Britain is already too London-centric but AJR members and friends in the "provinces" can do something about this.
Kathy Cohen, London N6

LIVING TOGETHER

Thank you for the latest issue of your journal – interesting as usual. I enjoyed particularly Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's *Letter from Israel* and her thoughts about Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. It touched on the most important issue of our time for the citizens of Israel and Palestine: how to live together. Unfortunately she left it hanging in the air in her penultimate paragraph: "And yet".

May I suggest that you invite Ms Shefer-Vanson to expand on those words – and hopefully draw in contributions from your readership? We must learn to understand the views of other people. That may open the possibility of a solution.
Heinz Grünwald, Pinner, Middx

THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD

One would not wish to see the future standing still when all around changes, particularly due to major steps in technology. But instead of appreciating what we achieved in the last century, many young people today have discarded many of the intrinsic values of previous generations.

There is an absence of responsibility of the individual and an imitation of the thoughts and actions of others. Many of the older generation watch with misgiving the direction this world is taking from the relatively decent past, via the unstable present, to the future that lies before them!

History books have always dealt predominantly with wars and rulers. Broadly speaking, nothing much has changed in this respect and the divisions between people, and peoples, has even worsened. One half of our planet is taken up by agriculture: as we would not want to live on the edge of a mountain or in the sea, normal life on our planet, as we know it, will be limited and there is nowhere else to go.

The people of Israel are now looking at this very problem with apprehension for the future. The country, which has been seeking to expand for a century, is now witnessing overcrowding. The Olim, then working on the Kibbutzim, did not think that this could ever happen – and so soon! Israel depends on the Diaspora and vice versa. Could the day come when the country will have to lock its doors to us? Prayers won't solve the problem - but what will?
Fred Stern, Wembley, Middx

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A BAFTA for the Third Generation

Recently the annual BAFTA awards recognised the very best in film of the past year. You may not know that there are also separate British Academy Children's Awards, which recognise the very best in children's media. The 2019 Factual award winner was a CBBC documentary *Finding My Family: Holocaust*, featuring young Maggie Fleet and her grandfather, AJR member Steven Frank. Maggie, now 15, has written a special account of the experience for the *AJR Journal*.

"In September 2018 I was given the opportunity of a lifetime to film a documentary with my Opa (grandfather), a Holocaust survivor. For the documentary Opa and I travelled around Europe, first visiting his old hometown of Amsterdam, then the last camp he was held in at Theresienstadt, and finally we went to Auschwitz.

On our first day in Amsterdam we went on a boat trip around the city. Personally, this was one of my highlights of the trip as I enjoyed seeing all the beautiful houses along the side of the canal. I also enjoyed seeing the areas of which my Opa had such fond memories and hearing about the many different events that took place there when he was little. Then we went to my Opa's old school – the open-air school. It was surprising to see how modern the school was, and it must have been exceptionally modern in the 1930s - a school you would want to be at. I was shocked to learn that my Opa had only attended the school for three weeks, as he always talked about it so fondly. It was even more upsetting when we saw his name crossed off the class records



Maggie Fleet and her grandfather Steven Frank at the recent children's BAFTA awards

when he was removed from the class - how could you deprive harmless children of something they enjoyed so much just because of their background?

On our second day in Amsterdam I visited the Dutch resistance museum to meet with a local historian. He explained the Dutch resistance and the heroic roles played by a handful of people, including my own Great Opa (Leonard Frank), who took huge risks to help save people's lives from injustices. After the visit I met up with my Opa to discuss his father's experiences during the resistance. Hearing about all that he had sacrificed to help others, particularly the mentally ill, made me very proud.

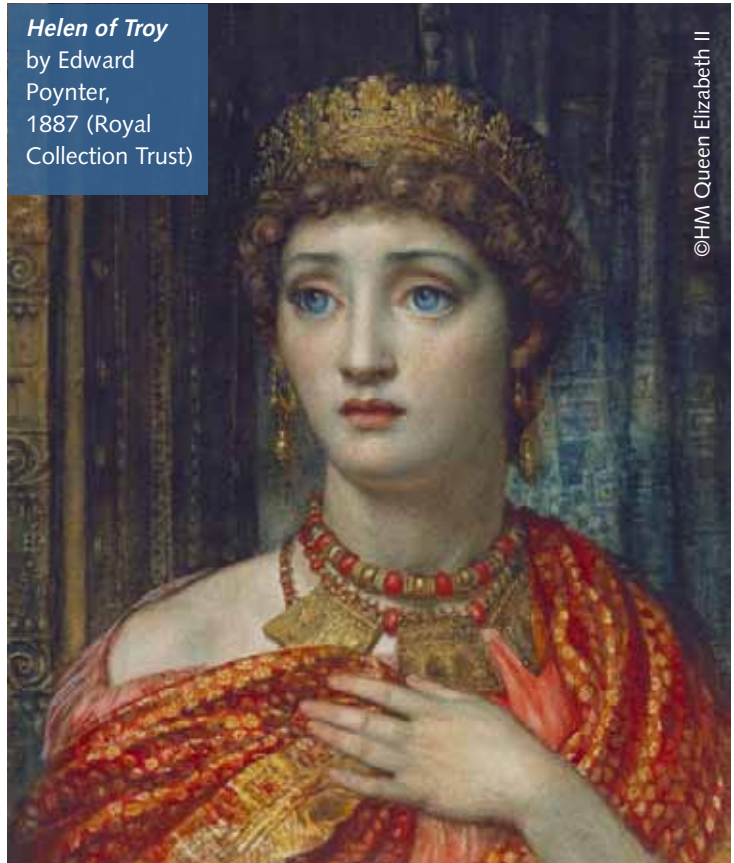
The following day we flew to the Czech Republic to film at Theresienstadt, where my Opa was transported from Barneveld via Westerbork. We were able to see a portion of the old train line near the camp, which my Opa would have almost certainly come in on. Then we went to the Theresienstadt museum, on the site of the camp. A guide showed me some of the prisoners' drawings that conveyed their horrors of being in the camp. Afterwards Opa and I went up to the model bunks, where he told me about his horrendous experiences and the distressing sights he saw. To finish the day, we visited the old hospital where his mother (Beatrix Frank) risked her life to

clean her children's clothes and steal hot water to make an edible slush that kept her children alive. We finished the trip in Auschwitz, which was where I learned exactly what happened to my Great Opa, as well as remembering our other relatives and all the one million Jewish children and adults who lost their lives here. I found it tremendously upsetting. I believe that the only reason my Opa, his brothers and mother survived was due to the massive sacrifices that his mother and father made, as well as his mothers' sheer determination and smart thinking throughout their time in and out of the camps.

