



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## We stand with Israel

More than 30 first generation Holocaust refugees and survivors stood together in vigil and to sing the Hatikvah for Israel last month. This highly moving and symbolic moment took place during our annual tea party, when almost 150 AJR members came together to celebrate their heritage.



The moment was filmed by *ITV News*, who showed it as part of their coverage of events in the Middle East along with an extract from an interview with AJR member Jacques Weisser, who stated: "When we said never again, it should have been never again. The loss of civilian lives of all ages, on both sides, has left its mark."

Earlier the same week the AJR had issued a statement in response to the Hamas attacks of 7 October, which read: 'After all that our members have witnessed and lost in their lifetimes, the existence of a modern Jewish

homeland has provided a sense of reassurance, even for those who do not live there. The brutal terrorist attacks in the Middle East remind us that protecting Jewish people from violent racism is as urgent a task today as it has ever been.'

The AJR stands with Israel at this very difficult time and our fervent hope is to see peace restored to the Middle East with minimum damage to civilians of all nationalities.

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman adds: "AJR members are particularly

sensitised to acts of terror against Jews. This is compounded by the news that some of the victims in Israel are themselves Holocaust survivors and refugees. In one instance, the elderly widow of a Kindertransport refugee was one of those abducted from a kibbutz near the Gaza border".

We take this opportunity to share with you the names of agencies providing critical assistance on the ground in Israel including: UJIA, American Joint Distribution Committee, Magen David Adom, New Israel Fund (NIF), ZAKA, Ort and United Hatzalah.

# ENGLISHNESS AND JEWISH OUTSIDERS

One of the key contributions of the extraordinary generation of Jewish refugees who came to Britain in the 1930s and '40s was their impact as cultural entrepreneurs. Many had successful careers as art dealers, filmmakers, cultural critics and perhaps, above all, as book publishers.

In 1967 the playwright Michael Frayn was taken by Michael Powell to meet his longtime collaborator, Emeric Pressburger. It was, Frayn said, 'as if Crosse were introducing one to Blackwell.' Powell was quintessentially English. Pressburger was a Hungarian-born Jew, fascinated by the relations between Englishness and European outsiders.

Powell and Pressburger were one of the great partnerships in the history of cinema. Between 1939 and 1956 they wrote and directed seventeen films, including masterpieces like *The Red Shoes*, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*, *A Matter of Life and Death* and *Black Narcissus*, all made within five years. British cinema has seen nothing else like them. Their films increasingly ran against the grain of British cinema and indeed British culture as a whole. In a culture which valued realism and naturalism, they championed art, expressionism and romanticism. 'We were storytellers, fantasists,' writes Michael Powell in the first volume of his autobiography, *A Life in Movies*. 'Documentary films started with poetry and finished as prose. We storytellers started with naturalism and finished with fantasy.'

Pressburger was born Imre Jozsef Pressburger in northern Hungary in 1902. In 1913 his family moved to Temesvar, the easternmost metropolis of the Habsburg empire. In 1920 Transylvania (including Pressburger's home town) was assigned to Romania. All Hungarian-speaking institutions, including schools, were closed. Pressburger never lived in Hungary again and spent the rest of his life as an émigré. He spent the 1920s and 1930s on the move,



The films of Powell and Pressburger

arriving in London in 1935.

In January 1937 he visited his mother one last time. 'In later life' wrote his grandson Kevin Macdonald, 'he felt guilty that he had not taken his mother with him to England when he had the opportunity and that, consequently, she died at the hands of the Nazis.'

In 1938 he wrote his first British film, *The Challenge*, produced by the great Alexander Korda. Korda introduced him to the English director, Michael Powell. Powell later wrote that Pressburger was 'a marvel: a screenwriter who could really write. ... I had always dreamt of this phenomenon: a screenwriter with the heart and mind of a novelist, who would be interested in the medium of film, and who would have wonderful ideas, which I would turn into even more wonderful images...'

Their first collaboration was *The Spy in Black* (1939), a sub-Buchanesque espionage chase set on Orkney in WW1, about a German attempt to blow up the British fleet at Scapa Flow. Powell and Pressburger then made four war films in rapid succession: *Contraband* (1940), *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (1941) (with Olivier and Leslie Howard, edited by David Lean, with music by Ralph Vaughan Williams), which won Pressburger his first Oscar, *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* (1942) (another Oscar nomination for Pressburger), and their first film in Technicolor, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) is about the friendship and rivalry of a German (Anton Walbrook) and an Englishman (Roger Livesey); it was the

nearest Pressburger came to the experience of a central European refugee from Hitler but at the same time shows Pressburger's fascination with Englishness.

The hits came thick and fast, films mixing Englishness and exotic European figures: *A Canterbury Tale* (1944) and *I Know Where I'm Going* (1945), both 'celebrations of the oddities, the irrationalities, the mysteries of British life' (Macdonald), *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), *Black Narcissus* (1947) and their most famous film, *The Red Shoes* (1948). Many of these films were about people who are displaced.

In the middle of this extraordinary creative spell, Pressburger spent a week with his old friend Billy Wilder in London after VE Day. 'We wondered where we should really go now that the war was over,' Wilder said later. 'None of us – I mean the émigrés – really knew where we stood. Should we go home? Where was home?' Pressburger had heard nothing from his 73-year-old mother since a three-line note from the Red Cross in 1942. Most of the Jewish population of his home town had been sent to the death camps in 1944. Of the twenty or so members of his family only three survived.

By 1957 Powell and Pressburger had broken up and Pressburger entered his wilderness years. He died in 1988.

The British Film Institute is currently showing the largest ever celebration of the films of Powell and Pressburger.

David Herman



# AROUND THE AJR



AJR Chairman Mike Karp OBE with HRH The Princess Royal, at his recent investiture at Windsor Castle



AJR Next Generations 3G members were invited to join The Wiener Holocaust Library's Future Generations group for a private after-hours tour of the current exhibition, a presentation about researching family history, and an opportunity to network



The AJR wishes a hearty mazeltov to our member Gisela Feldman, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday with her family



**JACKMAN SILVERMAN**

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Telephone: 020 7209 5532  
 robert@jackmans.co.uk

## CHAOS CONQUEROR

Do you need help with decluttering, downsizing or organising and storage solutions?

**Contact Jo Sovin, Chaos Conqueror**

07905 581 794 jo@josovin.com  
 www.josovin.com

Impeccable references provided  
 Fully Covid vaccinated

## CLAIMS NEWS

Please note the deadline to return proof of life certificates for the **Supplemental Hardship Fund** is 31 December 2023. If you have received a letter from the Claims Conference to request that you self-certify via Paneem, please attempt to do this with the help of a family member or friend, if possible, as it is the speediest option and it is simple to use.

If you have any queries about this, or require a paper Proof of Life certificate for the above, please contact Rosemary Peters at [rosemary@ajr.org.uk](mailto:rosemary@ajr.org.uk) / 020 8385 3088

All **Article 2 pension** proof of life certificates should now have been returned or verified using Paneem. If for any reason you still have not done this, please contact Rosemary.

## Inter-gen trauma

Professor Jonathan Seckl will discuss its biological effects on Monday 13 November. Contact [debra@ajr.org.uk](mailto:debra@ajr.org.uk) for details.

The story of the Ulma Family martyrs .....	4
Letter from Israel .....	5
Letters to the Editor .....	6
Notices .....	7
Art Notes.....	8
Dr Ludwig Tietz: a tribute .....	9
Memories of our Kinder.....	10-11
Thrown around by the tides.....	12
AJR Funding Partner: Holocaust Centre North.....	13
AJR News .....	14
Pleasure with Peine.....	15
Reviews .....	16-17
Obituaries.....	18-19
Events.....	20

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

### AJR Team

**Chief Executive** Michael Newman  
**Finance Director** Adam Daniels

### Heads of Department

**HR & Administration** Karen Markham  
**Social Services** Nicole Valens  
**Education & Heritage** Alex Maws  
**Volunteer Services** Fran Horwich  
**Outreach & Events** Susan Harrod

### AJR Journal

**Editor** Jo Briggs  
**Editorial Assistant** Lilian Levy  
**Contributing Editor** David Herman  
**PR & Communications** Gemma Blane

*Our Editor writes: This September marked 84 years since the Nazis invaded Poland, triggering the Allies' declaration of war. It also marked the start of the murder of three million Polish Jews, almost entirely wiping out Poland's Jewish community, previously the biggest Jewish community in Europe. Much has been written about the Polish response to these events and this year an inspiring, albeit equally horrific, story was shared by the Polish government.*

# The story of the Ulma Family

**As Poles, we are proud that on 10 September 2023, the Ulma family of eight – a married couple and their small children – was beatified by the Vatican for paying “the highest price of martyrdom”. The significance of this event went beyond the religious dimension – it was also a tribute to heroes embodying the highest ideals of humanity.**

A heavily worn, yellowed Bible opened to the parable of the merciful Samaritan, with a red line marking its title and a handwritten 'YES!' note on the side – this is the exhibit that comes to my mind whenever I think about the Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in WW2 in the village of Markowa in southern Poland.

