

AJR journal

Association of Jewish Refugees

The first AJR local groups (Part I)*

The local groups on whose activities we regularly report are one of the jewels in the AJR's crown. The first of the existing groups was that in Leeds, followed by that in South London, under the genial guidance of the late Ken Ambrose. In the 1990s the groups spread nationwide, thanks to the devoted efforts of the indefatigable Myrna Glass and her counterpart in the North, Susanne Green. They now number over 40.

But the AJR had flourishing local groups as far back as the 1940s, though these are now largely forgotten, to the extent that it is difficult to build up an accurate picture of their activities and membership. In January 1946, *AJR Information* listed 27 AJR local branches. These were mostly located in sizeable urban centres like Birmingham, Bradford, Glasgow, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke and the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge, where refugee academics congregated and which had been centres of wartime evacuation.

Groups were also established in the agreeable resort towns of Bath, Cheltenham and Harrogate, in Bedford, Epsom, Farnham, Guildford, Letchworth and Reading, all within easy reach of London, and in a scattering of places where refugees had settled for personal reasons or to set up businesses, Bishop Auckland, Blackburn, Cirencester, Northampton and Shrewsbury (Corsets Silhouette Ltd, the major manufacturer of women's undergarments run by Hans Blumenau, was then located in Shrewsbury).

But the coverage was patchy: Edinburgh and Cardiff were not represented and there was not a single group in Wales or the South-West, until the Bath group was extended to cover Bristol and the South-West in April 1946. The group in Epsom probably owed its existence to Rabbi Dr Holzer, who settled locally. Rabbis provided leadership and a focal point, but they were prone to move, leaving the group rudderless; Holzer returned to Germany in 1951. The chairman and



Rabbi Felix Carlebach

treasurer of the Newcastle group were both connected with firms set up by refugees in the North-East, one of the 'special areas' designated before the war as eligible for government aid; a number of refugee enterprises took root in the Team Valley industrial estate in Gateshead.

The large and active AJR group in Glasgow occupied a special place among the local organisations. It had been founded shortly before the AJR itself, in late 1940, and could therefore consider itself to that extent an autonomous group equal in status to the London-based association, to which it had affiliated. The Glasgow Society for Jewish Refugees, as it was known, arranged a wide variety of events, acted as a forum for bringing the refugee community together and, with its associate organisation, the Mutual Refugee Aid Society, provided support and assistance for lonely and needy refugees.

Whereas most local groups were dependent on the AJR in London - 'HQ', as it liked to style itself, as opposed to 'the provinces' - Glasgow, with its substantial refugee population, was able to mount its activities independently. In January 1946,

AJR Information reported that speakers sent from London would address meetings in Nottingham, Cambridge and Oxford, but that Glasgow would hold three locally organised events: a Skat tournament, a dance at the Jewish Institute, and a talk on a visit to Holland. The Glasgow group organised its own communal life and contributed significantly to Jewish life in the city.

When a function was held in 1950 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the group, it attracted a remarkable level of support and was attended by no less than 135 people. In his address, Ernst Levy, the Hon. President, paid tribute to his co-founders, Dr H. Hirsekorn (Hirst) and Dr Ehrlich. The Chairman, Dr Leo Loewensohn, recalled the Society's past achievements and the continuing need for a group 'where people who shared a common background, fate and hopes' might meet. In July 1955, Loewensohn reported that the group had a membership of 60-70, was active in the cultural and social fields, held fortnightly meetings with lectures, arranged functions on the Jewish festivals and played an active part in the affairs of Glasgow's Jewish community.

The standing of the AJR Glasgow group was reflected in the tributes paid to its officers on occasions like their birthdays. In June 1953, *AJR Information* published an announcement of the 75th birthday of Ernst Levy; in July 1956, it published a tribute by Loewensohn to Curt Rosenberg, the Hon. Treasurer, on his 80th birthday; and, in November 1956, it reported that members of the Society had honoured its Hon. Secretary, Herbert Levy, on his 70th birthday, for his work for it and for the Mutual Refugee Aid Society, whose founder and Hon. President he had been. But the passing of time thinned out the ranks of the founding generation. Already in 1948 Rabbi Curtis E. Cassell had left for London, to serve as minister at West London Synagogue; and in October 1956, the journal reported that Max Doctor, a

continued overleaf

THE FIRST AJR LOCAL GROUPS *continued from page 1*

leading member of the Society and listed as its Hon. Treasurer in 1946, had died in a road accident aged 77.

Herbert Levy left in 1959 for Israel, where he died shortly afterwards. *AJR Information* of October 1959 contained obituaries for Levy and for Leo Loewensohn, who had been the Society's chairman for 13 years. Else Rosenberg, Curt Rosenberg's wife, who had been a member of the council of the Society and President of the Mutual Refugee Aid Society, had died a few months earlier. Finally, Ernst Levy died in 1961, aged 83. In 1962, the Society elected a new committee, with B. N. Bergmann as chairman. Its officers were, compared to the founding generation, relatively unknown; the exception was the historian Werner Mosse, but he left Glasgow for Norwich in 1964, to take up a Chair at the University of East Anglia.

Manchester, which had a Jewish population of over 30,000 in 1950, was home to another thriving AJR group; nearly 200 people attended its General Meeting in March 1946. A feature unique to Manchester was the setting up of the Morris Feinmann Homes, which provided accommodation for elderly and lonely refugees well before similar homes were established in London. The Homes were named after Morris Feinmann, Chairman of the Manchester Jewish Refugees Committee, who had died in North Africa in 1944, on a mission to provide relief for liberated Jews.

An article on the Homes in *AJR Information* of August 1955, aptly entitled 'A Focus of Manchester's AJR', stated that they were the first venture of their kind in Britain, an achievement all the greater because it had been accomplished by the 'comparatively small' refugee community in the city – a revealing comment, since Manchester and Glasgow held the largest concentrations of refugees outside London. The first house, in Amherst Road, had been bought in 1947 and opened in 1948. The second house was given to the trust that administered the Homes through the generosity of Berthold Bochenek, then Chairman of Manchester AJR. It was opened at a ceremony on 15 July 1951, at which Bochenek and L. K. Sonneborn, the Vice-Chairman, spoke; Rabbi Felix Carlebach of South Manchester Synagogue conducted a short service. 'The Manchester Group deserves every praise for having built up a home where people of our specific background may live in a congenial happy atmosphere', wrote *AJR Information*.

But the AJR group in Manchester declined during the 1960s. When Werner Rosenstock, General Secretary of the AJR and Editor of *AJR Information*, travelled to Manchester in April 1962 to address a gathering of AJR members at Morris Feinmann House, the journal reported that an 'unexpectedly large number' of them had come to hear him speak, a comment that reflected less on Rosenstock's popularity than on the diminishing size of the audiences expected at the group's meetings. After Bochenek's death in 1951, the leadership of the Manchester group still included such outstanding figures as Sonneborn, who had been listed as chairman in 1946, Rudolf Friedlaender, a GP in Didsbury who had risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps during the war and then acted as Senior Medical Officer at Morris Feinmann House, and F. H. Kroch, founder of Lankro Chemicals Ltd of Eccles.

The transition from the founding generation was as evident in Manchester as it had been in Glasgow. On 7 December 1961, a farewell dinner was held in honour of Gertrude Blumenbach, the matron of Morris Feinmann House, who was retiring after 13 years of service. She had overseen the moving of 26 residents from the original 'austerity' home to new premises in Spath Road in December 1959; *AJR Information* reported that she had successfully merged those residents with some 20 new arrivals 'into one large family'. Gertrude Blumenbach herself became a resident at Morris Feinmann House, thus symbolising the passing of the baton to the next generation. As the refugees became increasingly well settled in Britain, they needed the support of the local groups less.

Anthony Grenville

**An article on the smaller AJR groups in other towns and cities will follow in next month's issue.*

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'Inspiration by Goodness'

Sir Nicholas Winton

Of the 669 Czech children who travelled on the original eight 'Winton Trains' from Prague to London in 1939, only 22 were on the new 'Winton Train', which left Prague on 31 August 2009 and arrived at Liverpool Street Station, the same destination as the original trains, on 4 September. I was one of the 22.