I think it is amazing that our documentary programme has been so widely recognised and I hope it will help explain and teach many people in the future. It recently won a BAFTA, which is something I never thought I would be saying, and I am so proud of my Opa for sharing his story with the world. This was an experience I will never forget and I will be forever grateful for being chosen to go on this trip. I believe it is very important for children and adults to learn about the traumas human beings faced during this time so that it will not happen again. One day it will be my turn to tell my Opa's story; now, having viewed his experience second hand, I will be able to give a more convincing version."

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Hers was the incomparable beauty that sent hundreds to their deaths. But did Helen of Troy and the Trojan War really exist? The subject has engaged artists, poets and composers from Homer and Virgil to Sappho, Tennyson and Oscar Wilde; from Richard Strauss to Offenbach, from Paul Rubens to William Blake, and is now examined in the British Museum's exhibition *Troy, Myth and Reality*.



In the 1870s archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann sited Troy in Turkey, and finds from his excavations are shown in the exhibition which describes a cycle of legacies from the wars of the Greeks dating back to around 1200 BC. Extracts from Homer and Virgil are written on the wall alongside diverse paintings from the classical period, to the Pre-Raphaelites and the contemporary era, including sarcophagi and painted Etruscan clay vessels.

A Roman sarcophagus lid with a wheeled and fully armed wooden horse - a metaphor for deception - is a significant loan from the Ashmolean Museum. A centrepiece is the white marble statue *The Wounded Achilles* by the 19th Century sculptor Filippo Albacini. A golden arrow pierces Achilles' heel, by which his divine mother held him while immersing him into the River Styx at his birth. The heel thus rendered him mortal, and he was killed by Paris. Copies of classical Greek sculpture were popular in 19th Century Europe, and a stunning Henry Gibbs sculpture of Achilles' immersion by his mother is tender and moving.

Helen was a Spartan queen married to King Menelaus but the handsome Trojan prince Paris was promised her by the goddess Aphrodite in what became known as the judgement of Paris. She was either

abducted by Paris or went willingly with him to Troy, according to which legend you prefer. With the help of the Trojan horse, the wronged Menelaus fought the Trojans and won her back - according to some, while to others she remained with Paris. Homer reunited her with Menelaus after Paris died in battle and from this point the legendary beauty disappears, leaving us to ponder the fragility of woman and the war-like ravages of man. "It's men that make war", a woman next to me observed. "It's all that testosterone," nodded her friend.

The mythic Helen is later reviled by her enemies, who seek to kill her. Victor or victim, how does an artist even imagine beauty as divine as hers? Based on Paul Rubens' *Judgement of Paris*, contemporary artist Eleanor Antin imagines scenes from Helen's life in a photographic series, *Helen's Odyssey*, using two models; a flirtatious, blonde and a brooding brunette. It is the brunette who vents her fury at being treated as an object.

Hans Eworth, the 16th Century painter, takes a sycophantic and androgynous view of Paris as Elizabeth 1 in the judgement scene. She keeps the golden apple, an orb of power for herself, needing nothing of the goddesses' gifts. In the same era, Louis Cranach's *Judgement of Paris* - he painted 22 versions - portrays the naked goddesses

watched by a lewd armoured Paris gazing lasciviously at Aphrodite who, promising him Helen, turns to us with sly foreboding. In contrast there is William Blake's depiction of pale, luminous goddesses, each offering bribes to Paris. In another mood, Angelica Kauffman's *Hector Taking Leave of Andromache* is a very human study of anticipated loss. William Morris's watercolour design for 12 panels, *Helen Flamma Troiea* offers a robust, sensuous Helen in pink robes, with flowing red hair, almost referencing the Botticelli *Venus*. She holds the flame of Troy, symbol of the passion she ignites.

The Trojan myth remained popular in medieval Europe as royal houses traced their ancestry back to Trojan refugees. This exhibition takes a more analytical view, examining the cost of war and the refugee status it brings to its losers.

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**CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

Dissent and displacement

'There was a bookshelf in our house devoted to unopened volumes of the Nuremberg Trials and Winston Churchill's History of the Second World War. We did not need the books; the unspoken shadow of the Holocaust, WWII and my parents' experiences were ever present in all of our lives' – Monica Petzal.

'Dissent and Displacement' is a new exhibition about opposition, persecution and persistence, referring to the artist Monica Petzal's German Jewish refugee heritage and the outstanding collection of German Expressionism in Leicester, largely gifted by German Jewish refugees.

As Rabbi Baroness Neuberger writes in the foreword to the book which accompanies the exhibition: *Monica Petzal takes on the oldest of journeys- people leaving their homeland because of persecution and war, and turns it into a story that never ends. Using her own family's experience, Petzal forces us to see what gets missed, where longing lies, and how the search for home, and the comfort of home, never really ends.*

The history moves from 1890's East Prussia

and the rise of National Socialism to the life of a Syrian refugee doctor in present-day Leicester, interweaving complex narratives of family, politics, culture and art. Using original sources, it brings together 36 large scale prints with accessible descriptive text. It also includes German Expressionist work, archive objects, photos and film.

Opening with the artist's family and friends in pre-war Germany, it chronicles their oppression after 1933, their attempts to flee and some of the family's tragic fates. It reflects on the degradation of artists, the looting of art and its ongoing legacy. It moves to the story of collector Alfred Hess, whose family escaped with some of their distinguished collection. Befriended by Trevor Thomas, the director of Leicester Museum, works from their collection



helped found the Leicester German Expressionist collection.