This copy of the Scriptures belonged to Józef and Wiktoria Ulma. They were Polish farmers who sheltered eight fellow citizens of Jewish origin: Gołda Grünfeld, Lea Didner with her little daughter, and Saul Goldman with his four sons. Just before dawn on 24 March 1944, German gendarmes burst into the farm in Markowa. The Jews in hiding and their protectors were shot on the spot. The tragic victims included not only Józef Ulma and his pregnant wife Wiktoria but also their six young children.

The German Nazi occupation, the Holocaust and the mass crimes against Poles are profoundly important and still painful parts of the history of my

homeland. Many of my compatriots shared the fate of the Ulma family. Every year on 24 March we celebrate a public holiday, the National Day of Remembrance for Poles who rescued Jews during German occupation.

For centuries, Jews had sought to settle in our country, endowing it with the telling name 'Polin', which translates as 'here you will rest.' Poland provided them with peace and chances to grow, making Warsaw the world's second-largest Jewish population centre in the late 1930s.

The German plan for the total extermination of the Jews – horrifying in its inhuman, mechanical, almost industrial character – had to take these facts into account. Thus, in occupied Poland, the German Nazis created death factories – extermination camps for Jews from our country and other territories seized by the Third Reich. For centuries, Poland had been known as a tolerant country where Christian values shaped culture and social relations. Therefore, the German occupation authorities expected resistance to their criminal actions. To minimise defiance, they threatened death to anyone in our lands who even attempted to help a Jew in hiding. But despite these harsh sanctions, thousands of Polish Jews found life-saving aid. They were helped escape the ghetto and provided with hiding places, food, money and false documents.

Historians are still reconstructing the course of the dramatic events of those years. So far, more



President Duda

than 7,000 Poles - including Wiktoria and Józef Ulma - have been honoured with the title of Righteous Among the Nations, awarded by the Yad Vashem. In the venerable circle of the righteous, Poles are the largest national group. Polish authorities and state institutions continue their efforts to commemorate these silent, often anonymous heroes – especially those killed for their courage and sacrifice.

The story of the Ulmas' martyrdom deserves global recognition, for although it is horrifying, it is also an empowering testament to loving one's neighbour. May it change hearts and be a model of openness and solidarity.

**Andrzej Duda**  
President of the Republic of Poland



Ulma Family from Mateusz Szpytmy collection

# MARTIN STERN'S LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Martin Stern is a Second Generation member of the AJR who has lived in Israel for over 50 years. He wrote this letter on 17 October 2023.

## THE WORLD HAS CHANGED



How our world has changed in ten days. Here in Jerusalem we planned after the Jewish Holiday period, from Rosh

Hashana to Simchat Torah, to settle down to our normal winter rainy schedule.

But what happened to our 'normal'? Wars are not strangers to us. The Six Day War, Yom Kippur War, Gulf War, Lebanon War are all names ingrained in our memories. Our enemies have made sure of that.

How can we move forward to rebuild the Israel we love after this trauma of immense proportions? Already ten days in, it is clear that this is a war between good and evil, with Israel at its epicentre.

The streets are lined with posters and notices placed by families who have lost loved ones, be they soldiers or civilians. Funerals and Shivas are our daily ration and yet we know we must move forward.

Each day we realise how much we owe the Israel Defence Forces who,

though terribly unprepared and this must be investigated thoroughly, got their act together showing bravery beyond imagination.

So how do we progress now? First and foremost we need the unity that deserted us during the ten months since Netanyahu returned to power. He was not given one day of grace by his political foes.

Unless political unity is restored there is no way we can rebuild the Israel we love to be the country we all long for. Without unity we have no future.

Jews all over the world need now to show the same unity or we face an existential threat. We must never again allow the internal feuds which led Hamas to believe they could destroy us.

Let us recall that in 1945 the remnant of Jewry faced the fact that six million of their brethren had died in the Holocaust. World Jewry has never recovered in strength or numbers. Israel was its beacon.

I am reminded constantly that both my parents escaped Europe. My father travelled on his own from Czechoslovakia in early 1939, never again to see his parents, both of whom were murdered in Auschwitz. My mother and her entire

family travelled on 14 May 1940 on the *Bodegraven* from Ijmuiden, Holland, the last ship to leave mainland Europe. They arrived in England with barely the clothes they were wearing and lived through the Blitz. My parents established a prosperous life in the UK and felt immense thanks for the refuge provided. My father's heavy involvement in communal matters during and after WW2, including with the Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovitz and Lord Sacks – who also became friends of my wife and me – left an indelible mark on our family. From my first visit there in 1964 on a youth trip I knew that Israel – our own country from time immemorial – was where I wished to live and where my family who perished in the Holocaust would have wished their grandchildren and great-grandchildren to be reared. We made Aliyah in 1971.

Whenever sirens go off here in Jerusalem I say a thank you for Iron Dome – an Israeli invention praised the world over for its ability to prevent 95% of rockets hitting their targets and thus killing and maiming innocent civilians as Hamas intended.

Prayer is a personal matter but maybe just now we can ask Jews everywhere to pray that matters in Israel will sort quickly and that we will soon see our country blooming and blossoming again.

## BEHIND THE SCENES IN HUDDERSFIELD

There was a wonderful turnout for AJR Next Generation's recent Behind the Scenes event at Holocaust Centre North in Huddersfield.

Guests – ranging from Holocaust survivor Trude Silman, to families of second, third and fourth generations, plus university students – viewed the excellent exhibition before being shown artefacts from the archives by curator Hari Jonkers and socialising over tea.

AJR Next Generations manager, Debra Barnes, said: "The AJR is all about family and community. In these troubling times,

it was comforting for everyone to come together in a safe, friendly environment and meet others with shared histories. It felt right to hold a minute's silence for the victims of the terror attacks and in solidarity with our family and friends in Israel. It was also a pleasure to partner with Holocaust Centre North: our organisations have a close connection and many of the survivors featured in their exhibition have taken part in our



The daughter, granddaughters and great-grandchildren of Holocaust survivor Edith Goldberg at HCN Huddersfield.

*My Story* project, including Trude Silman, Berta Klipstein, Ruth Grant, Rudy Leavor, Heinz Skyte and Martin Kapel."



# 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.

## WHO YOU ARE

I was pleasantly watching *Who do you think you are?* one September evening (the episode featuring Matt Lucas and his family) when suddenly Matt was told that in 1950 his grandmother Margot started working at the Association of Jewish Refugees! I was so shocked and excitedly turned to my husband and exclaimed "That's the AJR! It's their newsletter I work on!"

It then got even more exciting when they gave Matt a bound book containing copies of past *Journals* (from when it used to be called *AJR Information*) and as he leafed through it to an article pertaining to his grandmother I could barely contain myself: "That's MY newsletter!" I was so excited I quickly looked the episode up online to see if there was any further information and noted that the *Who do you think you are?* website incorrectly states that Matt's mother, not his grandmother, worked for the AJR!

I then buzzed about the programme for ages afterwards, feeling so excited that the AJR and the *Journal* had featured in such a prominent BBC programme and that someone so famous was personally linked to it. In some strange way, it made me feel connected to them too.

2023 marked my 20th year of working with the AJR to produce not just the *Journal* but many other printed and graphical materials, and it has been fantastic watching things change and evolve along the way. I remember when the *Journal* was only produced in 2 colours - black and blue - and each photo and logo had to be carefully changed so it printed correctly in just those 2 colours. Then when the AJR branding changed to what it is today, a whole world of colour entered the *Journal*. It was just fantastic! I liken the excitement I imagine submitters must feel when seeing their photos in full colour in the *Journal* to how I felt seeing the *AJR Journal* on the BBC - it makes me smile every time, and I just want to say thank you.

Firstly, I'd like to thank Mike (who saw potential in me and opened a door all those years ago) and Gill (who introduced me to the wonderful world of typesetting). Secondly, thank you to the AJR for all the amazing work that you do - it is evident in every word on every page that I set each month, and finally thank you to you, the reader. Just like in the *Neverending Story*, YOU are so important! As you read each line, it becomes a part of you. YOU keep their story alive!

*Celeste Gee, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.*

*Note from Editor: We thank Celeste both for her letter and for all her hard work designing and printing our Journal since she joined FBprinters twenty years ago.*

## AJR WEMBLEY GROUP

I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed occasional get togethers at the Preston Pub. It is always a mixture of intense listening and occasional contribution.

I particularly valued being introduced to the two new volunteers from Germany. This initiative is so positive and humanitarian and I congratulate the AJR for creating the opportunity for young German school leavers, about to go into university, to gain an insight and understanding of the Holocaust. One of the young people used the words reconciliation and reparation.

I am so happy to have become a member of the AJR and to be participating, in its activities.

*Helga Gladbaum, Harrow, Middx.*

## ESSAY PRIZE

I would like to draw your attention to the 2024 Robert Silver Essay Prize, which specifically invites essays related to the impact of British Jewry on 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain. The 2023 Prize was awarded to an essay on the impact of Jewish refugee women designers on British culture.

Competition is open to any writers who are a UK citizen and/or registered

for an undergraduate or postgraduate programme within a UK university. Essays should be no more than 8,000 words and include a summary version of 500 words.