Readers of the Journal may have seen some of the extensive TV footage already shown on the BBC News Channel, whose film crew and commentator were present throughout the journey. The idea of commemorating the earlier event was, in fact, conceived by the steam train enthusiasts of Czech Railways. If you have seen pictures of the train, you will have noticed not only the steam engines, which drew crowds of photographers all along the route through Bohemia and Germany (this had been publicised in advance) but also that the trains – the same applied to the train from Harwich to Liverpool Street – were made up of heterogeneous pre-war carriages of several nationalities, including a Hungarian restaurant car manned by Hungarian staff serving Hungarian food and wines, and in England a Pullman coach as well as one from the Royal Scot. The rest of the train occupants, apart from the several volunteer Czech organisers and the very welcome presence of Sir Nicholas Winton's daughter Barbara, consisted of family members of the '22', some of whom had come from as far as Israel, Canada, the US and Australia, and a considerable number of young people mostly in their twenties who had distinguished themselves as prize-winners in various artistic disciplines and had been awarded their prizes on the evening prior to the departure of the train at a ceremony in the splendid surroundings of the Prague National Museum.

Travelling on the train too was the Hottentots Orchestra, which supplied
cont. opposite

British first, Jewish second



Dominic Lawson wrote recently in *The Sunday Times* that he had 'inherited a bit of my grandmother's neurosis: a small part of me wonders if it is entirely wonderful that Britain's two best-known Jews [Alan Sugar and Michael Winner] seem so comfortably to tally with the anti-Semitic stereotype of the money-obsessed loudmouth.'

Jews have never been much liked here. There was the York massacre in 1190 and then the expulsion by Edward I in 1290 which lasted nearly 400 years. Shakespeare wrote about Shylock, Dickens about Fagin. Had Edward VIII not abdicated, we might have had a Nazi-sympathising monarch. The UK abstained in the vote on the creation of Israel and has always had a soft spot for the Arab nations. Ernest Bevin, the British foreign secretary at the time, certainly did. We did not endear ourselves to the British by what they considered Jewish terrorism in Palestine during their mandate, particularly the murder of the two British sergeants. It happened a long time ago, but these events have not been forgotten.

Even now, some of the media – the *Guardian*, *Observer*, *Independent*, Channel 4 and the BBC – are often accused of anti-Israel bias or anti-Semitism. There is no doubt that most of the British felt that Israel over-reacted to Gaza (the bombing of Gaza led to the highest number of attacks on British Jews in 25 years). Some of us Jews therefore blame Israel for the growing anti-Semitism of today because it is believed that many non-Jews confuse anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. This is a glib, simplistic argument. The upper classes have never been fans. Yes, Disraeli became prime minister but, generally, we were thought of as inferior beings. The working class didn't like us either be-

cause some of them thought we made more money than they did. Today, it is very unusual for Jews to commit violent crimes but, sadly, a tiny minority is seen to get involved in fraud. Also, some Jews are considered ostentatious, which is seen as very un-British.

Judaism needs a re-launch. We have many enemies in the UK, inevitably among some of the Muslim population but also because it is thought that US policy unfairly favours Israel. However, due to the horrific Holocaust, Jews have mostly presented themselves as victims for the last 60 or so years. Instead, let us now talk about our achievements in the arts and sciences, law and medicine, and quote figures like the ones Dominic Lawson did – that Jews have won almost a quarter of the Nobel Prizes awarded. Our doctors, lawyers, accountants and businessmen are among the best. Many of our writers, artists, musicians, film directors and actors have become legends. There are great academics, philosophers, historians and politicians among us. Margaret Thatcher even had five Jews in her cabinet. The former leader of the Conservative Party was Jewish. The current Speaker is a Jew.

But please, those of you who feel the necessity to boast – don't! Furthermore, let's be seen to be giving to non-Jewish charities as well as to our own. Let the ultra-religious not be so insular. Let's make close friends of those in other religions. Also, let's realise that we are British first, Jewish second. I am proud of Israel's achievements since 1948 but – using the Norman Tebbit test – when England played Israel at football, as they did recently, I supported England. Let's prove our loyalty. Let's together try to help stamp out anti-Semitism in the UK.

Peter Phillips

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daily teatime music in the bar car and at the stations where the train stopped overnight.

So much for the 'externals'. It is, of course, impossible to generalise on what this repeat journey after 70 years meant to the original children, let alone their own children and grandchildren. In 1939, none of us could have foreseen with any certainty the events which were to commence so shortly after, let alone the then unimaginable horrors which were to befall our families! Speaking for myself, I felt we were participating in a great adventure, and the thought that we would never see our parents again did not occur to us. Having been to Prague a number of times since the 'Velvet Revolution', what struck

me most forcefully as my wife and I wandered through the pretty, well-cared-for streets of Prague this time, was how awful life must have become so quickly for them as the anti-Jewish regulations were enforced – what with no work, not much money, no travel on public transport and the yellow star.

The highlight of the journey for us was, of course, the chance to see and talk to our rescuer, the 100-year-old Nicky Winton, both at Liverpool Street and later at the Czech embassy. It was wonderful to be able to thank this modest man once again for our lives. The motto for the whole event – 'Inspiration by Goodness' – could not have found a truer living representative.

Harry Stadler

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‘Between silence and screams’: The *Refugee Voices* collection – seven case studies by Julia Pettengill

This article is a condensed version of an undergraduate dissertation by Julia Pettengill of the University of St Andrews, who was awarded a first-class honours degree. She is also the author of “A Guilt Beyond Crime”: The Future of Genocide Prevention in the Anglo-American Sphere’ (The Henry Jackson Society, 2009). The dissertation uses material from the AJR’s Refugee Voices collection of filmed interviews to investigate the way in which oral history testimonies convey survivors’ memories of the traumatic events of the Holocaust. Because of the highly personal nature of some of the testimony, only the initials of the interviewees have been used (Ed.).

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the experiences of concentration camp survivors garnered little attention outside the trials of former Nazi officials. However, a combination of wider cultural, political and academic shifts engendered a surge of interest in the Holocaust at the end of the twentieth century, and has resulted in an unprecedented volume of recorded eyewitness testimonies from Jewish victims. With this proliferation of source material, scholars have sought to understand not just what the survivors witnessed in the camps, but how they have made sense of this unprecedented trauma in their post-liberation lives.

The present article seeks to provide insight into this question by analysing seven survivor testimonies from the AJR’s recently completed audio-visual Holocaust Testimony Archive *Refugee Voices* and represents one of the first scholarly usages of this archive.

Evolution of ‘age of testimony’

In the aftermath of the Allied liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, graphic photos of its surviving inmates inspired pity, revulsion and ultimately a resounding silence from the international community. If and when survivors did speak about their experiences, they were often confronted with an audience which was either reluctant to listen or simply could not comprehend the severity of the survivor’s account. Indeed, post-war societies were overwhelmingly concerned with the restoration of ‘normality’, a somewhat incongruous goal in the aftermath of the catastrophic Second World War. The historical record strongly suggests that this was a cross-cultural phenomenon of mass incomprehension – an ‘age of silence’ – which afflicted even Israeli society.

However, over the next few decades it would seem that the passage of time, and accompanying cultural shifts, encouraged a growth in public interest in the experiences of Holocaust survivors, and influenced survivors to share their experiences with the world. In many ways, the USA led the way in the rise of public and academic interest in the Holocaust, which arguably culminated in the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993 and the release of Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* in 1994. The tremendous response by survivors to *Schindler’s List* inspired Spielberg to co-found the University of Southern California’s Shoah Foundation Institute in 1994. The Institute has collected almost 52,000 videotaped testimonies from Holocaust survivors and witnesses and is the largest visual history archive in the world. Its methodology underpins the approach of the *Refugee Voices* interviews.

The development of the ‘age of testimony’ in the UK largely paralleled that of the USA and was reflected in the rise of dedicated university courses, the *Remembrance* documentary series on the BBC, the growth of testimony projects such as the British Library’s *National Life Stories: Jewish Living History* collection, and the establishment of the permanent Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in 2000. The new resource compiled by the Association of Jewish Refugees offers a fascinating glimpse into the way in which time and the traumatic content of survivor memory are reflected in recorded testimony.

Seven case studies from the *Refugee Voices* collection

Literary scholar Lawrence Langer argues that survivor memory is characterised by two competing modes of remembrance: ‘deep memory’ and ‘common memory’. ‘Deep memory’ refers to the memories which recall the self present at the scene of the trauma, while ‘common memory’ represents the desire to reconcile these traumas with a framework of ‘normal’ understanding. The seven samples of survivor testimony taken from the *Refugee Voices* collection can be characterised by a conflict between these competing forms of memory, with the ‘deep memory’ of their traumatic experience occasionally plunging the speaker back to the scene of their most nightmarish experiences. For example, HF relates an account in which he watched as the bodies of his mother, sister and still-living infant nephew were thrown into a mass grave in the Nowy

Sacz ghetto:

And the wagons came in towards us and, when they dropped the flap down, the first person that came out was my mother, and my sister with a three-month old baby still alive, and I wanted to jump into the grave with them.