The stories draw to a close considering the themes of destruction, fleeing for one's life, naturalisation, and the assimilation conundrum. The artist reflects on her own experience as an artist, as a '2nd generation' immigrant, and her reconnection with being German, through being granted reparative citizenship in 2014.

The exhibition at Leicester New Walk Museum runs from 8 February to 19 April. On 16 February at 12 noon Monica Bohm-Duchen will share 'Some Thoughts on the Work of First and Second Generation (Jewish) Visual Artists.'

www.dissentdisplacement.com

LAST OUTING FOR LEEDS COMMUNITY CHAMP

Leeds United FC recently welcomed a very special guest to their Elland Road ground: AJR member and lifelong Leeds supporter, Heinz Skyte, whose 100th birthday coincided with Leeds United's own centenary season.

Heinz was born in Fürth, near Nuremberg, and arrived in Britain aged 19 where his first outing was to Elland Road. He began work for the Leeds Jewish Welfare

Board in 1951, eventually becoming chief executive and remaining with the board until 1985. He was awarded the MBE for his dedication to community work in 1976.

Ahead of kick-off, Heinz and his son Peter met with the club chairman, who presented them with a 2019/20 home shirt with <SKYTE 100> printed on the back.

As we go to press the AJR was very saddened to learn that Heinz passed away on 31 December, shortly after this event. Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.



The Quiet Quaker

This article by Mike Levy was written with the help of David Hughes (now 100 years old) and with reference to the Mary Hughes papers held at the York Archives.

Born to a Quaker family in 1886, Mary Hughes was, and remained, a quiet and even timid woman who never pushed herself forward. Perhaps all the more remarkable then that she should have played such an active and energetic role on the York Refugee Committee where she acted as Hospitality Secretary. Mary fostered Harry Baum and his sister Franzi in York; years later they remembered her with affection and gratitude. Born in Germany, Harry and Franzi came to Britain on the Kindertransport in December 1938. Thanks to Mary, these Jewish children found safety and affection in an English family. Mary even managed to re-unite them with their mother. Harry grew up with the Hughes family, prospered in Britain and was eventually awarded the MBE by the Queen.

How did this come about? Early in December 1938, Mary's son David, a Cambridge undergraduate, received a letter from his mother urging him to volunteer at the Dovercourt Camp where the first of the Kinder had arrived. He was put in charge of the camp post office and it was there that he spotted Harry and Franzi - two very unhappy Jewish children. He picked up the post office telephone and called his mother. He asked Mary if she would be prepared to take these siblings as foster children. Mary, without a thought, simply replied, "Yes, of course." The brother and sister were put on the next train to York to begin a new life, one

that would turn out to be a permanent one, with the Hughes family.

Writing to her daughter, Mary reflected, "The increase in the family arrived yesterday and they're both darlings! Davy (David) was right - I fell for them on sight. They were overwhelmed with tiredness though, and would eat nothing. [...] they went to bed at 6.30 and I believe slept soundly for the whole night which will do them no end of good [...]." A few weeks after arriving at the Hughes' household, Mary could report to her daughter that the two youngsters had settled down and "were good as gold and are happily part of our ménage now. They are very helpful and easy: good tempered and happy."

She reiterated that her next priority would be to get the children's parents out of Germany. The seemingly endless responsibility towards those in danger was not one that fazed Mary Hughes. She acknowledged that it was hopeless to try to catch up on refugee work as new cases, and new challenges, were mounting as the months towards war advanced. This meant regular trips down to London to liaise with Bloomsbury House, outings to North Yorkshire to give talks on her work (with the aim of raising funds and finding more desperately needed host families). She would wake up to deal with cablegrams from America verifying something about refugees. Her morning postbag was enormous and included airmail missives from Jews in Germany desperate for her help.

Mary's work seemed to grow exponentially as 1939 progressed. She started up a scheme for a refugee hostel which was opened by March, lobbied



Mary Hughes

influential people such as the Archbishop of York. She also managed to get the children's mother (but not their father) out of Germany and up to the Hughes' house in York on a domestic permit.

When war was declared in September 1939, with no prospect of helping any new refugees, Mary threw herself into helping evacuate a local nursery school (and ensure there were sufficient gas masks for all) while ensuring that the refugees in York were either being educated or busily employed. She did the rounds of hospital visiting when the refugees were ill.

Mary Hughes continued to work tirelessly for the welfare of the refugees, taking up the cause of those interned on the Isle of Man. She carried on until her husband John died after an operation in June 1942. 'Her' refugees rallied round, helping her tend the garden and other duties. Her health began to deteriorate and she gradually gave up her work. Those she had helped never forgot her and became lifelong friends and supporters.

Mike Levy

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Commemorating Kristallnacht in Baden Baden

In November AJR member Henry Wuga was invited by the spa town of Baden Baden to commemorate Kristallnacht, also known as Reichspogromnacht. He wrote this report for the AJR Journal.

My daughter Hilary flew with me to Frankfurt airport where we were met by the lady in charge of Kultur-Baden Baden and taken to a hotel which had been converted from a former convent (my room had a 16' high ceiling). The following morning we enjoyed a horse-drawn coach ride along the beautiful Lichtentahler Allee by the river Oos, before being hosted for Sunday brunch at the Kurhaus by Barbara Hoffs, chair of the German-Israeli Association.

That evening the *Gedenkveranstaltung zur Reichspogromnacht* (the commemoration of Kristallnacht) took place in the Town Hall. I spoke,

telling of my impressions as a 14-year old apprentice chef at the Hotel Tannhäuser, which I recall very well. It was hard work but a great learning curve. Another Guest of Honour, Aryeh Levi, spoke of his family's history.

We all then walked, carrying lit candles, down the hill to the memorial, where we laid wreaths and the Rabbi spoke. There was a musical tribute and a minute's silence. It was very emotional.

The next day I was taken to Gymnasium Hohenbaden to talk to a very attentive class of 16-year olds. We were then treated to a delicious lunch, including the



Henry Wuga speaking in Baden Baden

finest cakes and chocolates, at the Café-Pâtisserie König.