*David Herman, London SW13*

## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Why has DSW (October) refused to give us their name in the letter attacking Dorothea Shefer-Vanson and her "Letter from Israel"? Is it because they realise that they are making very weak arguments in their attack - so weak that they do not want their actual name identified with them? Judging by their letter, DSW, like the ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel, does not recognise as Jews anyone who does not follow their ancient principles. This immediately excludes all members of the Progressive movements, Reform, Liberal and Masorti in the UK, Conservatives in the US, besides the "irreligious" ones to whom he refers. Also I am confused by their implication that the only good Jews are the ones who follow the Torah. Surely they know that all the Jewish movements follow the Torah. There are no differences between us. Where DSW is completely wrong is in asserting that Israel was given to the Jews largely because of the efforts of the religious groups. First, the original Zionists and Theodore Herzl were not religious and, indeed, there was not much religion to be seen in the early kibbutzim. Secondly, have they forgotten that some of the Chassidic sects did not want Israel created until after the Messiah had been? Lastly, DSW ends their letter with a curious snide comment about Dorothea perhaps showing "jealousy" in her letters. About what? Is it perhaps about the fact that the ultra-orthodox do not have to do military service like everyone else? My case rests.

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts.*

## ERRATA - THE MAVERICK

On the front page of our October issue we omitted to connect David Herman's article title with the name of the book on the same subject, *The Maverick*, written by the award-winning author Thomas Harding at the invitation of the publishers Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

## SPECIAL SCREENING OF KINDER



On 5 December the AJR and South Hampstead Synagogue are co-hosting a special screening of the film *Kinder*, which was co-written by Janet Eisenstein and Tom Fry.

Janet is a second-generation member of the AJR and a member of South Hampstead Shul. The screening of the film will be followed by a Q&A.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/screening-of-kinder-a-film-by-janet-eisenstein-followed-by-a-qa-tickets-695319428127?aff=oddtcreator>

## FACING FORWARD

As AJR continues to grow our offer for our Next Generations, we're pleased to announce the launch of Facing Forward, a holistic wellbeing project designed to provide support, empowerment and community for the children of Holocaust survivors and refugees, and the future generations.

Through peer led interest groups, wellbeing activities and one-to-one support, Facing Forward seeks to promote emotional health and a sense of belonging. The common connection for this group of people is looking back at their shared history; this project will encourage them to face forward with strength, resilience, and hope.

Caryn Bentley will be running this project, alongside her Carers Support programme. Please email [caryn@ajr.org.uk](mailto:caryn@ajr.org.uk) for more information.



## 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST KINDERTRANSPORT

SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER  
LONDON EC2

Pre-booking is essential, with priority given to Kinder and their families.

 [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

## SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household electrical work

**PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518**

**Mobile: 0795 614 8566**



Outstanding live-in & hourly care in your home at affordable rates



020 7482 2188 | [enquiries@pillarcare.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pillarcare.co.uk)

## BEYOND THE CUT OUT GIRL

On Thursday 9 November at 6pm Bart van Es, prize-winning author, literary critic and Professor of English at the University of Oxford, gives the eighth 'Martin Miller and Hannah Norbert-Miller Memorial Lecture' of the Research Centre for German & Austrian Exile Studies, University of London.

There will be a reception following the lecture. Further details and booking via <https://ilcs.sas.ac.uk/events/memoir-holocaust-fiction-and-truth-beyond-cut-out-girl>



## AJR KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION

THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER  
CENTRAL LONDON

This year we will be holding our annual commemorative Kristallnacht in central London.

We are delighted that we will be joined by **Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis** as well as other keynote speakers and VIP guests.

Pre-booking is essential.

 [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)



## CHANUKAH LUNCH

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER  
IN LONDON N20



Please join us for a delicious two course lunch with a special guest speaker.

£25.00 payable at the door  
Pre-booking is essential

 [roshart@ajr.org.uk](mailto:roshart@ajr.org.uk)

## LOOKING FOR?

### URSULA BINSWANGER

Robert Mueller-Stahl, a PhD-candidate from Berlin, seeks information on Ursula Binswanger, who stayed at a boarding house run by the Hiller family in the late 1930s and then emigrated to the United States. If you know anything about her, the boarding house, or other refugee boarding houses in London, Robert would deeply appreciate your help. [mueller-stahl@zzf-potsdam.de](mailto:mueller-stahl@zzf-potsdam.de)

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

You can do it as an athlete; you can do it as a mystic and you can do it as an artist. The aesthetic of Belgrade-born performance artist Marina Abramović is to put her body through extreme tension and pain, in order to gain the peace of nirvana.



*The House with the Ocean View, 2002*

Years of intense concentration preceded this. As you enter the **Royal Academy**, which hosts her exhibition, two banks of faces greet you. On the left wall of the section, *Public Participation* are some of the 1,500 faces she invited to out-stare her in 1975, and on the right is the artist's response to each stare. Some 45 years later in the silent serenity of *The Artist is Present*, spiritual stillness has been achieved – after much battling with the body,

In the next room is a desk containing a motley of items, including knives, guns, matches, candles, and a chocolate cake, from which Abramović has invited participants to select an object to attack her. One person put a gun to her head – and later still we see her self-harming with a knife. Move on – if you still have the heart for it – and there is more video imagery of staring, slapping, glaring at her partner and fellow artist, Ulay, all against a background of loud screaming.

Much has been made of the use of nude models – re-performers they are called. In earlier exhibitions Abramović performed the various rituals herself. At least one reviewer worried about walking past a male and female nude so close to each other that he feared treading on their

toes! This was an optional extra, but I chose to do it, as the idea here seems to confront the uncomfortable. What was I expected to feel? The powerful pull of our combined energies? What I actually felt was total discomfort at intruding on their naked space. And yes – treading on their toes!

I wondered at the meaning of this much vaunted encounter. Was it just a narcissistic experience for the artist? Yet – I get it that she is attempting some personal growth through putting the body and the mind through awkward situations.

In *Balkan Baroque*, her four-day performance at the 1997 Venice Biennale, Abramović is seen reflecting on her own heritage in former Yugoslavia and how Communist ideals, imbibed through the Balkan wars of the 1990s, affected her. Here she is trying to wash a pile of bloodied bones – recreated in a pile on the floor. This projection features the artist beside her parents, telling a gruesome folk tale. She suddenly removes her white coat to reveal a sexy black dress from which she pulls a red scarf and dances to a Balkan song, with all its social and sexual connotations. Apparently, this performance met with shock at its anti-nationalistic message. Abramović had to perform it instead in the basement of the Italian pavilion, where it caused a sensation and was awarded the Golden Lion.

Her relationship with Ulay culminates in a 90-day walk towards each other from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China, where they intend to marry. Blocked by interminable

Chinese bureaucracy, they realise their relationship is spent and go their separate ways. It is a moment worthy of fiction, but Abramović becomes energised by the wall having been built along the earth's energy lines. This and her study of oriental medicine now take her in another direction. Now she seeks to shape the natural flow of energy by creating large, polished urns, suggesting the passage of bodies through time.

In, perhaps the most beautiful performance, she is projected nude, lying beneath a skeleton. Above her a live model re-performs the image. So here are two heavily breathing nude women beneath two skeletons. This was inspired by the practice of Tibetan monks sleeping alongside the dead. It also evokes the Renaissance imagery of the subject painted with a skull; a *memento mori* to our transitory lives.

And so Abramović arrives at the point where putting the body through intense concentration, even pain, the spirit will achieve the tranquillity of meditation. Yet despite the long trajectory of this exclamatory exhibition, what I found missing everywhere was the emotion.

**Marina Abramović at the Royal Academy until 1 January 2024**

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

**Jonathan Fishburn**

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

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

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

**Annely Juda Fine Art**

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

**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**



# DR. LUDWIG TIETZ: A TRIBUTE

**November marks the 90th anniversary of the death of Dr. Ludwig Tietz (1897-1933), a leading German-Jewish philanthropist who died tragically young. Hundreds of prominent German Jews attended his funeral at Weissensee, near Berlin. Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck of Berlin and Dr. Julius Brodnitz, leader of the Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith, delivered the funeral eulogies.**

In November 1953, Werner Rosenstock marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tietz's death with a tribute in *AJR Information*. As Rosenstock pointed out, 'At first sight, there seems to be much similarity between Ludwig Tietz and another man of his generation... Wilfrid Israel.' They were not just contemporaries (Israel was born in 1893, Tietz in 1897), but as Rosenstock writes, both came from wealthy backgrounds and both had a huge influence on a younger generation. Israel's family owned Israel's Department Store in Berlin, one of the largest and oldest stores in pre-war Germany. Tietz was the son of Alfred Tietz, who owned fifty-eight department stores with more than 30,000 employees, including the famous KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westens) in Berlin. Alfred Tietz fled to Amsterdam in 1934 and managed to escape to Palestine on the last ship before the Wehrmacht marched into Amsterdam. He died on August 4, 1941 in Jerusalem.

But the most important similarity was that both Tietz and Israel became leading German-Jewish philanthropists after 1933. From 1937 Wilfrid Israel was active in the work of the Hilfsverein, the central German Jewish organisation for emigration, rescuing Jews from Nazi Germany. He helped to persuade the British government to allow 8,000 young Jewish men released from German concentration camps to come to Britain.