This incident stands out as the most direct and agonising encounter with both personal grief and mass death among the seven case studies I surveyed. HF refers to this incident three times throughout his testimony and attests to suffering from recurrent nightmares involving this scene. In contrast, RK consistently evades mentioning any enduring traumatic memories:

RK: I don’t know who, Mengele or what ... He just done this and this. Any children or any old people they didn’t want because they don’t work. And you know, just this and this and this and this ... And then you go this way and another one the other way.

Rosalyn Livshin (Interviewer): So who of your family went the other way?

RK: My parents and my sister. And then they take you in a bath and give you a bath and they cut all your hair off and all the, you know, and they give you a uniform – striped dress of some sort – and then they put you again in a group of some sort. And this is how they took me to ... Plaszow.

RK substitutes phrases such as ‘this and this’ for descriptions of the scene of selection and her final separation from her family, and jumps as quickly as possible to her arrival in Plaszow. Prior to the terse account of arrival, she attempts to skip ahead of this traumatic scene to speak about liberation before describing anything about her experience in the camps. In having to be asked by the interviewer to elaborate on her time in Auschwitz, she demonstrates the way in which some survivors guard their ‘deep memory’ from exposure by stripping her account of detailed or emotional language.

‘Deep memory’ also takes the form of recollections endowed with both lived and metaphorical significance. For example, IG relates the ‘deathly silence’ of the overnight transport to her final encounter with her mother and sister, culminating in the following episode in the shower room:

I remember then this terrible panic under the shower because I could see blood on the floor, and I thought ‘Dear Lord, they are killing us here!’ Not far in front of me was this woman and she was menstruating. There was no sanitary towel – just like animals. And then [the SS] started shouting ‘Raus, Raus!’

This recollection operates on two levels: the ‘lived’ reality of their immediate experience, and the metaphorical reality which conflates the life-giving cycles

of female biology with the primordial horror of spilt blood. Deprived of privacy or sanitary necessities, this woman's unavoidable menstruation becomes a symbol for the relationship between dehumanisation and murder.

Certainly, the recounting of memories vested with symbolic potency casts light on the way in which survivors communicate their own attempts to process experiences and feelings which evade description. For example, NK relates an episode of 'metaphorical and lived reality' which reveals the way in which 'deep memory' can be guarded by the comforting constructs of 'common memory'. Unprovoked by the interviewer, she recounts visiting Berlin after the war to visit her mother's grave in the Jewish cemetery in Weissensee. She recalls arriving at the cemetery just before dark and is warned to return before the gates are locked at five. Having found her mother's grave at the end of the cemetery, she loses her way back to the entrance and begins to panic:

I was in despair, I could hear the clocks, I could hear five o'clock ringing, and I thought 'Oh my goodness, now I will be here all night!'

She then relates her handling of this frightening situation to her behaviour in Auschwitz:

I am not hysterical, I am a very composed and normal human being ... In the camp, when they were grumbling 'Oh, we will all be killed!', I said 'No, we will not be killed, we will survive!'

By explicitly relating this anecdote to her bravery and endurance in the camps, NK asserts her control over a situation which appears to remind her of her powerlessness as a camp inmate. In this symbolic episode, the 'deep memory' of her death-immersion in the camps seeps through the framework of courage and forbearance which characterises much of her testimony.

Common memory

In Lawrence Langer's view, narratives which present internment as a positive or redemptive experience are anachronistic expressions of the survivor's need to master the unresolved and uncontrollable resurgence of 'deep memory'. According to his construct, the interpretation of survival through a religious framework is another example of 'common memory' as it implies that the horror of the Holocaust has meaning and, by extension, value.

Interestingly, in each of the seven case studies reviewed here, nearly every survivor conveys an essentially ambivalent attitude towards the explanatory power of their Jewish faith in relation to their experiences in the camps, and none of those interviewed affirms any belief in the redemptive power of suffering. Even among religious subjects, faith is expressed in terms of its sustaining power rather than any relevance it may have to explaining why they experienced the

horrors of the camps. As IG reflects:

When people were talking about any *Yom Tov* [in Auschwitz], I thought 'They're crazy!' How can anybody still believe what we were taught? But people do. We have to hold on to something.

JS appears to be the most actively religious survivor among these case studies and recalls being teased by her bunkmate for praying each night in Auschwitz:

I said 'It may not save me but it certainly makes me feel better. And as long as I can say my prayers, I thank God almighty I am still alive ... There is no God to help escape this horror and the funny thing is when we [were] liberated and we met up in Budapest she said 'You know, you were right to say your prayers! It has saved you.' And she became very religious and moved to Israel.

The ambivalence conveyed in this statement reveals the extent to which the 'horror' of the experience both cries out for and resists religious interpretation. Ultimately, JS will not allow despair to control her narrative, and she concludes by noting how her example influenced her bunkmate's post-war conversion. In a similar vein, WG describes how meeting his wife after liberation allowed them to 'overcome the traumas of the past, and we decided there and then that it is time to look ahead. We decided we must start living again.' Such invocations of religion and family represent the mechanism by which they have been able to pursue a life after the camps and in this sense reveals that the life-affirming frameworks of common memory, while anachronistic, may be necessary to survival.

The limits of speech: Incomprehension, incommunicability and the 'age of testimony'

With the exception of LG, none of the survivors shared their experiences publicly until after the beginning of what I have called the 'age of testimony'. IG, WG, NK and JS describe their silence as part of an attempt to forge new lives and move on from the past. LG was interviewed by the BBC in 1946 but explains that 'They didn't air it because it was too bad for the public to hear,' and could not find a publisher for his memoir *An Englishman in Auschwitz* for over 30 years. 'To mention the past was taboo; nobody wanted to relive past traumas,' remarks WG. 'So the talks that we had were ... all about the future and the trivialities of the present.'

LG is exceptional among this sample – and indeed among the majority of Holocaust survivors – in that he has been speaking about his experiences publicly since 1946, and began relating his experiences immediately after liberation:

In the barracks it smelled of death. We didn't notice it, but those [American] soldiers ... I can still see the tall fellow taking his handkerchief out of his pocket and saying 'I've seen it!' and I said 'You've seen nothing! Don't go, please stay.' So I took them to every bed, lifted every blanket and I said look, skin and bones, the man is alive, but

look at the skin and bones My urge was to tell, to show.

LG's testimony is rife with references to this desire to 'tell', which he began to do publicly with an interview in the *London Evening Standard* in 1946, followed by regularly visiting Jewish organisations and schools in London to discuss his experiences. He repeatedly refers to testimony as 'fighting', as if retelling is both a way of conquering his own past and of combatting the lies of Holocaust deniers.

Elie Wiesel wrote: 'Between a survivor's memory and its reflection in words, his own included, there is an unbridgeable gulf.' The testimonies reviewed here suggest that the gradual emergence of the 'age of testimony' may have been a product of both social pressure and a more fundamental inability to come to terms with – let alone express – the incomprehensible horrors of the camps. Each testimony under review is characterised by a tension between the constructs which enable them to control and make sense of their experiences, and the underlying 'deep memory' which threatens to snap them back into the abyss of their trauma. To this end, HF regards a degree of self-censorship as necessary in his testimony: 'It's just one of those things that you don't go into, because when you start it can drive you *meshuge* [crazy] completely.'

At the conclusion of the *Refugee Voices* interviews, the interviewers ask whether or not the subject has a message they would like to conclude with. Interestingly, each response by the individuals surveyed here is characterised either by the total failure of words or the insertion of a formula characteristic of 'common memory', which can appear incongruous in the context of their trauma-filled testimonies. For instance, JS remarks:

If you can end up with a nice home and children, life goes on, and, thank God, my religion gives me strength and hope ... My father says 'Don't ever give up hope whatever difficult times we live in!'

Yet, despite referring to God, miracles and their religious faith, none of the survivors expressed a view of their experience as somehow positive or as holding any eschatological significance. Thus, the most striking feature of these testimonies is their failure to fulfil the expectation central to the 'age of testimony': that the survivors should impart a lesson. While the 'age of testimony' has elevated the survivor-storyteller to the position of prophet, the raw text of survivor testimonies often attests to their existential bewilderment.