At the Badischer Hof Hilary and I went to the beautiful spa and open-air thermal pool. Wonderful to swim outside in November! I have not done that since the Alps. All in all, this was a very special trip which will remain in my memory for a long time.

AJR also wishes mazeltov to Henry & Ingrid Wuga on their recent 75th wedding anniversary.

BIBRINGS AT HOME

A moving ceremony took place in Vienna in December for the installation of commemorative "Stones of Remembrance" in honour of Michael, Lea, Gerta (Freimark) and Harry Bibring.

Lea and Michael Bibring both perished at the hands of the Nazi regime. Their children Gerty and Harry each escaped the horrors of the war on the Kindertransport to carve out new lives for themselves, becoming prominent members of the AJR. Their story, like many, showed their incredible resilience, fortitude and strength of spirit.

"Stolpersteine" are now located in front of the Oben apartment in which the Bibring family lived, honouring all four in perpetuity, and making their descendants very proud.



Remembering the Freuds

Lucian Freud was washing his brushes in the kitchen sink when he turned to me and said, "I am going to be a painter."

I was on holiday with the Freud boys, the year was 1937. He had been teaching me – not how to paint, but how to bet on the horses. I shrugged off his talent and thought him boorish. He had a ruthless streak even then and could turn on one like a wild animal.

My mother must have arranged that stay with the boys; in 1937 she had neither the time nor the means to give me a holiday. Lucian's parents who had arrived in England in 1933 were well established and hospitable. They invited me into their home in St. John's Wood. Lucie, Lucian's mother, fed us cake while we played Monopoly. Lucian was a bad loser. I had only just learned that this was bad form. (In Austria being a bad loser was the norm). Lucie's husband, the architect, liked to play with us but was neurotic about crumbs. I watched with fascination as he tried to catch them before they hit the carpet.

Years later, during a chance encounter at his brother Clement's ("Cle") night club at the Royal Court Theatre, he attacked me furiously when I asked him to repay a loan of three pounds. Cle (pronounced clay), who went from nightclub to knighthood, was more outgoing but I minded his unseemly jokes about his grandfather. Stephen (vere Gabriel), the eldest brother,

was my regular tennis partner and helped me to get "*Basic British*" published. He sold door furniture and shunned the limelight. Indeed, he shunned daylight, spending every afternoon in the basement of his shop watching the racing. The three brothers did not have a good word to say for one another, but they were united in their love of the turf.

The connection between my family, the Rosenfelds, and the Freuds dates back to the 1920s when Siegfried Bernfeld, psychoanalyst, educator and friend of Anna Freud, recommended our home in Vienna as a safe place for one of Anna's patients. It was the beginning of a lifelong relationship between Eva Rosenfeld and Anna Freud. Their letters (some of which were published by IUP in 1992) show them fiercely involved with each other. In one of them Anna writes, 'You are I and I am you...'. Such ardour cooled when my mother moved to Berlin in 1931 as matron at the psychoanalytic clinic in Tegel. Anna distanced herself further as Eva set up as analyst in England and tasted the forbidden fruit of Melanie Klein's teachings.

But there was always recognition of my mother's gifts as educator and moral mentor. So much so that she was entrusted with the care of one of Sigmund Freud's grandsons when he came to live in Vienna. Ernst Halberstadt, Lucian's cousin, was the son of Freud's youngest daughter Sophie who until her early death was married to Max Halberstadt, the photographer responsible for taking the 'official' photos of Freud with his inevitable cigar.

Ernst joined our household. On the eve of the boycott of Jewish-owned shops scheduled for April 1, 1933, when violent Jew-baiting was expected, my mother

decided that we must leave Berlin and take Ernst with us. While she prepared our departure, I was to collect him from his school. I was 14 years old and deemed ready to face difficult times.

Our flight was not without incident. Jews were ordered off the train at Dresden and we spent the night under arrest in an S.A. stronghold. There were machine guns on every floor. Ernst had a ten dollar bill which he rolled into a ball and swallowed. He understood the danger. My mother demanded our release, arguing that as Austrians we were foreigners, held illegally. By midday of the following day the three of us were heading for the border at Passau on our way to Vienna - all part of the service the Freuds would expect and receive from my mother.

The network of relationships was marked by the exchange of presents. The supreme present giver was of course the 'Professor' (as he was known to us) who sealed the bond with his early followers by giving each of them a ring, an act that became part of the mythology of psychoanalysis. Later he gave jewellery to chosen friends including a ring and brooch to my mother.

As Anna's friend and later as Freud's patient, she was favoured in many ways, notably by an inscription in a copy of "*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*". In spiky German script he had written, "Seiner tapferen Eva" (For his valorous Eva), a reference to my sister's death aged 15 in a mountaineering accident and her spirit in adversity. My grandmother received a framed Halberstadt photo (with cigar) inscribed 'To the indispensable Om'; for me there was the prophetic gift of a mini typewriter and one of the gold five dollar coins that had gone in larger numbers to the Freud boys and which Lucian later boasted he had stolen from his brothers to finance his teenage forays into Soho.

Of course, we all wanted to respond. Holidaying with the Freuds in Grundsee, a lakeside resort in Austria, I managed to catch a trout around the time of Frau Professor's birthday and present it to her on a bed of cowslip leaves. My mother excelled at giving inventive presents. Once she strung up thirty small birthday gifts on a silver cord, one for



Lucian Freud (left) with Irish author Brendan Behan, in Dublin 1952



Anna Freud c.1930 (Freud Museum)

each year of giving missed before knowing Anna who responded with poems and products of her loom.

My earliest memory of the Freuds goes back to 1926 and the Professor's 70th birthday. I am the sole survivor of the memorable party in the Berggasse where Vienna's finest had gathered to pay tribute. I was also present at what may have been the last Freud family party, sometime in 1950 at 20 Maresfield Gardens where we were offered coffee and Viennese pastries by Frau Professor. My mother continued her visits there until her death in 1977, more often than not on her own initiative rather than Anna's, who might combine granting access with a request for help with looking after her sister Mathilde.