He managed to leave Germany days before the outbreak of war but, tragically, he was killed in 1943 when his civilian plane was shot down by a Luftwaffe pilot. Einstein wrote to Israel's mother, 'never in my life have I come in contact with a being so noble, so strong and as selfless as he was – in very truth a living work of art.' The character Bernhard Landauer in Isherwood's *Goodbye to Berlin* is based on Israel.

For Tietz as well the crucial turning point was the coming to power of the Nazis in 1933. After the advent of the Hitler regime he devoted himself almost entirely to work on behalf of Germany's Jews. He served as a member of the Central Union of German Citizens of the Jewish Faith and was appointed executive director of the Central Committee of German Jews for Relief and Rehabilitation, an organisation founded to put German Jewish relief work on a nationwide, coordinated basis and to supervise the work within the country.

Cecilia Angela Rabà recently wrote to me about Dr. Tietz: 'Nobody believed in young people like he did. He hoped for their future in an idealistic and pragmatic way at the same time. Education, culture, but also work and practical activities; develop mind and body to build first a hope for the Jews in Germany and then in the future Israel; these were the leitmotiv of his speeches. Young people were not only an object of his care: they were the subject, the fulcrum of any action. 'He was a clear and precise thinker, a mix between his German cultural background, as an assimilated Jew, and a very strong Jewish identity, which made him an

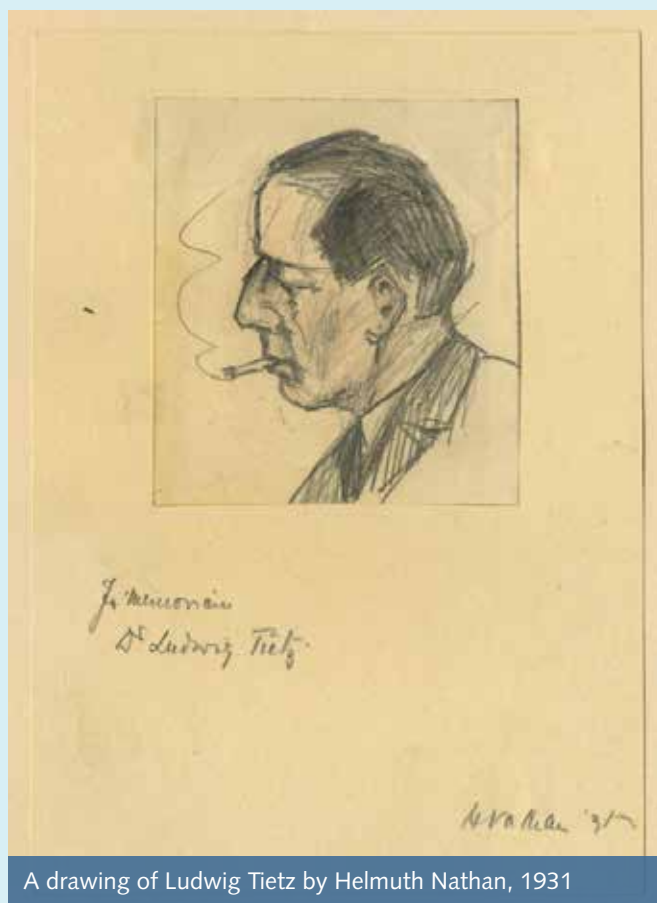
exemplary figure, an inspirational source for many people, even after his death. A typical example of the best Jewish and German intelligentsia of the early 1900s and, at the same time, a unique man of his kind.'

Dr. Tietz became one of the most popular Jewish figures in Nazi Germany and was one of the twenty Jewish leaders attending the conference to plan relief measures for destitute German Jews in Berlin on June 20 who were arrested and badly treated by the SA. They were all eventually released but only after some of them had been painfully injured.

The last words should belong to Werner Rosenstock. He concluded his tribute with this passage:

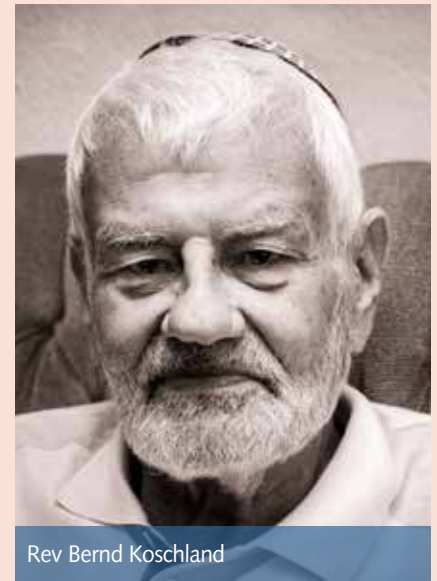
'The word on which Leo Baeck based his unforgettable address at the funeral of Ludwig Tietz sounds as fresh as it did twenty years ago: "Dein Platz bleibt leer – Du wirst uns fehlen."'

**David Herman**



A drawing of Ludwig Tietz by Helmuth Nathan, 1931

# Memories of our Kinder



Rev Bernd Koschland

**This month we are privileged to share with you some first-hand accounts from AJR members who directly benefitted from one of the greatest humanitarian movements in British history.**

## Rev Bernd Koschland

As a very young 8-year old, I - like other Kinder - said goodbye to my parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members and friends. In my case it was a permanent good-bye but not to my sister who came on a later transport. The concept of survival here is not physical or in memories of home only, but of things Mum or Dad said or did. I recall things that Dad taught me about Jewish life. He taught me to read Hebrew in a unique way and learned Mishnah with me. He showed me a half-used candle, which he explained was first lit at my circumcision and re-lit at my Bar Mitzvah; this sadly never happened as Mum and Dad had both died at the hands of the Nazis by the time I reached 13. Mum loved our cat; she would often buy a 'sardine roll' which I loved. Memories, memories, enhanced by photos which have survived. I, like countless other Kinder, have been stimulated by such 'survivor' memories.

In the following generation the intangible, invisible 'survivors' become tangible and visible, hopefully. For example, I recall that Elijah's Cup at the Seder was left untouched and used for Kiddush the following morning. I

did this also (no doubt many households did the same; it allowed the children the 'fun' of looking in the morning to see if the wine had gone down. If so, Elijah had 'visited'!). Or again, putting bits of chametz round before the search for chametz began.

Back to reality! While studying at Jews College, around 1950, a couple of tea chests arrived in the library filled with Hebrew books that had survived the Shoah and collected together from wherever. Remains of now destroyed synagogues, yeshivot, private homes and other places. Many showed use. Where were their owners? Beneath the wings of the shechinah (Almighty)? Or still surviving somewhere? The librarian kindly allowed me to look at some of the books. I picked up one that seemed particularly well used, a Talmudic commentary which had belonged to Nahum ben Ezra (deliberately a fictitious name). Who was he? Where did he live? Was he a Rabbi, or yeshivah student or a learned man? We'll never know.

I once had a surprise that shook me, but with pleasure. While at breakfast some 70 years ago, a packet arrived from a cousin who was in a town in Germany. It was Sukkot. He went to synagogue, pulled out one of the community

machzors from the bookcase, opened it and to his amazement saw the rubber stamp of his uncle - my father. He kept the book and sent it to me as the heir. He explained the find when we met next in Israel. Like the books in the tea chest the machzor was a survivor and a personal treasure. Its journey from Dad's bookcase to its arrival in the synagogue above will never be known. People survived, so did books, so did memories. As a Kingdom of Priests and Holy Nation (Torah) we have survived as a people with a country - Medinat Israel, the State of Israel.

## George Lazarus

My mother waved me goodbye from Frankfurt Station in 1939.

At the age of just 2¾ I arrived here in the company of my brother, who was 7 years old. He later told me that every time the train came to a stop I went to the window and cried out "MUTTI! MUTTI!", expecting to see her on the platform.

My parents were able to come later by obtaining a visa to come to London through the Panamanian Consulate.

Such is one of many stories of defeat of the Nazi plans.



The AJR's **My Story** project tells the life stories of Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors through the production of individual life story books to be kept as treasured memories and tools for reminiscence and to raise awareness about the Holocaust and Nazi oppression. These are extracts from the life stories of some individual Kinder.