'The only way I could explain [Auschwitz] was, I think I was screaming, but there was no sound coming out of me,' remarks IG. Caught between silence and screams, survivor testimony becomes an enterprise without end, and a challenge to those who seek to access the truths therein.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'MY VIENNA IS DEAD'

Sir – Though now back in my home in Sydney, Australia, I can still enjoy your wonderful journal on the internet. I was moved by a letter in your September issue from Mrs. E. Holden, which she concludes: 'England is my home. I love it and belong to it – warts and all!' It reminded me of my father and uncle, who were my only blood relatives to escape the Holocaust. My father never wanted to return to Prague to a way of life that no longer existed, as Mrs. Holden found in Vienna. Instead, he became more British than the British. Whatever he might say at home, if anyone ever criticised Britain in public, he would immediately rise to its defence.

Integration and patriotism for their adopted countries have always seemed to me to be the cardinal duties and virtues of refugees and migrants.

Tom Schrecker, Sydney, Australia

Sir – How I agree with Mrs Holden! I was born in the Patzmanitengasse and lived there until I came to England. The kosher butcher with whom she enquired, an immigrant from Russia, did not know of the beautiful synagogue I attended regularly in the Patzmanitengasse, which was burned down on Kristallnacht.

When I was in Vienna a few years ago, we made sure that the Kultusgemeinde put a memorial tablet for our beautiful Tempel on the house built on the ground where the Tempel had stood.

*Mrs N. Karen (née Margulies)
London NW2*

LIVING COMMUNITIES

Sir – My father is a member of the AJR and I recently read some of the newsletters. My own position is very different – though born and bred in Bradford, I am actually a rabbi working in several congregations in Germany and Austria! And it struck me that although several of your correspondents wrote about visiting important former places for them in Berlin, Vienna and so forth, there seems to be little awareness of the existence of living communities once more in some of these cities and towns.

They remain small and they cannot be compared to what existed before the war. In Germany, many of them are also dominated by immigrants from the former Soviet Union who have little understanding even now for the nuances of German-Jewish history. Nevertheless, should one of your readers – a survivor or child of survivors – be interested in visiting a synagogue service or a community centre when exploring former 'roots', this

is something I would encourage.

Clearly some readers tend towards Orthodoxy, others are Reform or Liberal, and yet others atheist, so there are no simple answers to offer. I work in the small Liberal communities, badly underfunded and usually not given any of the state support lavished on certain more Orthodox communities (officially *Einheitsgemeinden*). Nevertheless, we try to maintain a living Jewish presence in these places, which have known such a destructive past. There are 'Liberal' or open, tolerant and welcoming Jewish communities in Vienna, Munich and Cologne, in Schleswig-Holstein and Hanover, and many other cities. Some of them have websites; details of some can be found in yearbooks and Jewish travel guides. But if anyone is travelling to Germany or Austria and is interested, I would also be glad to respond by e-mail to any queries about communities.

*Rabbi Dr Walter Rothschild
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'GOD ON TRIAL'

Sir – The unjustified and erroneous statements on Reform and Liberal Judaism expressed by Margarete Stern (September) demand a refutation. She wrote: '[I]f left to Reform and the Liberals, the Jewish "race" would have got diluted even more as no one ... can deny.' I, for one, am denying it.

Having the experience of leading congregations over 60 years and having served for a decade as Chairman of the Rabbinic Board of the Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, I can testify that the opposite is true.

The adherence to Jewish status solely on matriarchal descent, the agonies endured by *Agunot*, the restrictions imposed on *Cohanim*, and the demands put on prospective proselytes by Orthodox authorities have led to considerable dilution of Jewry, whilst Liberal Jewish attitudes and practices are strengthening and enriching Jewish life.

*(Rabbi) Harry M. Jacobi MBE
New Barnet*

Sir – Peter Phillips attacks the sincerely held beliefs of Mrs Stern and makes wild, unsubstantiated statements asserting that the Torah was authored by men.

God was the author of the Torah and He gave it to the Children of Israel orally via Moses, who spent 40 days and nights on Mount Sinai receiving it. Moses handed it on to Joshua and it was passed on by mouth through the generations until in times of persecution it was feared that it could be lost and it was then written down.

A Liberal Jew once went on a train journey and saw his Liberal 'rabbi' eating a ham sandwich. The minister said to his congregant: 'I suppose you are surprised to see me eating this!' 'Oh no', said the man, 'I am only surprised you call yourself a rabbi!'

Rabbiner Samson Raphael Hirsch, staunch defender of Orthodoxy against the inroads of Reform in the nineteenth century, aptly summed it up: 'They [the Liberals] permit that which God has forbidden us.'

Henry Schragenheim, London N15

Sir – We live in a state of emergency, where intermarriage is rampant and the fires of confusion and assimilation are raging. When a fire is burning, everyone is responsible for helping his fellow man in a caring and kind manner, for the essential thing is the deed!

In response to the challenges expressed in previous issues of the Journal which question the 13 Principles of Faith codified by Maimonides, I would like in a courteous and brief manner to address one of the most fundamental issues raised. Faith is not the absence of reason: it is a skill in its own right, which, when cultivated, allows us to experience the ultimate. Man can never be happy if he does not nourish his soul as he does his body.

Yonatan Kohavi, London N15

Sir – Peter Phillips's latest diatribe (July) betrays a Voltairean dogmatism that shows how little he understands the Jewish doctrine of *Torah min Hashamyim* (Revelation) and so is reduced to abusing an Orthodox Jew as a 'poor deluded creature [who] believes that the Torah ... was actually written by God and not by man'.

He should endeavour to find out what he is attacking instead of displaying his prejudices for all to see. Unfortunately, a letter is inadequate for a full discussion but he can read an exposition in my book *A Time to Speak* (Devora Publishing, August 2009), which should be available from Borders and most Jewish bookstores or over the internet from Amazon.

Perhaps, when he has had a chance to study it, he will be able to write in a more reasoned manner on the subject.

Martin D. Stern, Salford, Lancs

Sir – In her September letter to you, Mrs Margarete Stern uses the word 'goyim' when referring to non-Jews. I find this most offensive. How would she like to be referred to as a 'yid'?

*Peter Phillips
Loudwater, Herts*

LITTLE BLUE BOOK

Sir – If S. Muller cares to peruse the front page of the August issue he will see that the standards of education and culture were unequalled among German-speaking Jews on the Continent.

My parents made tremendous sacrifices in the 1930s slump to give me a good start in life. Moreover, my non-Jewish piano teacher went on teaching me *free of charge* after the Anschluss, although

Aryans were strictly forbidden to have anything to do with Jews. She risked arrest and even concentration camp.

What aroused my anger most in the 'blue book' was that the boys were going to be allocated to agriculture and menial 'trades' and girls to nursing and domestic service. 'That's what you were brought here for. Think of the pioneers in Palestine; they did not mind getting their hands dirty.' They did it to build up *their* country *voluntarily*, and they already had their education and professions.

A great deal of emotional, if not mental, damage was suffered by us children. I myself was in hospital *eight months* for nervous breakdowns in 1939-40.

As for your renowned Lady Reading, she was well known as a snob. During the war, the Government offered to issue extra clothing coupons for us deprived, parentless children but she declined, saying 'Hand-me-downs are good enough for my refugees.'

Incidentally, the two girls from the hostel who went into domestic service to her wrote to us and told us how *unhappy* they were there.

As for 'concentration camp and gas chambers', I would have been far better off if I had gone to Shanghai with my parents or even to a kibbutz in Palestine, as I was preparing to do.

There is a book called *And the Policeman Smiled* which gives a truthful account of the Kindertransport. More people ought to read it. (Mrs) A. Saville ARCM London NW4

DON'T OFFEND THE NATIVES

Sir - I'm a post-war addition to the ranks of newcomers. Evidently, by that time the Anglo-Jewish establishment no longer considered the 'Little Blue Book' essential reading. I suppose things changed with the war and certainly not because the bunch of unruly youngsters I came with were not lacking in civility. Betty Bloom's mention of the condescending attitude to refugees (August) brings to mind an amusing tale from that period. It's no joke - it actually happened!

After a group of German refugees had been counselled on proper conduct, lest the natives be offended, one gentleman got so peeved that he rose to his feet and hurled back at the speaker: 'You Breetish sink vee forenners know bugger nussing, vell I tell you, vee know bugger all!'

Rubin Katz, London NW11

MY DAD SALO KESTEN

Sir - My father died in July of complications from Parkinson's. I hope I may use your Journal both to let this be known and to invite those who knew him to contribute their recollections to a paper I am producing.

He came here from Vienna in 1938, as, separately, did my mother. They married in 1947 and had both been members of a 'Young Austrians' choir. After the war he worked first as a tailor in Saville Row and, more recently, as the trade union representative for the bespoke tailoring trade in London. Until his late 70s, he was on

the Board of the Tailors Benevolent Institute and still able to find employment for people who rang him. His commitment was such that he set up a grinding stone at home to sharpen scissors for tailors. On a number of occasions he organised reunions of 'Young Austrians' and I recently wrote to those whose addresses I could find.