Of all the Freuds I knew Anna best. She was a quietly imposing figure, a wonderful storyteller to us children. When Anna fell ill, I felt the need to complete the virtuous circle begun by my mother 60 years earlier by offering Anna a late-blooming friendship. It meant taking my turn as regular visitor to the last home of the Professor. My mother called him "a glutton for the truth". He called her 'my dear, grown-up Eva', perhaps implying that analysis had helped her to grow into her true self. I once described him as the Great Uncoverer and was told he did not mind.

A chat with the Professor had been a rare treat. I was the little boy who got patted on the head, allowed to play with his Chow. When I saw him in London, by then a student at university, his jaw was ravaged by years of cancer and speaking was an effort. But when my grandmother called on him not long before his death, he was sitting at his desk, surrounded by his books and artefacts. Pointing, he said, 'Everything is here, but I am not here.'

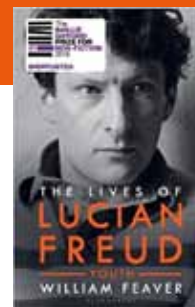
Today the house is a museum and I am a museum piece. Soon I shall be able to claim - if I cannot do so already - that I am the only one left alive to have held the hand of "the important Jew" who, in Auden's words, "changed the climate of opinion".

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REVIEW

THE LIVES OF LUCIAN FREUD: YOUTH

William Feaver
Bloomsbury
ISBN; 978-140 885 0930



Lucian Freud was eighteen years old when, in 1941, he painted *The Refugees* (accessible online). The man in the middle of the portrait is said to represent the Freud family's Finchley Road dentist. He wears dark glasses and has combed his diminishing hairs across his nearly barren pate.

Freud called the figures a 'joke refugees group' of '(friendly) enemy aliens'. In his recent first volume of *The Lives of Lucian Freud* covering Freud's 'Youth', William Feaver refers to them as a set of oddly clad characters straight off the boat. With their backs to the sea, the refugees are, in Feaver's interpretation, suspicious of England, but have nowhere else to go.

Feaver met Freud in 1973, and has based his work on hundreds of hours of transcribed conversations he recorded over the years with the artist, who died in 2011. Freud told Feaver: 'Refugees were terrified when they came, and demoralised. So many there were, Jews in Golders Green and Hampstead, and they gathered in those terrible restaurants in Finchley Road: horrible and Germanic and only a bit better than concentration camp food. And they'd sit there. Just sit there.'

Freud's biographer contrasts the refugees with the artist himself, whose family had been 'immigrants with possessions and opportunities and potential for assimilation.' Lucian told Feaver: 'We weren't refugees, we were émigrés.' He and his family left Berlin for London in 1933.

It was not only Hitler and his

nationwide boycott of Jewish shops in April 1933 that made Lucian's father Ernst, Sigmund's youngest son and a successful architect in the German capital, consider emigration. A relative by marriage was murdered, while drinking coffee on the terrace of a café on the famous Kurfürstendamm boulevard. To look into work, housing and school prospects, Ernst visited London that summer. In September, his wife Lucie took their three sons to England and put them in Dartington, the ultra progressive co-educational school in Devon. Back in Berlin, Ernst wound down his practice and prepared their furniture and other possessions for removal. He left that November.

Having been resident for more than five years, the family had been hoping to acquire British nationality - and passports - when they learned in 1939 that the government had suspended the naturalisation of German subjects. Sigmund Freud's patient Princess Marie Bonaparte pulled strings. She was linked through marriage to the Greek and British royal families. Lunching with the Duke of Kent, she mentioned the plight of Sigmund and his family. According to Lucian, 'the Duke lifted the phone and that afternoon someone from Immigration came round.' The Freuds were issued with passports just as war was declared. Lucian believed he might otherwise have been interned on the Isle of Man, like an uncle, or despatched to Australia, like a cousin.

Martin Mauthner

Around the AJR

These are just a few of the many recent AJR events around the country.

YORK



York members enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of Marc and Rosl Schatzberger.
Edith Jayne

EDINBURGH



Members of the Edinburgh AJR relaxing after a very tasty and enjoyable pre-Chanukah lunch.
Agnes Isaacs

PINNER

Australian guitarist Dean Staker entertained 40 guests at our Chanukah party, and got us all to sing along whilst we enjoyed our "nosh".
Henri Obstfeld

GLASGOW



The shimmering lantern-filled hall was buzzing as First and a large contingent of Second Generation arrived to celebrate Chanukah in true AJR style. The food was delicious and the entertainment provided by Denton Drover's irresistible High Five Swing Band was superb. A lovely time was had by all.
Agnes Isaacs

NEWCASTLE

30 people came to Newcastle's Reform Synagogue for the AJR Chanukah lunch. Agnes and husband served a beautiful three-course meal, brought all the way from Glasgow, while a magician left us all absolutely spellbound.
Elaine Goldsmith

KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH



Ex Labour MP Joan Ryan addressed a large group at Alyth Gardens synagogue during our monthly lunch for the AJR's Kindertransport Special Interest Group.
Ros Hart

MANCHESTER



Just a few of the members who had fun at our annual Chanukah party.
Wendy Bott



Kindertransport

A special interest group of
The Association of Jewish Refugees



LUNCH

on **Wednesday 12 February 2020**
at **12.30pm**

at **Alyth Gardens Synagogue**

**We are delighted to be joined
by Helen Fry, Author**

Helen has written and edited over 25 books. Her works cover the social history of WWII: British Intelligence and the secret war; spies and espionage; and MI9 escape and evasion.

Helen lives and works in London. She is an ambassador for the Museum of Military Intelligence at Milton Bryan in Buckinghamshire

Because of her expertise in British Intelligence in WW1 and WWII, she has been involved in a number of documentaries – including David Jason's *Secret Service* – and delivered numerous radio broadcasts.