#### RENATA BEIGEL

*"In May 1939 my father took us to Trieste on the Italian-Yugoslav border to put us on the train to England. My mother was so beside herself at our parting that she didn't come to see us off."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Renate-Beigel](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Renate-Beigel)

#### RUTH GRANT

*"I did not feel too sad to be leaving my parents, but of course they were extremely upset. I was looking forward to seeing my brother in England. I had a vision of England as a little island with a tree in the middle and my brother was sitting under it. It is strange how my mind as a child worked. It did not even occur to me that I would never see my parents again."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Ruth-Grant](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Ruth-Grant)

#### TOMMY GUTWIN

*"I remember standing at Liverpool Street station with a cardboard plaque around my neck, on which was written my name and where I came from. All I took with me was a cardboard suitcase with whatever clothes and belongings I had."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Tommy-Gutwin](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Tommy-Gutwin)

#### GABRIELE KEENAGHAN

*"My grandmother told me many years later that the adults had been commanded by the Nazis that there must be no emotional outbursts or scenes on the platform. She therefore appeared very positive, giving me plenty of encouragement, smiling and*

*saying: 'We will soon see each other again'."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Gabriele-Keenaghan](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Gabriele-Keenaghan)

#### DINA LE BOUTILLIER

*"When my brother and I started to talk in German, we were stopped immediately and told we would be sent back to Austria if we didn't speak in English. We tried to whisper instead, but that was also forbidden. Ralph got the buckle end of the belt and I got the other end. We soon lost all ability to speak in our mother tongue."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Dina-LeBoutillier](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Dina-LeBoutillier)

#### EVA LORIMER

*"Once on the train I stood by the window with the other children. I had my case in my hands and my knapsack on my back with my teddy bear's head poking out at the top. Although I had known this trip was going to happen I don't think I was fully able to believe it. I was in a state of shock and unable to shed a tear."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Eve-Lorimer](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Eve-Lorimer)

#### TRUDE SILMAN

*"I have absolutely no memory of saying goodbye. I cannot remember whether I kissed them, whether I hugged them, or what we said to one another. This memory has been completely erased from my mind. The pain of that moment must have been so great that I have no recollection of it whatsoever."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Trude-Silman](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Trude-Silman)

#### ERNEST SIMON

*"At midnight on 11 January 1939, my parents took me to Wiener Westbahnhof, one of the main train stations in Vienna, and put me on a train bound for England. They had absolutely no idea whether they would ever see me again, but they knew, following the terrible events of Kristallnacht the previous November, that this journey was likely to save my life."*

[www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Ernest-Simon](http://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/Ernest-Simon)



# “thrown around by the tides of history”

**The AJR Refugee Voices Archive contains 80 testimonies with Kinder refugees. The director of the Archive, Dr Bea Lewkowicz, shares some reflections.**

One of my first interviews was with Richard Grunberger, former editor of this *Journal*. He came from Vienna as a 15-year-old, was first sent to Dovercourt reception camp and then became a domestic servant with an English family related to the (later) prime minister Sir Anthony Eden. Richard did not last very long in the position, experienced little empathy for being an unaccompanied child refugee. By chance, he met a Jewish family from the East End and lived with them for eight years. When I asked him how his life had been affected, he answered: *“I have been at the receiving end of that whole experience, as somebody who was totally passive. I was just thrown around by the tides of history”*

That phrase has stuck with me. While you could argue that it applies to any refugee or displaced person, it seems to really encapsulate the child refugee experience, whose lives were so deeply impacted by the decision of their parents to send them via Kindertransport to safety, and by the subsequent decisions made by the various agencies and foster families responsible for them.

More than 20 years have passed since that interview and I am proud that AJR Refugee Voices has since interviewed 80 Kinder. It is the largest single experience in the entire archive and constitutes one of the largest collection of Kinder interviews in the UK. These interviews have been used in exhibitions, films, educational material, and in a wide range of research projects. The youngest Kind in our archive is Sir Erich Reich, former AJR trustee and chairman of our Kindertransport Special Interest Group, who came to Britain from Vienna aged

four. Twelve other interviewees were under the age of nine when they arrived in the UK. Older Kinder, born between 1922 and 1925, such as Richard Grunberger, account for 41 interviews.

The interviews offer insight into many aspects of the Kindertransport, illustrating a huge diversity of experiences and lived lives. The most striking similarity is the frequent movement of the Kinder in their early years here: between foster families, hostels, farms, educational camps, schools and boarding schools. Children were often exposed to random decisions by various agencies, sometimes in conflict with other family members.

Our interviews also give a voice and an image to the families left behind in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, in forms of letters, documents, and photographs filmed at the end of the interviews. For example, the very moving inscription in a prayer book given to Ursula Gilbert by her father Ferdinand Brann, where he wrote 10 guidelines for her new life in England.

We also have on film four photographs of interviewees on their Kindertransport journey. Bea Green MBE is shown leaving Munich station, Leslie Baruch Brent MBE with a group of other children on a train, Edith Fulton walking from the boat, and Vera Schaufeld MBE standing on a platform with relatives in Holland.

Another extraordinary historical treasure was created when we filmed Leslie Baruch Brent listening to his own voice, recorded in 1939 for a BBC broadcast on Dovercourt Reception camp, talking about the daily routine of Kinder who had just arrived in the UK.

One of my early Kinder interviews was with Prof. Emeritus Julius Carlebach, son of the last chief rabbi of Hamburg, Joseph Carlebach. Julius was one of nine children and was sent with one of his sisters on a Kindertransport to the UK. He describes the children's experience:



Ursula Gilbert reading the list of the '10 points for your life in England' that her father wrote in her prayer book

*“For many of them the whole world changed, because where you thought you broke off, that wasn't the break, that was an abyss”.*

As we approach the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I feel it important to acknowledge that ‘abyss’. We need to understand that narratives of resilience, coping and empowerment stand side by side traces of rupture, trauma and lack of agency in most Kinder interviews. We should also recognise that for some Kinder it was not easy to give testimony. For example, when I asked Marion Lesser if she spoke about her experiences to her children she answered, in tears: *“Not easily, not easily... yes, it's hard to go back... I believe in letting sleeping dogs lie. Don't try and unravel it all and start all over again”*

I am grateful to all the Kinder who had the courage ‘to go back’ and share their memories with our Archive, so that future generations can learn from their experiences as unaccompanied minors who arrived in Britain from November 1938 to September 1939.

**To see the full range of interviews visit: [www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/interviewexperiences/Kindertransport](http://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/interviewexperiences/Kindertransport)**



Leslie Baruch Brent in 2004 listening to his voice on the BBC's 1939 recording

# AJR FUNDING PARTNER



## REACHING EVERY STUDENT IN EVERY PART OF THE UK

The latest in our series of articles looking at organisations which receive grant funding through the AJR focuses on the National Holocaust Centre & Museum and is written by its Director of Learning, Mark Rusling.

We are proud to have been supported by the AJR for many years. Your support helped us to create *The Journey*, the UK's only museum teaching the Holocaust to primary-aged children. It has helped us to deliver learning programmes in schools throughout the UK. In the last year alone, AJR funding has enabled over 10,000 students to deepen their understanding of why thousands of children just like them had to leave their homes and families and travel to the UK on the Kindertransport.

### Enduring impact and fresh thinking

These programmes have an enduring impact on children's understanding not only of the persecution of the Jewish people of the 1930s and 1940s, but also of how they can use this understanding to better address the persecution of Jews and others today. Among the students we reached through AJR funding, there was a 144% increase in their awareness of historic and contemporary antisemitism as a result. Their teachers agreed: 100% said they were likely to recommend us to other schools.

AJR funding has also helped to sharpen our educational message. For example, when we consider the persecution suffered by Jewish children under the Nazis, we want children in schools today to understand that there were no easy answers in the past – and that the same is true today. It is certainly not enough to teach that children today should learn from the lessons of Nazi persecution and 'stand up against injustice'.

What would 'standing up' mean for non-Jewish children under the Nazis? Complaints to teachers? Not an option. Mobilising parents? Not an option. Mobilising friends? Not an option. We want children today to understand that there were no easy options for children in the 1930s. We want students to question; to think; and to reject easy, comforting, answers. Maybe counter-intuitively, we want them to come out of our programmes with more questions than answers. Fostering informed critical thinking is much more likely to equip children for the challenges of othering, conspiracy theories and hatred today than a safe, but wrong-headed, reliance on trite slogans.

### New challenges

Our outreach programmes in primary schools have had clear impact so we decided to create a programme in secondary schools for children aged 11-14. Thanks to new funding from the AJR, agreed in September, we are now able to do this. We will use *The Journey* and the Kindertransport as the basis for the programme, adapting the content to the needs of older children. We will use the same approach to questioning and critical thinking that has worked so well with younger children.

We also wanted to reach children who do not currently benefit from any type of Holocaust Education – particularly those in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students. These are the students who are currently losing out the most from recent reductions in state school funding. Half of all schools are cutting their budgets for trips and speakers, rising to 68% of schools serving the most deprived areas. 40% of schools are having to use their dedicated funding for disadvantaged pupils to plug gaps in their general budgets. This is the very funding that should be used to pay for the poorest students to benefit



Children taking part in a session facilitated by the National Holocaust Centre with the help of AJR funding

from places like the National Holocaust Museum.

Thanks to the generous funding from the AJR, we are tackling this trend. We do not want geography or disadvantage to be barriers to young people benefiting from our education programmes. We have therefore agreed with the AJR that we will target all our new funding on schools with more than 30% of disadvantaged pupils in areas which have generally been under-served by Holocaust Education. We anticipate reaching around 15,000 students in over 150 schools each year as a direct result of AJR funding. This is in addition to the 40,000 students a year who currently benefit from our work.

AJR funding is allowing us to take our programmes to new areas and new groups of students. It is helping us to reach the students who will benefit the most from our approach. And for those students who visit us at our museum, exciting times are in store. *The Journey* is being upgraded in the next year thanks to a £4.2 million site renovation, equipping us to meet the challenges of our dangerous times. AJR funding has been a key support for our education programmes for many years and we are delighted that it is continuing.

**JOSEPH PEREIRA**  
(ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years) is now available for DIY repairs and general maintenance.  
No job too small, very reasonable rates.  
Please telephone 07966 887 485.