I decided not to hold a memorial event because many of his friends are now too frail to attend one. I intend to collate whatever comments I get with at least some of an autobiography he was writing and with some pictures I have found (including, I believe, one of my father at about two) and send them to those who contribute.

Anthony Kesten tel 07710 579094
email tony.tk@live.co.uk

'WHERE WERE YOU ON D-DAY?'

Sir - In contrast with Ken Shindler (your September issue), I was at school, in North Wales, preparing for my School Certificate examination. For some reason, newspapers were not allowed in the school, although as a dayboy I had heard the news. The first lesson in the morning for my class was Latin and our teacher, Walter Fischer (from Vienna!), always told us the news, in the form of sentences to be translated into Latin. That morning it was something like 'The Allied forces have landed successfully on the coast of France. There is very heavy fighting.'

Paul Samet, Pinner, Middx

'CONFUSED AS NEVER BEFORE'

Sir - Peter Phillips's thoughtful article in your September issue highlights the sad course of events in and around Israel over the years. I remember the admiration most of the world expressed about the kibbutz movement and about creating a healthy and prosperous country out of a patch of land which had been little more than a sandy desert. There was international appreciation of Israel's resourcefulness in the 1967 Six-Day War and the world's press couldn't praise Israel enough for her daring exploits at Entebbe. Dr T. Scarlett Epstein rightly mentions the many shortcomings of Arabs surrounding Israel, and all the real and imagined wrongs they have suffered at the hands of Israel do not excuse some of their actions. And yet, and yet - I do wish Israel would stop building new settlements in the West Bank. I hope Peter Phillips does not consider this 'fighting among ourselves'.

Marc (Wolfi) Schatzberger, York

'FREMDWÖRTER SIND GLÜCKSACHE'

Sir - My mother used to say 'Fremdwörter sind Glücksache' - meaning that the use of words of foreign derivation is a matter of luck. I do not believe that, in their final paragraph (August issue), Ros and Jane Merkin meant that Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's ideas would cause a bonfire, but rather that they 'conflate' into a single belief. I note that you reserve the right to shorten correspondence - why not also correct obvious errors?

Stephanie Solomon
London NW3

VALUED MAGAZINE

Sir - I value your magazine - took it over from my mother when she died.

Brita Wolf, London NW3

GASTRONOMIC MEMORIES

Sir - Regarding the Cosmo Restaurant in Finchley Road, I believe it was originally called the Cosmopolitan Restaurant, as we Northerners called it. It became the Cosmo as the letters 'politan' gradually fell off and were not replaced.

Jo Maier, Wembley, Middx

AUSTRIAN PSYCHE

Sir - I much enjoyed Anthony Grenville's recent leading article, which explored the development of the German psyche since the defeat of Nazism. I was wondering why a similar journey for Austrians has not necessarily brought them to the same place. Their current, enshrined neutrality was brought about by geopolitical forces outside Austria and they also have the rather flimsy excuse of the Anschluss to hide behind for their own exculpation. The elections in November 1945 were distinct for being free and anti-Communist and perhaps this, together with the beginnings of the Cold War, enabled the Austrians to retain their conservative views without extirpating their Nazi roots, thus allowing a continuity from pre-war rather than the total disconnect caused in Germany.

Following your theme of the female experience determining the sociological development of Germany, I would be interested to hear why this didn't work in Austria.

Please continue to produce such thought-provoking articles.

Geoffrey Marx
Kensington, London

RESCUE OF REFUGEE SCHOLARS

Sir - Warm thanks for your recent excellent feature 'The Rescue of Refugee Scholars'. The Society for Protection of Science and Learning was one of the most effective refugee assistance organisations. Those involved, like its secretary Esther Simpson, cared not only for the scholars as individuals but also for their families, especially their children. The attitude was to assist the persecuted as people. The physiologist A. V. Hill was a long-term supporter of refugee scientists and physicians. He took someone from an ordinary non-academic family from Vienna into his household: a 17-year-old girl, Erica Guttmann (my mother-to-be).

Importantly, the Society continues today. Now known as the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), it is busier than ever because of the persecution and intolerance worldwide. CARA maintains its excellence in valuing every refugee as an individual person. The experiences of the 1930s help a new generation of the displaced and persecuted. CARA would be pleased to hear from anyone (and their families) who was helped in the past or wishes to support its work today.

Paul Weindling
Oxford

ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

If Futurism is the collective noun for modern art, its 1910 manifesto, pledged by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, declares war on all before it. It condemns art critics, sentimentality, imitation and the (nauseous) nude.

Nonetheless, one of the first paintings you see in **Tate Modern's Futurism** exhibition is a nude by **Georges Braque**. The Futurist pledge has all the dogma of a Communist-style manifesto, stating that without aggression there is no masterpiece. Indeed, its response to the machine age that changed the world and the way artists saw it was filled with the raw, uncompromising energy that



Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913), cast 1972 ©Tate. Picture: Tate Photography

Apollinaire identified as a move towards abstract art.

The influence of these Italian modernists ignited Cubist France and, later, the British Vorticists and Russian Futurists. Their message was essentially aimed at post-industrial society. As urban life changed, electric street lighting blurred day and night and, much as Einstein's relativity saw colours change with movement, so an artist looking through the window of a moving cab could reveal new ways of seeing new colour formations.

Umberto Boccioni watches human

shapes drift from conical to fish-like. His *Faces on the Street* features surreal pointed arches, shadow figures and lots of purple, and his triptychs on the excitement of travel and the anguish of separation follow another Futurist credo – to combine psychological and physical states, synthesising what you remember and what you actually see. A particular exponent of this is **Luigi Russolo**, for whom past and present exist simultaneously in the consciousness, seen in his colourful swirls of faces, houses and windows, all jumbled up in a space-time continuum.

Futurists were often Cubists, like radical exponents **Picasso** and **Braque**. Picasso's *Woman in an Armchair* has more muted colours in beige, browns and yellows. **Gino Severini** stands somewhere between Cubism and Futurism; his colours are strong but darker. *The Boulevard* looks clearly post-Impressionist and **Carlo Carra's** colourful, bowed figures with dappled light (*Leaving the Theatre*) indicate that it is not so easy to leave the Impressionist past behind you. But then again, Severini's satirical *Dance of the Pan-Pan at the Monico*, a brilliant cavalcade of dance, flirtation, faces, feet and wine glasses, is a multi-sensory Cubist jumble of non-stop colour and energy. The original 1909 version was destroyed in the Second World War and this replica was repainted in Rome by the artist in 1959-60 from postcards.

Despite being considered an aggressive movement, the Futurists' response to war in 1915 was confused. Severini's *Red Cross Train* depicts the wounded, but **Giacomo Balla's** *Forms Cry Long Live Italy* is a dramatic whirl of colourful tongues, demonstrating his patriotism.

The Danish Neo-Expressionist **Per Kirkeby**, also at **Tate Modern**, is a trained geologist whose work spanned Pop imagery to rest finally on his austere reflections on nature itself. Using common household paints and Masonite, Kirkeby moves from cowboys to Mayan folklore, from the Bible to Byzantium, often working on several paintings simultaneously. The gloomy, Nordic landscapes of the 1970s-80s give way in 2005 to a joyful, exotic freedom.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

REVIEWS

Almost a rollicking good yarn

GOODNIGHT VIENNA

by J. H. Schryer

Stroud: *The History Press*

(www.thehistorypress.co.uk), 2009,
192 pp. paper, £8.99

Most of the action of this 'novel of historical fiction', as the author describes it, unfolds in the Austrian capital in the months between the Anschluss and Kristallnacht. Three primary themes interlock: the worsening plight of Austria's Jews under Nazi rule, Britain's impending entry into a war that increasingly appears inevitable, a triangular love story.

The author tells us that 'The backdrop of Nazi-occupied Vienna is as accurate as possible'. It certainly reads like it is. In addition, we have brief scenes featuring such historical figures as Hitler, Churchill, Mussolini, Eichmann, Sigmund Freud and the conductor Furtwängler – all 'the product of creative licence'.

The action centres around the British embassy. Katharine Walters, the heroine, is a young and beautiful professional musician with high-profile connections, an aptitude for languages, and, on top of that, unusual skill as a radio operator – all these talents making her a highly qualified British spy. Jonathan, Katharine's handsome doctor husband, also a spy, is never quite what he seems, which is a sort of boyish adventure hero. The third side of this love/intelligence-gathering triangle is Captain George Henderson, a high-ranking embassy official with a British stiff upper lip who holds a massive torch for Katharine.