£7.00 per person

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

Contact Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070
or email susan@ajr.org.uk

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FORTHCOMING NATIONAL EVENTS

TITLE	DATE	VENUE	DETAILS	CONTACT
KT LUNCH	12 February	Alyth Gardens	With the author Helen Fry - see advert on page 14.	Susan Harrod susan@ajr.org.uk
FILM CLUB	17 February	Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform Synagogue	<i>Stan & Ollie</i> - see advert on page 17.	Ros Hart roshart@ajr.org.uk
EASTBOURNE HOLIDAY	28 June – 5 July	Eastbourne	See advert on page 5.	Susan Harrod susan@ajr.org.uk

REGIONAL MEETINGS

The AJR operates a nationwide network of Regional Groups that offer our members a unique opportunity to socialise with friends of similar backgrounds. There will be an interesting programme of speakers, plus the opportunity to meet up with old friends and make new friends. All AJR members are welcome at any of these events; you do not have to be affiliated to that particular group. Please contact the relevant co-ordinator for full details.

GROUP	CO-ORDINATOR	DATE	TIME	EVENT
Ealing	Ros Hart	4 February	2pm	Maurice Kanerek - Palestine Police
Bradford	Wendy Bott	4 February	2pm	Social get-together
Ilford	Karen Diamond	5 February	10.30am	Ruth Nieman - <i>The Galilean Kitchen Cookbook</i>
Glasgow CF	Agnes Isaacs	5 February	2pm	Theatre outing to <i>The King & I</i>
Kingston and Surrey	Ros Hart	6 February	2pm	Social get-together
Pinner	Karen Diamond	6 February	2pm	Gillian Perry MBE, co-founder of the Anne Frank Trust UK
Hampstead	Ros Hart	10 February	2pm	Judy Karbritz - Behind the Movie Scenes
Muswell Hill	Ros Hart	13 February	2pm	Lesley Urbach - Josiah Wedgwood
Liverpool	Wendy Bott	18 February	2pm	Christine Dawe
Edgware	Ros Hart	18 February	2pm	Michael Bennett - Life in the Jewish East End before WW2
Hertfordshire	Susan Harrod	19 February	10.30am	David Morris - Master Boxmaker
Edinburgh CF	Agnes Isaacs	20 February	2pm	Social get-together
Book Club	Karen Diamond	26 February	2pm	Book Club meeting
North London	Ros Hart	27 February	10.30am	David Lawson - The Jews of Ostrava
Glasgow Book Club	Agnes Isaacs	27 February	2pm	Glasgow Book Club
Oxford	Karen Diamond	27 February	12.30pm	Social meeting and lunch

REVIEWS

A TRAIN TO PALESTINE

By Randy Grigsby

Valentine Mitchell

ISBN 978 1 912676 27 9

The first photo in this book is of three young children in the backyard of their home. What would you wish and expect for them - childhood fun and games, family love, stability and a good education? However, it was Cologne in 1937 and the children were Jewish. They were in the wrong place at the wrong time and their lives were torn to bits.

In 1938 father Simon Rosenbaum left for New York in the hope that his wife and three children would soon join him, which only his eldest daughter managed. Rather than heading west mother Mina with her remaining two children, Josef and Nelly, were expelled to the east, first to Poland and then to Russia. But then in February 1940 the Russians expelled Jews and Poles to work as slave labour in the gulags of Siberia. After the Nazis invaded the USSR these prisoners were granted an amnesty and were allowed to head south to Iran. Here the plan to get 870 Jewish children to Palestine was hindered by Iraq and Turkey refusing the right of transit. Through the agency of the British Embassy the children were then sent to India before getting a ship to Yemen and another to Port Said, before finally, as the book's title indicates, getting 'A Train to Palestine' in 1943.

The son, Josef Rosenbaum, born in 1930, is the central figure of this book for the simple reason that he survived and so was able to tell his story. Along the way he suffered dysentery, typhus and fever, yet, almost miraculously, overcame the various ordeals that claimed the lives of so many of his fellow refugees. He witnessed the deaths of his aunt, grandfather, grandmother, mother and for him the most distressing of all, his younger sister. Disease and death were everywhere, particularly in Siberia where prisoners were hungry all the time; under-clothed, underfed and overworked. When the Jewish children eventually reached Palestine they were, unsurprisingly, reported to have 'no traces of childhood in their faces - no

mischief, no laughter, only cold remote suspicion'. Josef was nearly 12 when he reached Palestine and, among other benefits, enjoyed sleeping in a real bed for the first time since he was 8. He eventually moved to California to enjoy the pleasures of 'a loving family of two sons, daughter-in-law and grandchildren'.

The book contains a few bad factual errors (eg Israel achieving independence in 1945) and some incoherent sentences but these do not diminish the value of relating this important and disturbing story.

Michael Levin

NEARLY THE NEW WORLD: THE BRITISH WEST INDIES AND THE FLIGHT FROM NAZISM, 1933 - 1945

By Joanna Newman

Berghahn Books

ISBN 9781789206494

The extraordinary story of European Jews who escaped Nazism and fled to the British West Indies is told in this meticulously researched book by Joanna Newman. Joanna's father was a child German Jewish refugee whose family were saved when they came to Britain in 1937. But thousands of others went to the Caribbean after they had exhausted possibilities of going somewhere nearer.

From 1933 onwards Jews became ever more anxious to flee, and the far-flung destinations of Trinidad, Jamaica and Barbados represented a last chance option. After Kristallnacht the Jewish plight became ever more desperate. Some - particularly heads of families - were freed from concentration camps on condition they emigrated.

But they found conditions very different from those they knew. The book opens with an account of a young couple who left the cold and grey Baltic winter with icebreakers at Hamburg arriving to temperatures of 30° C in Trinidad. Like all too many, they left family behind in Germany whom they never saw again. Younger people adapted more easily than their parents, who found it strange and unfamiliar, especially the agricultural way of life. But settlers adapted their professions as best they could to suit local needs.

As time went on it became increasingly difficult to be allowed even into these islands. After war broke out European refugees continued to try and escape to the Caribbean, usually as a stopping point en route to South America, the USA and Australia. Conditions on ships were crowded and sometimes unsanitary with ships braving possible attack, mines and uncertainty about being allowed to dock.

An internment policy was adopted more zealously than in Britain, perhaps economically driven as existing businesses were jealous of those set up by newcomers. Refugees who were incarcerated for years were aggrieved they could no longer ply their trade and their concerns foundered. Impassioned pleas for freedom are included but for children allowed out to schools and college, life was livelier. A few people remained in camps even after war ended. All along the tireless and difficult job of refugee organisations - who wrestled with the colonial authorities and British government in a desperate bid to save more embattled Jews - is charted.