# WELCOMING OUR NEW FRIENDS FROM GERMANY

The AJR is delighted to introduce readers to our two new volunteers from Germany, who have joined us through our long-term partnership with the German peace organisation Action Reconciliation Service for Peace.

## EMMA

I was born on 12 January 2005. When I was one-year old we moved to Magdeburg, a small town in the east of Germany, where I went to primary and secondary school. I have been active in a political youth organisation for many years. I also play the piano and am interested in literature, photography and history. A few months ago, I graduated from school and I wanted to use my gap year in a meaningful and important way, gain lots of experience and meet interesting people. I have hoped for years to come to London to improve my language skills and experience the

culture of the city. This is why I am very grateful for the opportunity to support the work of the AJR, to get to know a culture that is rather new to me and to meet people I probably would never have met like this.

## MAXIMILIAN

I was born on 7 September 2004 in Eberswalde, a small town close to Berlin. There I went to primary as well as grammar school. In my free time I played a lot of soccer, especially when I was younger. As well as sport I also enjoy playing music. I started playing recorder



The AJR's new ARSP volunteers, Emma and Max

when I was eight, in school I learned how to play the clarinet and then later on I started playing the bassoon. With my bassoon I have played in several competitions and orchestras. In 2023 I finished high school and decided to do a gap year in London. I am really glad to have the chance to work at the AJR, getting to know different people and stories, gaining experiences, learning more about Jewish life and history and improving my language skills.

# ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

The Annual Election Meeting for the AJR's Board of Trustees will take place at 3pm on Wednesday 6 December. Andrew Kaufman, Stephen Kon and Mark White are standing for re-election and the Board is also planning to elect two new Trustees: Joel Hockman and Joshua Marks.



**JOEL HOCKMAN** is the grandson of three refugee survivors from Vienna. His Oma, a ballet dancer for the Vienna State Opera, came to the UK as her uncle was a guarantor, while his Opa came via the Czech Republic

where he resided with family for a short time before arriving in the UK only a few days before war broke out. His other grandmother came over on a domestic permit with her mother who was a cashier in a department store in Vienna. Although his day job is as an Assistant Headteacher

in a primary school he has always had a strong interest in WW2 and specifically the Holocaust. Joel has carried out extensive research into his own family history. The AJR has always been a part of his life as his grandparents attended many events and always saved the *Journal* for him to have a read! He is looking forward to continuing to help support the first generation and to working closely with the AJR as it continues supporting the next generations.

**JOSHUA MARKS** is a Venture Partner at Ark, where he advises charities working with children and young people on scaling their operations. He is also a trustee of the Jewish Youth Fund and Service Coordinator at New North London Synagogue. He returned to London in 2022 after three years in Delhi as a Senior Project Manager at Dalberg Advisors, where he advised



Josh Marks with his son Jacob, born 9 September. Perhaps the youngest member of AJR's 4th generation, Jacob's middle name is Alexander, after his great-grandfather.

global foundations, NGOs and bilateral agencies on strategy, programme design and government engagement. Previously, he was CO of two Government-funded NGOs in the UK social sector. He is the grandson of Alexander Marks, who left Germany in 1939 and ran the Alexis bakery on West End Lane.



# Mixed feelings in Peine

By the early 2000s, I had learned to use the internet and occasionally, put the names of my grandparents – Max and Käthe Herzfeld - into the search box. I knew little about them and my father, their only child, who had arrived here on the Kindertransport in June 1939, had died in 1987.



Susan Hamlyn's father and grandparents

Search after search produced nothing but, in early 2005, a photograph appeared of little brass plaques engraved with their names, dates of birth and of their transportation to the Warsaw Ghetto from their home in Peine, a small town east of Hannover. I learned that these were *Stolpersteine*.

I contacted the Peine archivist, a kindly historian called Jens Binner. He was amazed to hear from me. Of the 17 Jewish families who had lived in Peine, none had survived the Nazis and the records of the existence of all but one had been destroyed. That one family was mine – filed by mistake in the “wrong” cabinet. Jens had written his PhD on my family about whom copious records – mostly documenting the persecution they had suffered – remained. With mixed feelings I made plans to visit Peine.

My sister and children decided to come too – bravely as they had no German. Shortly before our visit, Jens asked if we would like to meet Sally Perel whose annual visit would coincide with ours. The name meant nothing to me – which clearly surprised Jens. He explained that

Sally – Salomon – had been a Jewish boy in Peine whose family had moved to Łódź in Poland in 1935 after his father had been put out of business by Nazi victimisation. Sally had been caught by German soldiers in 1941 but managed to pass himself off as an Aryan German boy and spent the war maintaining this pretence. It was an extraordinary story and one which Sally had eventually told in his book *Ich war Hitlerjunge Salomon (I Was Hitler Youth, Salomon)* and which became the film *Europa, Europa*. Abashed by my ignorance, I told Jens that I would be happy to meet Mr Perel if he had any interest in meeting me but I wouldn't expect it.

We arrived in Peine. Despite a warm welcome from our hosts, it was an uncomfortable experience. There was interest from the local press. We were stared at in the street. An old man came up to me and shouted that he had never done anything to hurt my father.

In the evening we were taken into the town's auditorium which was filling up with people. Sally Perel's talk was clearly a big event. I tried to muster what remained of

my A-level German as Jens had told me that Sally spoke no English and had spent his adult life in Israel. The door was opened and there stood a small man with wiry grey hair. I was introduced as the granddaughter of Max and Käthe Herzfeld.

Sally Perel stared at me as I had never been stared at before.

“I don't know if you knew my father...” I began in halting German.

“He was my best friend,” said Sally quietly and he continued to stare. I felt as if layers of my face were dropping to the floor as he stared through me and back 70 years.

“My father always said I looked like his mother,” I managed.

“You *do* look like her,” he said. “But you look like his father too.”

“Can you tell me about my father as a boy?” I asked.

“He was my best friend,” he said again. “I lived in their garden. His mother made the best ice cream. And your father was very, very clever.” He said this while continuing to stare and tears began to appear in his eyes.

Officials came and gently told him the audience was waiting. We shook hands and he was taken out. I heard the applause as he appeared on the stage and the door was shut.

Sally Perel died in February 2023. He was 97.



Sally Perel with Susan Hamlyn and her daughter Olivia, during their recent meeting in Peine

Susan Hamlyn

# REVIEWS

## THE FORGERS: THE FORGOTTEN STORY OF THE HOLOCAUST'S MOST AUDACIOUS RESCUE OPERATION

By Roger Moorhouse  
The Bodley Head

Until now few have realised the extraordinary role of a group of Polish diplomats in Switzerland engaged in a remarkable and unknown humanitarian operation to save imperilled Jews. Under the leadership of the Polish envoy Aleksander Ładosz they undertook a systematic programme of forging Latin American passports and identity documents mainly for Paraguay. Roger Moorhouse's new book unveils their story as Jews faced persecution and brutality particularly when forced into ghettos such as Łódź, Warsaw and Bełżin. They were desperate to escape with their families in the face of deportation and death. Ładosz arrived in Bern in April 1940 and embassy staff noted his "excellent work ethic"; he never acted on impulse and was linguistically talented. He was positively predisposed towards Poland's Jewish populations and his attitude to officialdom was somewhat relaxed. The primary supplier of blank passports, which only needed to be filled out and signed, was Rudolf Hügli, honorary consul for Paraguay in Switzerland. It is interesting to read how applicants' information was ingeniously conveyed to produce the documents and pass the censor. Unfortunately it was hard to cope with the sheer volume of requests, forcing sometimes difficult decisions. The book also tells the story of diplomat Chiune Sugihara who issued visas to enable Lithuanian refugees to escape through Japan.

Despite their murderous fury, the Nazis retained a strange legalism that respected citizens and passport holders of neutral countries. Even as the war turned, these "Exchange Jews" became of value to swap for German citizens and were at first held in more favourable conditions.

The plight of Polish Jews – who were often treated less advantageously as they had seen too much – is covered extensively. Around 130,000 Jews lived

in Holland in 1940 including 30,000 from Germany. Dutch exchange prisoners were held at Westerbork transit camp and then conveyed to Bergen-Belsen where conditions were originally perhaps better than in most concentration camps. But they deteriorated, leaving the camp rife with disease and starvation. Here Hanneli Goslar spoke to her old friend Anne Frank through the fence.

There was painful uncertainty over whether the passports would really offer protection as the Nazi death machine closed in. When it became obvious Latin American states including Honduras, Haiti and Chile were unwilling to honour these illegally issued documents, the security which saved these Jews from death camps was gradually lost.

Undoubtedly the quiet heroism of a group of ordinary men who decided to do something rather than nothing saved thousands. The numbers of forged passports are unknown but are estimated at about 10,000 and perhaps 2,000 to 3,000 holders survived the war. Sometimes this initiative operated in conjunction with other measures such as going underground, assuming an 'Aryan' identity or securing immigration papers for Palestine. Certainly the book is a mine of information, some of which is little known. One of the most moving features is a picture of a Paraguayan passport issued to Cwi Rosenwein who survived the Holocaust. Another poignantly shows two families who held papers where tragically only one group survived.