As the Nazi grip on Austria tightens, the embassy finds itself increasingly caught up in issuing visas to Austrian Jews. Embassy officials are depicted as resolutely sympathetic to the Jews' plight, going out of their way to respond to the burgeoning demand for emigration permits to the UK. The tone of the novel is not only unflinchingly pro-Jewish, but also pro-British.

Jonathan, picked up by the Gestapo, is incarcerated in Dachau, then sent to a slave labour camp in the East. The realistic-sounding portrayal of concentration camp life and Nazi brutality is no doubt based on the historical record. Katharine, full of guilt, see-saws between Jonathan, now out of the picture, and George. The climax of the story is a breathtaking flight from Austria to England. All this leads to a truly preposterous finale.

There's something for everybody here: espionage, high politics, intrigue,

treachery, murder, homosexuality, lesbianism, and much more.

Ultimately, the author has given us a desperately serious historical background and artificially grafted a romance on to it. It doesn't really work. The historical narrative is lifelike, gritty, painful; the romantic bits – relationships between cardboard characters – are often soppy and clichéd ('Then it happened. Their glances locked'; 'Her heart leapt'; 'Each breath of her perfume intoxicated him, further wrapping his soul into hers'; etc, etc, etc).

It's almost a rollicking good yarn. Maybe there's a movie here. Hollywood producers, take note!

Howard Spier

Evoking a forceful message

TURNING THE KEY

by Lotte Kramer

Herts: Rockingham Press

(tel 01920 467868, email rockpress@ntlworld.com), 2009, 64 pp., £7.99

There is for me a mystery in this new volume of poems by Lotte Kramer. Towards the end of the volume are eight poems under the rubric 'Engadine Poems: A Sequence'. While most of these eight poems celebrate the poet's love of, and familiarity with, the Swiss mountain landscape, the first, *The Same World*, evokes a horrifying past:

An earth-tremor inland
We knew nothing of ...
Not far away
The wounded earth
Shook in agony.

So it was then
When breath was choked
Out of their bodies
Under a hostile sky
And we danced
The 'Lambeth Walk'
On another continent
In the same world.

I quote from this poem at length because it made a deep impression on me and is a fine example of Kramer's proficiency in evoking a forceful message with great economy of language. The mystery of what took place in the Swiss mountains while the author, a Kindertransport refugee, was safely in England, remains.

Kramer has won praise for her previous collections and for poems which have appeared in magazines and anthologies. The poems in this volume which tell her story are those I find most compelling. The first poem in the book, *Identity*, is particularly striking, capturing the poet's complex and fragmented identity through the metaphor of a river unable to arrive 'at the sea's throat', its flow interrupted by a series of changes

of time and place and obstacles. Other poems evoke her childhood in Germany, her love of the River Rhine, her memory of burying her face in her mother's fur coat when the East Wind was blowing, and her recollections of teachers (one she regrets having sneered at, another who committed suicide after her career was ended by the Nazi race laws). Also profoundly evocative are her tribute to her father, a gifted writer who somehow 'stayed unfulfilled', a poem recalling the first Channel crossing, and *Ode to M.F.*, the warm-hearted Irish woman who met Kramer's Kindertransport and took her and others into her home and her world. The poem *1939*, in which Kramer recalls quoting to a baffled cleaning lady the Shakespeare sonnets she learned by heart to improve her English and an ironic report of a *Foiled Arrest* of 'suspicious enemy aliens' vividly convey the experiences of the newcomers during the war years.

More contemporary themes include a poignant tribute to the victims of the tsunami in 2004 and an appreciation of the bus driver who survived the carnage in London on 7 July 2005. Poignant too is the message conveyed in *Books*: 'Today the books are my sole companions ... They tell me who I am and who I was.'

This collection, which includes a number of adaptations and translations of German poets, particularly Rilke, deserves to be widely read.

Emma Klein

THEATRE

Some Enchanted Evening: Hollywood meets Hampstead

THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK

directed by Heather Simpkin

New End Theatre, London

The musical talent that surged through America in the pre- and post-war years has come to represent the golden age of Hollywood. As the world stood braced for war, many Jewish composers and lyricists contributed to one of the most joyous periods of an essentially tragic century. Names like Rodgers and Hart, Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, Ira and George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Johnny Mercer, Rodgers and Hammerstein and others whose vibrant music is summed up by the Duke Ellington number *It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)* brought energy, romance, nostalgia and irony to a world which will never see its like again.

Now, this iconic period in American popular music has come to rest in Hampstead, pending a possible national tour. Three singers crooned their way in



AJR member Clemens N. Nathan in discussion about textile conservation with Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal at the Clothworkers Hall in London

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near-perfect harmony through a medley of Broadway hit songs in a seductive and witty performance that had the audience swinging to their rhythm. With true cool, Paul Roberts, former lead singer with The Stranglers, gave a slick and stylish performance, joined by Louisa Parry, whose warm and sensual delivery, particularly in George and Ira Gershwin's *Summertime*, betrayed nostalgia without sentiment. She was partnered in Gershwin's *They Can't Take That Away from Me* by Ray Caruana, Maltese-born son of an opera singer who taught him to sing. His rendition of Jerome Kern's *Ol' Man River* may have lacked the deep pathos of Paul Robeson, but he gave it a subtle twist of its own.

There were some moving moments that reminded me of all the songs my father used to sing on our car journeys: Cole Porter's *Every Time We Say Goodbye* and *Begin the Beguine*, and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Some Enchanted Evening* and *If I Loved You*. With that wonderful collusive energy of jazz musicians, the singers were fully supported by the Gas Orchestra, with Andy Rumble on piano, Mat Elliott on bass, James O'Carroll on drums and the appropriately named David Horniblow on tenor sax, clarinet and flute. Having made Hampstead swing, this feel-good musical deserves a national tour.

Gloria Tessler

MEMORY OF TRAGIC FAMILY LIVES ON

Stolpersteine – stumbling stones – outside their former Hamburg home now commemorate the tragic lives of a Jewish boy and his family about whom I wrote in the Journal last year.

Tragically, Ernst Rudolf Reiss – my father Hans Meyer's first cousin – died at the end of the war after being deported to Auschwitz. He was only 17 but, thanks to the *Stolpersteine* and other projects, his memory lives on.

In my article I explained how the Quaker Tapestry Centre in Kendal, Cumbria had produced a CD ROM for schools. This tells how Ernst is mentioned in a diary kept by his best friend Klaus Seckel, with whom he was at the Eerde Quaker School in Ommen in the eastern Netherlands. Ernst was sent there for his safety in 1938.

Later, despite heroic efforts by the Quakers to save the nine Jewish children at the school, they were sent to their deaths in concentration camps.

Last year, a special exhibition in Holland commemorated the children, including Ernst and Klaus. Erin van Pallandt, a former pupil and daughter of the owner of the castle where the school was housed, tells the story of their fate on a DVD.

Apparently Ernst had the opportunity to go into hiding but refused as he did not want to leave Klaus behind.

Ernst came from a wealthy Hamburg family and, before the war, lived with his widowed mother Marie and sister Ingeborg at Abteistrasse 24 together with their grandmother Elisabeth Lazarus.

Other relatives, who themselves emigrated, tried in vain to persuade Marie to move to England but she remained with her family in Hamburg, although sadly



Fitting tribute: *Stolpersteine* outside Abteistrasse 24, Hamburg SOURCE PRIVATE

they failed to survive the war.

Too late, Marie, an interior decorator, tried to escape to Chile. As Marie's elder brother, Ernst Wilhelm, was killed in the First World War and another brother, Max Rudolf, drowned in the River Alster soon afterwards, the entire branch of the family died out.

Records tell how difficult it was for the family under the Nazi dictatorship. Heartrending applications were made for the release of funds to pay the water bill and Mrs Lazarus begged to use funds for Christmas presents. There was also a letter from Mrs Lazarus asking for the money for tickets for her daughter and children for the Hamburg-America shipping line.

Eventually, Marie was forced to sell the home and move into a 'Jew house' on Papagoyenstrasse in Altona only days before deportation and death. Furnishings were auctioned off, but the Gestapo delivered some of her books to the Hamburg State Library.

They have now been uncovered by Hamburg University and formed part of the exhibition *Geraubte Bücher* (Stolen Books) staged by Professor Dr Gabriele

Beger and her colleagues at the end of last year. My father has donated the books to the university on behalf of the entire family in memory of his aunt and they can now be seen by researchers and visitors.