Despite their known plight there was endless bureaucracy - which is well described - and this prevented the persecuted from being rescued despite space in Gibraltar camp, Jamaica. Opportunities were missed - with tragic consequences - in the face of the limitations of the Bermuda conference.

After war ended most refugees re-emigrated from the West Indies but some chose to stay or had nowhere else to go. Others stopped for decades until political unrest in their new home meant they no longer felt safe.

Joanna Newman is Secretary General of the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Senior Research fellow in the history department at Kings College, London. Her book is a tour de force covering uncharted territory, exploring aspects that perhaps most readers had never thought about. As always, the historic photos and human-interest stories are fascinating and the detailed notes about sources will be of particular interest to academics.

Janet Weston

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.

DO YOU RECOGNISE ANYONE?

This photo was taken in 1947, in the Ex-Servicemen's Club, at the birthday party of Susan Kay. Helen Grunberg, née Oakley, (also in the picture) would be grateful to get in touch with any of these people if they can be identified. 124116@talktalk.net



Do you recognise anyone from this 1947 photograph?

WESSEX GARDENS SCHOOL

This year Wessex Gardens School in Golders Green, London NW11, celebrates its 100th birthday. Former pupils of the school are invited to contact J. Barnett (former School Governor) with memories or memorabilia, to mark the occasion. jbarnett@barnettross.co.uk

ISLE OF MAN INTERNMENT

Washington-based Tony Hausner has recently set up an email group about Internment on the Isle of Man, primarily during WW2 but also during WW1. Tony's own parents and other family

members, all Jewish, escaped from Vienna to England shortly after the Anschluss, only to be labelled as "enemy aliens" and interned. He would love to hear from other people with similar family backgrounds. thausner@gmail.com

KINDERTRANSPORTEES

Sandbag Media is producing a six-part Podcast series on the Kindertransport, exploring the rise of antisemitism in Europe pre-1939 which led parents to send their children out of mainland Europe. If you came to the UK on the Kindertransport, or your family has a connection, please get in touch. emile@sandbagmedia.com

FAMILY GOLDSTEIN

Melanie Jawett seeks information on family members originating from Klimontov (Poland), formerly part of the Russian Empire.

Yosef / Joseph Goldstein came to the UK between 1903 and 1905 with two children- Max, and Samuel – born in Klimintow in 1903, and then had another five children (Louis -born 1905, Nat, Sarah, Wolfe and Phil) in London.

Other family members include Erna (m. Michower), a hidden child in France, and Erica (m. Schirmer) who emigrated to the USA. mjawett@icloud.com

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AJR FILM CLUB

MONDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2020
at 12.30pm

Sha'arei Tzedek North London Reform
Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North,
Whetstone, N20 9EZ

£8.00 donation per person

STAN & OLLIE



Laurel and Hardy – the world's greatest comedy team – face an uncertain future as their golden era of Hollywood films remain long behind them. Diminished by age, the duo set out to reconnect with their adoring fans by touring variety halls in Britain in 1953. The shows become an instant hit, but Stan and Ollie can't quite shake the past as long-buried tension and Hardy's failing health start to threaten their precious partnership.

A delicious deli lunch will be served first

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL
for seating and catering

Please RSVP to Ros Hart
on 07966 969951 or
email roshart@ajr.org.uk

OBITUARIES

ALFRED LEVY

Born: 11 September 1926, Stettin

Died: 18 November 2019, London

Alfred Levy was the eldest child of Ella and Maximilian with a brother, Norbert, and a sister, Helga, all of whom he left in Germany on joining a Kindertransport in 1939, sadly never to see them again.

Alfred had a happy young childhood until, at age 6, he was forced to move to a private Jewish school and increasingly had his freedom of movement restricted. In England he was placed in a refugee hostel in Oxted, Surrey, before being moved to Oxford Technical College.

Admitted to the Oxford School of Architecture and Building, Alfred interrupted his architectural studies to join the Jewish Brigade in early 1945, serving first in Italy, and later joining the Royal Army Education Corps in Germany, where he acted as interpreter and English teacher. Here he met the love of his life, Connie, who, on resuming his architectural studies, he married in 1949.

Alfred then embarked on a career in the public sector, rising

through local government to the position of Director of Architectural Services and Chief Architect within the Department of the Environment.

One attachment to the Department of Defence, where he assumed the role of Director for the Navy Defence Works, required security clearance at a high level within NATO. He was a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and was awarded fellowships of the British Institute of Management and the Royal Society for the Arts.

Throughout a long and fulfilling life, marred only by the tragic loss of his whole family in the Holocaust, Alfred was keen to make a genuine contribution to his adoptive country. His last family outing was to attend the wedding of the last of his grandchildren in April 2019 at Hatfield House, where his two children and their spouses, four grandchildren and their spouses, and seven great-grandchildren were able to celebrate together. Alfred will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by them as well as many former colleagues and friends around the world.



David Levy

LESLIE BARUCH BRENT MBE (formerly Lothar Baruch)

Born: 5 July 1925, Köslin, Germany/Poland

Died: 21 December 2019, London

My colleagues and fellow Kinder at the Association of Jewish Refugees were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Leslie Baruch Brent MBE, who has died aged 94. He arrived on that fateful first Kindertransport, a group of children from an orphanage in Berlin, on 2 December 1938.

Having studied Zoology at Birmingham University, he was the co-discoverer with Peter Medawar and Rupert Billingham of acquired immunological tolerance, for which Medawar was awarded the Nobel Prize. Leslie became a leading immunologist and was appointed Professor Emeritus at the University of London in 1990.