Janet Weston

## BEFORE THE LIGHT FADES - A MEMOIR OF GRIEF & RESISTANCE

By Natasha Walter  
Virago

Not since the 1950s has the rattle of nuclear weapons provided the unwelcome soundscape to our living nightmares. For the first time since those days, the rhetoric of Russian threats of the use of 'tactical nuclear weapons', and US announcements for the fast forwarding of 'new nuclear' warheads to be stationed in Norfolk, make the air thick with anxiety.

This present atmosphere will assist the reader to understand the 1950s/early

1960s political atmosphere which provides the unlikely backdrop to the personal story told by Natasha Walter; about her mother, Ruth, and her planned but inexplicable suicide at the age of 75. A story not only about 'What can an individual do?' but what an individual 'did'.

The shock, self-recrimination, and shame her daughter at first experiences when learning that her mother has determinedly ended her life, leads the author back to the history of the Jewish branch of her family to learn more about the individual her mother was and then to tell the story of her activism in The Cold War.

Her grandfather Georg Oppenheim, a communist from Hamburg, was a survivor of political battles in Germany in the 1930s for which he was tortured. But, in England he becomes an accountant and craves the stability, security, and obscurity that life in Britain offered.

But when the 1950s arrive Ruth and her generation do not see stability but the race towards the next war – one that with the H-Bomb has the power not just to destroy nations, but the world. Natasha's mother, Ruth, joins the political fight of her day – not this time against fascism but against nuclear weapons and government secrecy – the battle of the individual versus the state.

Proof of state perfidy comes when Ruth and her 'Committee of 100' colleagues discover an unlocked nuclear bunker in the Reading countryside. When they return to obtain evidence, it is locked but they break in and collect papers witnessing the secret UK government preparations for the elite to survive nuclear war. With these documents in their possession, they have the evidence to share with marchers on the 1962 Aldermaston March which (in case anyone has forgotten) was in the same year as the Cuban Missile Crisis).

Walter's story reminds us how much we owe to those who worried for the world in the 1950s and expressed themselves through satire, song, cartoons, novels, film, marches and the creation of the peace sign.

I am reminded that in 1960, the German-Jewish Refugee artist and peace activist, Gustav Metzger (1926-2017), wrote a

tract called 'Act or Perish!' published by the Committee of 100. To take Metzger's exhortation literally, Natasha Walter's mother 'acted' and it is the theme of taking control that provides the author's final comfort. Ruth Walter's suicide is her last freedom, the last privilege of a sane individual against the intimations of dementia she stared in the face.

This review records just one theme within a rich story beautifully told - a further piece in the mosaic of British Jewish refugee memory to be preserved and passed on.

Anthony Lipmann

### SCHREIBEN INS EXIL (Writing into Exile)

By Jörg Zedler  
Böhlau Verlag

While visiting Lisbon in the spring of 2016, Jörg Zedler, a history scholar at Regensburg University, would take his breakfast at Raffi's Bagels. When the owner, Raphael Schneider, learned that Zedler came from Germany, he told him of his own Austrian heritage and showed him an exercise book with baking recipes written in *Sütterlin* that had belonged to his great-grandmother, Ella (Eleonore Wenger).

After Zedler translated one of the recipes Raphael's father, Martin, who

lived in Lyons, offered him a whole batch of *Sütterlin* letters written by Ella to her elder daughter Lisl (Elisabeth Schneider), Martin's mother, between 1938 and 1942. These letters provide the background to Zedler's impressive work of exegesis, *Schreiben ins Exil*. For Ella and her younger daughter Martha stayed on in wartime Vienna, living on Martha's earnings as a nurse at a Jewish children's home run by the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde. Martha's employment protected mother and daughter from forced removal and, ultimately, deportation. Meanwhile, Lisl and her husband Viktor and their three sons, fled after the Anschluss, via Belgium, to years of hiding in southern France.

Zedler has transcribed 61 letters, providing a thorough commentary and explanation of the events and organisations to which Ella alludes. Helpful accompanying essays include an authoritative account of the Nazis' relentless persecution of Austria's Jews from 1938. But how did Ella send letters to her daughter? Remarkably, the family could exchange correspondence and send parcels between Vienna and Brussels and, later, unoccupied southern France even after the invasion of France. From 1941 they exchanged letters via relatives in Switzerland.

What about Lisl's letters to her mother?

Zedler surmises that Ella had to leave them behind, when she, in her mid-seventies, and Martha were deported to Theresienstadt in October 1942. Exceptionally, they were not sent on to an extermination camp, perhaps because Martha was needed to care for motherless children. After liberation Ella and Martha reached a camp in Bavaria for displaced persons. Ella then joined Lisl and her family in Paris in 1946, and was buried near the French capital in 1957.

Ella obviously could not write directly about the horrors taking place. When she wrote that it hurt her intensely to have to write about something so *Entsetzliches* (appalling) concerning 'Fina', she was referring to the fate of Lisl's sister-in-law Josefine Schneider, a Salzburg clothes-shop assistant who was a known activist against Austro-fascism. She was arrested in 1939, and sent to Lichtenburg, in eastern Germany, and then Ravensbrück. When the latter, which had no extermination facility, became too full, Fina among others was finally gassed in Bernburg, in 1942. That June, Fina's father David Schneider, collected and buried her urn in Vienna's central cemetery; a fortnight later he was deported to Theresienstadt and gassed in Treblinka in September.

Martin Mauthner

## HONORARY TREASURER WANTED

London's Leo Baeck Institute, the UK's leading research and teaching institute for the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry, is looking for a Treasurer. The institute has a close relationship with Birkbeck, University of London, and is moving soon to an office in Bloomsbury.

The Treasurer, a voluntary role, will be a trustee and a member of the Institute's Executive Committee, and will act as the non-executive finance director.

Key responsibilities include:

- Oversight of financial strategy, budgeting and reporting.
- Direction of outsourced accounting re management accounts, salaries, cash flows, annual statutory accounts, budgets

- Independent Examiner Liaison
- Property
- Investments
- Banking

The role would suit a qualified accountant, preferably chartered, living in or near London. The person should have good experience in reviewing management and statutory accounts, and be able to provide relevant advice, information and guidance.

Sympathy with, or interest in, the aims and objectives of the LBI would be useful. Knowledge of German is useful but not necessary.

The role would suit an early retiree looking to build a portfolio of charitable roles or someone working full or part time and



looking for an entry role in the charitable sector .

Time commitment is approximately one day a month, most of which can be done remotely if that is more convenient.

More information from Carina, via [c.chitayat@leobaeck.co.uk](mailto:c.chitayat@leobaeck.co.uk) and at [www.leobaeck.co.uk](http://www.leobaeck.co.uk)



# OBITUARIES

## Frank BRIGHT

Born: 7 October 1928, Berlin

Died: 29 August 2023, Ipswich



**Franz was born to Hermann Brichta from Moravia and Toni Wasservogel, both non-practising assimilated Jews. Frank had a vivid and detailed memory of a comfortable middle-class life in pre-Nazi Berlin and an equally vivid memory of the growing antisemitism. The family wore miniature Czechoslovak flags in their lapels to identify them as foreigners to whom the antisemitic laws did not apply.**

In Spring 1938 they moved to Prague. His father joined the Council of Elders which later enabled their deportation to Theresienstadt to be delayed until July 1943. Frank quickly became fluent in Czech and was enrolled in a religious Jewish school so he had no secondary scientific or liberal arts education but later gained an OU degree in maths. Fredy Hirsch was the PE teacher. The school was shut down in June 1942. The class photograph on which Frank based his school talks was taken shortly before. The photo is incomplete because some students had already been transported. It shows 49 pupils of whom 43 were murdered. In TZ his job was in a metal workshop repairing locks and making keys for them. On 29 September 1944 his father was sent to Auschwitz, on 12 October Frank and his mother followed.

He was selected for work. A particularly painful memory was of

his mother breaking ranks as they were separated, coming over to him, shaking his hand and going back to her line and the subsequent realisation that she had been killed. The following week he was selected by the manager of Friedland, a sub-camp of Gross-Rosen, which used slave labour to produce propellers for the German Air Force. He was chosen because he was standing at the front of the barrack and the manager saw him. His schoolfriend at the back of the barrack was unseen, not chosen and died in Dachau.

The elements of luck that enabled Frank to survive was a thread in all his talks. Karel Ancerl (later conductor of the Czech Philharmonic) was in charge of the younger workers. In May 1945 the Russians reached the camp by which time the Ukrainian SS guards had disappeared and Frank made his way to Prague. Distant Viennese relatives who had come to Britain pre-war traced him via the Red Cross and one was able to sponsor him for £500 (approx £50,000) to come to Britain in 1946.

Frank qualified as a civil engineer at night school at the Regent Street Polytechnic and married Cynthia in 1955. They moved to Toronto where daughter Toni was born. Their daughter Miriam was born in the UK. Frank held posts in a number of Local Authorities, finally settling in Martlesham Heath, Suffolk. After he retired he began giving talks to local secondary schools, believing it extremely important that students heard a personal account of the Holocaust. He was very disappointed when academy schools ceased to invite him but he maintained an extremely close relationship with Northgate High School whose young teenagers in a heartfelt letter nominated him for an

MBE, awarded 2022, of which he was quietly very proud. The image above was painted by Sophia Skrinchuck, an A level art student.