The exhibition featured in local papers in Hamburg. An old school friend who remembered Inge produced a picture showing her with a group of girls on an outing with the Ria-Wirth School, which closed in 1938.

In the spring, another exhibition in Hamburg, *In den Tod geschickt* (Sent to Their Deaths), followed the terrible fate of Jews, Roma and Sinti in 1940-45. The catalogue mentions the Reiss's and one of Marie's books was displayed.

The Reiss's have never been forgotten by our family. I have known about them since being very small. But what is touching is the way several very recent projects have been unveiled in different locations to ensure their memory lives on.

Of course, most moving of all has been the creation in the spring of the *Stolpersteine* outside Abteistrasse 24 – which the people who now live in the house have promised to take care of.

This is both a reminder to future generations and a fitting tribute to a family which has been wiped out but which will remain in our hearts forever.

Janet Weston

janetweston@btinternet.com

Research grant awarded to music specialist

The British Academy's Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship for 2009-2010, funded by money raised by the Jewish refugees from Central Europe in the 1960s, has been awarded to Dr Alexander Lingas. Dr Lingas is Senior Lecturer in Music at City University London, a Fellow of the University of Oxford's European Humanities Research Centre, and the founder and artistic director of the vocal ensemble Cappella Romana. His research on Byzantine chant follows in the footsteps of the great refugee musicologist Egon Wellesz. Dr Lingas writes:

One of the most distinguished musicians to find refuge from Nazi persecution in Britain was the Austrian musicologist and composer Egon Wellesz (1885-1974). A pupil of Arnold Schoenberg, Wellesz quickly established himself as both an articulate advocate of Viennese contemporary music and a

major creative figure in his own right. As a composer, he soon progressed from piano works and songs to ballets and operas. During the same period, he also became a leading figure in the still young academic discipline of musicology, making a substantial contribution to two areas of scholarship, Baroque opera and Byzantine chant.

The Greek sibling of Gregorian chant, Byzantine chant originated in the cathedrals and monasteries of the Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean and is the source of musical traditions employed in worship today by hundreds of millions of Orthodox and Byzantine-rite Catholic Christians. Wellesz played a decisive role in modern scholarship's recovery of early Byzantine psalmody and hymnody, publishing pioneering studies of its notation. In 1931, together with H. J. W.

continued on opposite page

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AJR Annual Tea

This year's Tea was 'one of the most successful', AJR Director Carol Rossen said. Accompanying the scrumptious tea, held at the Hilton Hotel, Watford, was New World Operetta, a programme of familiar music performed by Simon Butteriss (Baritone) and Deborah Crowe (Soprano), accompanied on the piano by Diana Franklin.



RESEARCH GRANT *continued*

Tillyard and Carsten Høed, he founded the Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae of Copenhagen, which remains to this day Western academia's flagship organisation for Byzantine musicology.

Tillyard was but one of Wellesz's many British colleagues, friends and admirers, a fact that contributed to Oxford University's decision in 1932 to award him an honorary doctorate, an honour previously bestowed on F. J. Haydn. These contacts proved invaluable after Austria's annexation by Germany, allowing Wellesz to find a new academic home as a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. In England, he continued to publish important studies of Byzantine chant, including the first (1949) and second (1961) editions of his magisterial *History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, a book that remains in print today as a standard reference tool. Wellesz remained active as a composer and a scholar long after his official retirement in 1956, advising two musicologists, Milos Velimirovic and Dimitri Conomos, who, in turn, supervised my own 1996 doctoral thesis on the Byzantine cathedral rite.

Long before I became a kind of scholarly grandchild to Wellesz through direct

contact with his students, his work had played a major role in my formation as a researcher and performer. Although I grew up surrounded by Byzantine music in the Greek Orthodox Church, my development as a scholar of its musical traditions really began with my acquisition, at the age of 16, of a used copy of Wellesz's *History of Byzantine Music* at Powell's Books in Portland, Oregon and then with the mentorship of the musicologist, composer and conductor Frank Desby (Photios Despotopoulos), who as director of music at St Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles had attracted Wellesz's attention through his efforts to bring medieval Byzantine music to life both in concerts and in worship. My subsequent encounters with more recent scholarship, especially that produced by Greek scholars rooted in the received traditions of Byzantine chanting, caused me to realise that some of Wellesz's views stood in need of modification. Nevertheless, it was with keen awareness of my profound debt to him that I accepted the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship for 2009-2010 in support of my work on a new historical introduction to Byzantine chant for Yale University Press.

Alexander Lingas

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY OCTOBER 2009

Mon 5 Ernst Flesch MA, 'CUBA (with slides)' Club 43

Mon 12 Roy W. Clements BA, 'James Joyce and the Jewish Connection' Club 43

Thur 15 B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. Marilyn Rose, 'My Life in Brazil' Kenton Synagogue Hall, 8.00 pm

Sun 18 The 2009 Bill Epstein Memorial Lecture. Dr Emanuel Marx, Professor Emeritus of Social Anthropology, Tel Aviv University, 'Kristallnacht as Symbolic Turning Point in Nazi Rule' Ajax Hall, Palmeira Avenue, Hove, 2.30 pm. Refreshments. Admission free

Mon 19 Irene-Lawford Hinrichsen BA, FRSA, 'Felix Mendelssohn (1809) and Leipzig' Club 43

Mon 26 Dr Jennifer Taylor, 'Huyton Camp: What Can We Know about This Transit Camp?' Club 43

Club 43 Meetings at Belsize Square Synagogue, 7.45 pm. Tel Ernst Flesch on 020 7624 7740 or Leni Ehrenbergh on 020 7286 9698

INSIDE the AJR

Eastbourne CF inaugural meeting

Our first meeting, hosted by Suzanne Dyke, was enjoyed by all present, some of whom had never previously met. There are others of us in the area and we are hoping more will join.
Milenka Jackson

Cardiff bowled over

Having been bowled over by Mady's account of a prison visit – in particular, a Shoah-based verse from a non-Jewish inmate – the dozen of us present were regaled by Esther's account of 'Israel Revisited'.
Marian Lane
Next meeting: 26 Oct. Lunch and speaker from Bank of England

Cleve Road: The kibbutz movement

Author and former kibbutznik David Merron told us about the kibbutz movement past, present and future. The meeting ended with an interesting Q&A session.
David Lang

Manchester: 'Bystanders'

Prof Dolf Mogendorff spoke to us about Dutch Jewry in the Nazi era. In his talk, entitled 'Bystanders', we learned of the frailty of human nature, the belief in a sort of 'laissez faire' way of dealing with problems, and of collaboration, but also of courage and heroism, without which the toll of victims would have been even greater.
Werner Lachs

Bromley CF: From Berlin to London

Over tea at Eva Byk's we heard a fascinating account of Gertrude Evan's journey from the academy of music in Berlin to London, a story being researched by a student from Germany. We also managed to fit in a discussion on euthanasia, gay weddings, autism and the situation in Israel.
Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 24 Nov. Coffee morning at home of Gertrude Evans

Ealing: 'Israel Revisited'

Esther Rinkoff gave us a beautifully delivered talk on her recent visit to Israel. Why are the hotel staff in Israel so rude?
Anita Lutterkort

Next meeting: 6 Oct. Alan Bilgora, 'Jewish Opera Singers'

Leeds HSFA: 'By Steam Train in the Trail of the Holocaust'

Richard Butterfield's talk was beautifully illustrated with pictures of steam trains as well as of places in Germany, Ukraine and Bosnia. The Jewish connections of these were carefully explained and pictures of museum exhibits pertaining to the Holocaust were also shown.
Martin Kapel

Lattes and toasted tea cakes at Café Imperial

Another lively gathering of AJR war veterans mulling over lattes and toasted

tea cakes. Two new, most welcome recruits: Howard Livingstone and Peter Bloch.