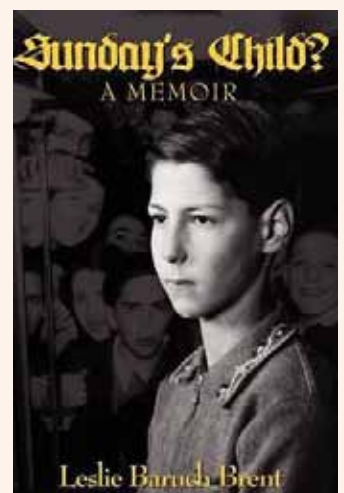
In recent years, among his other interests, Leslie was a stalwart

member of the AJR and regularly attended commemorative AJR events. He was the driving force behind the AJR plaque dedicated to Anna Essinger, the Headmistress of the Bunce Court School in Kent, to which Leslie and several other Kinder were sent.

Leslie also spoke openly about his experiences as a Kind, including at Westminster Abbey last November to mark the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

Our heartfelt sympathies go to his family. Leslie's legacy and memory will live on through the interview he gave to the AJR Refugee Voices testimony collection. A summary of his interview can be seen at <https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/RefugeeVoices/Leslie-Brent>

Sir Erich Reich



HERMANN HIRSCHBERGER MBE

Born: 11 July 1926, Karlsruhe, Germany
Died: 1 January 2020, London

It is with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Hermann Hirschberger MBE, aged 93, a former Chair of the AJR's Kindertransport special interest group.

Hermann arrived in Britain aged 12 with his brother Julius in March 1939 after he had to flee his native Karlsruhe in western Germany. He later recalled his mother telling them to expect a "happy reunion" with their parents in England but both his mother and father died at Auschwitz.

He celebrated his barmitzvah while living in a hostel and went to work in a factory aged 15. He worked as an engineer and was a founder member of Belmont Synagogue which he represented on the Board of Deputies.

Among his other achievements, in 2007 Hermann devised and oversaw the creation and publication of a unique survey entitled "Making New Lives in Britain", a database

recording the Continental background, journey to Britain, reception and subsequent experiences and lives of some 1,450 Kinder, a strongly representative sample of the almost 10,000, predominantly Jewish children of the Kindertransport. This is now published in the form of a statistical database which can be seen at www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport-survey/



Hermann also successfully campaigned to enable Kinder to benefit from a British state pension although they had missed the opportunity to pay national insurance premiums.

Until poor health prevented him doing so, Hermann regularly spoke to school pupils about his experiences fleeing Karlsruhe, his town of birth in Germany, on a Kindertransport and was a regular attendee at our Kindertransport lunches.

We send our heartfelt wishes to Hermann's family.

AN UNEXPECTED AWARD

Last summer my mother received a phone call from a lady who was carrying out research for a Masonic Lodge in Nuremberg.

The lady had seen a video of my grandmother, Inge, in a museum in Israel. The video explained that my grandmother had grown up in Nuremberg and that her parents had sent her on the Kindertransport when she was 12 years old. Sadly, the rest of her family were killed. The lady was eventually able to track down my mother and explained to her the relevance of the Nuremberg Lodge to our family.

We always knew that my great grandfather, Moritz Wertheimer, was a lawyer and political activist in Nuremberg

who helped left-wing clients throughout the 1930s. But we did not know that he was a member of the Masonic Lodge and that, since 2007, the lodge has awarded a medal in his honour. The Wertheimer-Schloss medal is awarded in honour of my great grandfather and another lawyer, Dr Schloss, to people who excel in human or social activities.

The Lodge was absolutely delighted to find out that not only is Moritz's daughter Inge still alive at 93, but that he also has two grandchildren and three great grandchildren!

As a result, my mother, uncle and I were invited as guests of honour to the 2019 award ceremony in Nuremberg, together with Dr Schloss' relatives. The medal was awarded to Charlotte Knobloch, a survivor who presided over the Central



Council of Jews in Germany from 2006 - 2010. The ceremony was truly humbling and I was so proud to represent my great grandfather and to walk in his footsteps.

Claire Wills

Events and Exhibitions

THE LIFE OF HERBERT BIER

His daughter Marion Davies will talk about the life of the art dealer Herbert Bier (1905-1981). There will also be the chance to view extensive archive material.

7 February at 12.00 pm, free Wallace Collection (Visitors' Library), London

<https://insidersoutsidersfestival.org/event/life-of-herbert-bier-through-his-archive/>

THE FASHION REVOLUTION

As part of Jewish Book Week a number of authors, including Daniel Snowman, Michael Gee, Uwe Westphal (*Fashion Metropolis Berlin*) and Anna Nyburg (*The Clothes on our Backs*) will discuss how refugees from Nazism revitalised the British fashion industry.

1 March at 6.30 pm, £14.50

Kings Place, London

www.jewishbookweek.com/event/the-fashion-revolution-from-berlin-to-london

APPROACHING THE HISTORY OF INTERNMENT

To mark the eightieth anniversary of the introduction of mass internment of enemy aliens in Britain, this conference will reflect on the impact of internment and examine contemporary policies and detention in the UK in the 21st century.

16 - 18 March

The Institute of Advanced Studies, London WC1E 6BT

On 16 March there will be an evening event at the Wiener Library.

<https://internment-conference.eventbrite.co.uk>

MY STORY COMES TO THE MIDLANDS



Keith Rowe launching *My Story* in the Midlands at a recent Chanukah fair

AJR members in the Midlands now have the opportunity to take part in the *My Story* publishing project, thanks to the appointment of a new regional co-ordinator.

Keith Rowe, who joined AJR in November, is based in Birmingham and will liaise with local members and volunteers to produce individual books telling the life stories of Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors.

Keith, who is a former President of Birmingham Hebrew Congregation

(Singers Hill Synagogue) and still runs the Shul choir, ran his own business for 25 years, supplying promotional products to many well-known organisations. He sold his company in 2015 and is actively engaged in politics, including standing as a candidate in the last general election.

Keith describes *My Story* as a "wonderful and extremely valuable project" and says that he "can't wait to get several books for Midlands-based AJR members into production."

Keith can be contacted via Keith@ajr.org.uk

REINVESTING IN NEW ACQUISITIONS AND LONG-TERM LOANS



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Until 27 March

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David Bomberg, *Mount Zion and the Church of Dormition, Jerusalem, 1923*

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For the latest AJR news, including details of forthcoming events and information about our services, visit www.ajr.org.uk

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