He received an honorary degree from Essex University and was a Patron of its Dora Love Prize. He contributed his memories to the USC Shoah Foundation, the Imperial War Museum and the Wiener Holocaust Library and took part in several BBC documentaries including the Last Survivors, and met the Queen at a Holocaust Memorial Day. He was a member of the Martlesham Heath Aviation Society and helped uncover and restore the underground shelter near the control tower as a small thank you to the UK and US fighter pilots based there.

He was a new man long before the term was coined and took an equal and active role in raising his daughters, housework (except the washing machine), shopping, cooking and baking. He had several signature dishes, the triumph being a baked lemon cheesecake. He picked kilos of blackberries each year to turn into juice and jelly, not forgetting the marmalade. His winemaking forays were not so successful.

He was an enthusiastic reader of the *AJR Journal* and frequent contributor to its letter pages.

### Toni Bright



**WHY NOT CONVERT  
YOUR OLD CINE  
FILMS  
AND PUT THEM  
ON DVDS  
FREE OF CHARGE?**

Contact Alf Buechler at [alf@buechler.org](mailto:alf@buechler.org)  
or tel 020 8554 5635 or 07488 774 414

## Frederic (Freddie) HAAS

Born: 30 March 1926, Aachen

Died: 23 March 2023, London

**Frederic Haas, known as Freddie, was the only child of Johanna and Ludwig Haas. When he was forced to move from his Montessori school, as Jewish children were no longer welcome, he attended Aachen's Jewish primary school and then the family fled Germany under the growing shadow of the Nazis. Freddie was told they were going on holiday and some considerable time passed before his parents explained that they had left Germany for good.**

The family obtained residency in Brussels; Freddie was Bar Mitzvah at the Great Synagogue at Pesach 1939, but with war growing ever more likely, there was minimal celebration. His father secured emigration visas to Chile but by the time the visas came, WW2 had broken out and the family managed to book passages to Santiago via the Panama Canal. The following day there was a powerful explosion caused by a torpedo or mine. Freddie was given a lifejacket and put into a lifeboat. A second explosion followed, causing the lifeboat to drop from a height into the North Sea and throwing Freddie into the water. He swam until he was picked up by HMS Warwick, covered in black engine oil. In Harwich he was reunited with his father, but his mother and grandmother were lost when their lifeboat capsized.

Without a mother to look after him,

13-year-old Freddie was sent to boarding school. He learned English and had a brutal introduction to Marmite (which he spread like jam the first time, to the merriment of fellow pupils) and cricket. His father was interned on the Isle of Man; then, and at other times, he was looked after by his mother's sister, Elly. He remained close to her for the rest of her life. He did well at school, but had missed chunks of his education.

After leaving school, Freddie started to demonstrate his ability and flair in scientific and practical fields. He worked hard by day and studied diligently at night. He gained a BSc at Regent Street Polytechnic and a vast amount of experience in Manchester and London, where he became expert in the glass trade. His spoken French was fluent and he was sent to France, with authority to place orders from glass factories, at the early age of 22. He invested £4 – then representing 2 weeks' wages - on a second-hand bicycle which he carefully maintained for almost seventy years.

In 1950 Freddie joined a Patent Agency in Chancery Lane. He rose steadily, culminating in being admitted as an equity partner. He happily worked there for 30 years, being proficient both in the technical and business sides of the profession. While there, he took a law degree in the evenings through UCL.

He started a second career as a solicitor, specialising in wills and conveyancing for family and friends. As ever, his legal professional work was punctilious, precise and carried out to a very high standard. He continued doing technical translations for the Patent Agency until well into his 80's.

In 1948 Freddie met Margot, then aged

16: the love of his life. They married at West London Synagogue in 1955 and had three daughters, Joanna, Carol and Paula. They built a happy family and were members of Edgware Reform Synagogue.

Freddie became a keen Rotarian, working devotedly to help a wide variety of deserving causes well into his 90's. He rode the London to Brighton cycle ride several times, raising funds for the British Heart Foundation, always in his trademark tweeds and tie, trilby hat taped on so that it would not fly off.

Many subjects attracted Freddie's keen interest, including mycology, the study of mushrooms. He became something of an expert, classifying his finds with care (not least in making sure he fed nothing poisonous to his family). Margot, as ever his soulmate, gently tolerated his passions, although lines of drying mushrooms in the kitchen occasionally tried her patience.

When Margot suffered ill health in later life, Freddie cared for her with devotion. He embraced the joys of being grandpa to seven grandchildren, who addressed him as "ancient and revered grandpapa Frederic". Later still, he took huge pleasure in his nine great-grandchildren, even lying on the floor in his mid-90s to play with them

Freddie was loved and deeply respected. His life was the story of triumph over adversity, achievement in his profession and conspicuous ability in all he did. He is greatly missed.

**Jonathan Arkush**

## IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Wednesday 1 November	11.00am	Cambridge	Karen Diamond
Thursday 2 November	2.00pm	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Monday 6 November	12.30pm	Sheffield	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 7 November	12.30pm	North Lancashire	Michal Mocton
Wednesday 15 November	12.30pm	Edgware	Ros Hart
Thursday 16 November	10.30am	Glasgow coffee morning	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 16 November	12 noon	Nottingham	Karen Diamond
Monday 20 November	12.30pm	Bournemouth	Ros Hart
Wednesday 22 November	12.30pm	Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs
Wednesday 22 November	12.30pm	Kingston	Ros Hart
Thursday 23 November	11.30am	Wembley	Karen Diamond
Thursday 30 November	12.30pm	Newcastle pre-Chanukah lunch	Agnes Isaacs

## CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

**Agnes Isaacs**  
[agnes@ajr.org.uk](mailto:agnes@ajr.org.uk)  
 Tel: 07908 156 361

**Ros Hart**  
[roshart@ajr.org.uk](mailto:roshart@ajr.org.uk)  
 Tel: 07966 969 951

**Karen Diamond**  
[karendiamond@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karendiamond@ajr.org.uk)  
 07966 631 778

**Michal Mocton**  
[michalmocton@ajr.org.uk](mailto:michalmocton@ajr.org.uk)  
 07966 886 535

**Susan Harrod**  
 EVENTS & OUTREACH MANAGER  
[susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)  
 020 8385 3078

## ZOOMS AHEAD

Details of all meetings and the links to join will appear in the e-newsletter each Monday.

Monday 6 November @ 4pm	<b>If you are from France this is for you</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86742409394">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86742409394</a>	Meeting ID: 867 4240 9394
Monday 13 November @ 4pm	<b>Margaret Mills - British Garden Designer Gertrude Jekyll</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87951822601">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87951822601</a>	Meeting ID: 879 5182 2601
Wednesday 15 November @ 2pm	<b>AJR Book Discussion (no speaker) – Address Unknown by Kathrine Kressmann Taylor</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85028268444">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85028268444</a>	Meeting ID: 850 2826 8444
Monday 20 November @ 4pm	<b>Agnes Isaacs - László Michnay, a little known saviour</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89850923092">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89850923092</a>	Meeting ID: 820 5824 1909
Tuesday 21 November @ 2pm	<b>Viola player Philip Heyman – tales and tunes from the Welsh National Opera and elsewhere</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89367805674">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89367805674</a>	Meeting ID: 893 6780 5674
Wednesday 22 November @ 2pm	<b>David Barnett - Tea Shops and Corner Houses: the story of Joe Lyons</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86018719870">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86018719870</a>	Meeting ID: 8601 871 9870
Monday 27 November @ 4pm	<b>Stuart Robinson from the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84211641403">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84211641403</a>	Meeting ID: 842 1164 1403

## KEEP FIT WITH AJR

All AJR members & friends are invited to take part in these online exercise and dance classes throughout the coming month.

Every Monday @ 10.30am **Get Fit where you Sit (seated exercise)**  
<https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439>  
 Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439

Every Tuesday @ 11.00am **Shelley's Exercise class**  
<https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622>  
 Meeting ID: 884 6694 5622

Every Wednesday @ 10.30am **Dance Yourself Fit with Jackie Turner**  
<https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86302485494>  
 Meeting ID: 8630 248 5494



## NORTHERN LIGHTS

AJR members from the North of England met for a pre Yom Tov lunch in Manchester. Michael Newman, our CEO, welcomed members, both first and second generation, to this event organised by Michal Mocton, Outreach Co-ordinator for the North of England. A delicious lunch was enjoyed by all and members also heard from Gary Fisher, who told the emotional story of his family Haggadah which was restored on the BBC's *The Repair Shop*.

SCAN  
 HERE TO  
 CONNECT  
 WITH US



Published by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), a company limited by guarantee.  
**Registered office: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, Finchley, London N3 1HF**  
 Registered in England and Wales with charity number: 1149882 and company number: 8220991

**Telephone 020 8385 3070** [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)  
 For general enquiries please contact: [enquiries@ajr.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ajr.org.uk)  
 For press enquiries please contact: [gemma@ajr.org.uk](mailto:gemma@ajr.org.uk)  
 For AJR Journal enquiries please contact: [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)

• Designed and Printed by **FBprinters** | Tel: 020 8458 3220 | Email: [info@fbprinters.com](mailto:info@fbprinters.com) •

The AJR Journal is printed on 100% recycled material and posted out in fully recyclable paper envelopes.