Esther Rinkoff

Oxford: A delightful lunch

We had a delightful lunch at the home of Susie and John Bates in Abingdon. We enjoyed the dry weather and each other's cooking. Thank you from all of us!
Anne Selinger

Bradford

Return to Leipzig



Pictured: Albert Waxman, Lilly Waxman, Anna Greenwood, Hanneke Dye, Lola Michaelis

Lilly Waxman spoke to us about her visit to Leipzig, the first time she had been back since 1938. On the visit were 20 people from the UK, Israel and Brazil. Among many other things, she visited Auerbach Jewish School, which they had all attended after 1935; the Archive Office; the house she lived in as a little girl; the sole remaining synagogue in Leipzig; the Schiller High School. Thea Hurst, who goes back to Leipzig regularly, also spoke to us.
Hanneke Dye
Next meeting: 20 Oct. Lunch at Salts Mill

Happy anniversary morning in Ilford

Our 6th anniversary was celebrated in style with Lynne Bradley entertaining us with songs from the shows plus an account of her domestic and showtime life. We had birthday cake to round off the morning.
Meta Roseneil

Next meeting: 7 Oct. Judy Kelner

Lots of everything in Pinner

Some 50 of us enjoyed Vera's beautiful garden with lots of talk, cold drinks, tea, coffee, cakes and, of course, strawberries and cream.
Paul Samet

Next meeting: 1 Oct. Brian Curtois, former BBC Political Editor

HGS: World Jewish Relief

Laura Grossman gave us a very informative account of WJR. Its entire income, which is from donations, is spent on helping primarily Jewish communities worldwide, excluding Israel and the USA.
Laszlo Roman

Next meeting: 12 Oct. Pam Schweitzer, 'Making Theatre from Memories'

Essex: The story of a Czech soldier

Shirley Bilgora told us a moving story about a Czech soldier who gave his life to help his fellow soldiers. His grave was originally marked with a Cross but, with Shirley's persistence, this was changed to a Star of David.
Larry Lisner

Next meeting: 13 Oct. Helen Fry, 'Refugees in the Second World War'

Liverpool: Mount Zion

Group member Tom Reti told us about his experience of living in Mount Zion, a children's home in Chislehurst, Kent run by Christian evangelists. The main aim of the Barbican Mission is to convert Jews to Christianity. Before the war the Mission rescued Jewish children from Czechoslovakia.
Susanne Green

Kingston CF – a greedy group

Apple cake, walnut cake, cheesecake, almond cake – all baked by Susan Zisman. We felt sufficiently relaxed in her home to tuck in with varying levels of greed.
Jackie Cronheim

Cambridge: A controversial case

We heard Prof Ladislaus Löb's fascinating account of the effort by Rudolf Kastner which resulted in the rescue of a number of Hungarian Jews and led to a court case in Israel.
Keith Lawson

Next meeting: 29 Oct. Shirley Bilgora, 'A Soldier's Final Resting Place'

Brighton & Hove Sarid: 'Village of Peace'

Janet Niam showed us a video describing her visit to Neve Shalom, the Jewish-Arab 'Village of Peace' in Israel.
Ceska Abrahams

Next meeting: 19 Oct. Gerald Curzon, 'A Strange Affair'

Kent: Return to Israel

We very much enjoyed a talk by Esther Rinkoff telling us about a year she spent in Israel on a kibbutz as a teenager and as a volunteer 35 years later.
Inge Ball
Next meeting: 6 Oct. Scarlett Epstein, 'Back to the Village'

Edgware: Jews of Ostrava

David Lawson spoke most interestingly about the history of the Jews of Moravska Ostrava, Czech Republic.
Felix Winkler
Next meeting: 20 Oct. Helen Fry on her new book

RECIPES REMEMBERED

Continental Friends groups in the North are compiling a recipe book from dishes remembered from their childhood.

First and Second Generation members are welcome to send in recipes of dishes they remember from their childhood – perhaps dishes mother or grandmother made and you still make today.

Also tell us about special memories such as when the dish was eaten – perhaps at festivals, family gatherings, picnics or in the winter. Please also send relevant photographs.

If you remember a dish but don't know the recipe, we'll do our best to research one for you ...

Contact Pippa Landey (Leeds) at pmlandey1@googlemail.com or telephone Susanne Green on 0151 291 5734.

Radlett: A poignant tale

Shirley Bilgora told the poignant tale of her Uncle Max, a Czech subject who died a war hero in 1944. He was buried in a

Normandy grave marked with a Cross and we heard about Shirley's amazing efforts to give him a headstone marked with a Star of David. *Esther Rinkoff*
 Next meeting: 21 Oct. 2nd birthday celebration and Kurt Wick, 'The Jews of Shanghai'

BIRMINGHAM REGIONAL MEETING

Wednesday 28 October 2009
 at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue
 Lunch followed by speaker
Sir David Hart
 former General Secretary, National Association of Head Teachers
 If you wish to attend, please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070

Wembley CF: An enjoyable afternoon

We had an animated discussion on topical subjects before enjoying Myrna's usual tea goodies. An enjoyable afternoon.

Ursula Trafford

Next meeting: 14 Oct. Social Get-together

Temple Fortune:

'So much for philosophy!'

Gerald Curzon told us about the relationship between the philosophers Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, who were lovers in the nine years up to 1933. Then she was forced to leave Germany while he joined the Nazi Party. 'So much for philosophy!', Prof Curzon concluded. *David Lang*

Next meeting: 15 Oct. WJR's Ros Bluestone

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

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 Anne Bender 01223 276 999

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Leeds HSFA
 Trude Silman 0113 2251628

Liverpool
 Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
 Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
 Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

The Great American Songbook

Twenty of us greatly enjoyed *The Great American Songbook* at the New End Theatre, Hampstead. Many wanted to join in the singing (some of us did). We met 'old' friends and some of us visited the pub next door for a cheerful drink.

Hilde Davis

Norfolk: A lunch-time gathering of the Clan

Eight perennials gathered for what's so cheerful that keeps us going, aka the nosh, for which Myrna brought an even larger trolley than usual. Among other things, Frank showed an album of photographs of the steel castings along Gleis 17 of the Grunewald station showing every transport to ghetto and Auschwitz from which over 50,000 Berlin Jews left never to return.

Frank Bright

Next meeting: Monday, 23 Nov, usual venue

'CHURCHILL'S GERMAN ARMY'

Appearing in this unique documentary, screened by the National Geographic Channel early this year, are members of the AJR who fought heroically for Britain in the Second World War.

We will be showing this film on **Thursday 22 October 2009 at 1.30 pm for 2.00 pm at:**

The Victoria Suite, Camden Centre Market Square, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
 Donation £1.00

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 to reserve your place

Hendon talk on WJR

A young WJR representative told us that the organisation provides help in 34 countries. Donations of clothes, toys, toiletries, etc are distributed. There is special need in the former Iron Curtain countries.

Annette Saville

Next meeting: 26 Oct. Pam Schweitzer, 'Making Theatre from Memories'

'Inside the AJR' continued on page 16

Norfolk (Norwich)
 Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

North London
 Jenny Zundel 020 8882 4033

Oxford
 Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
 Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett
 Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Sheffield
 Steve Mendelsson 0114 2630666

South London
 Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

South West Midlands (Worcester area)
 Myrna Glass 020 8385 3070

Surrey
 Edmée Barta 01372 727 412

Temple Fortune
 Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

Weald of Kent
 Max and Jane Dickson
 01892 541026

Wembley
 Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)
 Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
 Corinne Oppenheimer 0121 705 9529

Paul Balint AJR Centre
 15 Cleve Road, London NW6
 Tel: 020 7328 0208

AJR LUNCHEON CLUB

Wednesday 21 October 2009

Peter Suchet
 'The Suchet Family'

Please be aware that members should not automatically assume that they are on the Luncheon Club list. It is now necessary, on receipt of your copy of the *AJR Journal*, to phone the Centre on 020 7328 0208 to book your place.

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

Monday 5 October 2009

Howard Sotnick

'The Coburg Conspiracy'

KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 1.00 PM ON MONDAYS

Reservations required

Please telephone 020 7328 0208

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
 9.30 am - 3.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CENTRE IS CLOSED ON TUESDAYS

October Afternoon Entertainment

Thur	1	Michael Heaton
Mon	5	KT LUNCH - Kards & Games Klub
Tue	6	CLOSED
Wed	7	Sheila Games
Thur	8	Mike Marandi
Mon	12	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	13	CLOSED
Wed	14	David Peace
Thur	15	Simon Gilbert
Mon	19	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	20	CLOSED
Wed	21	LUNCHEON CLUB
Thur	22	Mark Rosen
Mon	26	Kards & Games Klub - Monday Movie Matinee
Tue	27	CLOSED
Wed	28	Geoffrey Strum
Thur	29	Katinka Seiner

Hazel Beiny, Southern Groups Co-ordinator
 020 8385 3070

Myrna Glass, London South and Midlands Groups Co-ordinator
 020 8385 3077

Susanne Green, Northern Groups Co-ordinator
 0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
 020 8385 3070

Agnes Isaacs, Scotland and Newcastle Co-ordinator
 0755 1968 593

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
 020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
 Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
 Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deaths

Blumenau, Tom OBE, on Saturday 5 September, one day short of his 82nd birthday. Husband to Eva, brother to Ralph, father to Anthony, Colin and Anne, grandfather to his six grandchildren. A celebration of his life will take place in due course. Donations, if desired, to the Prisoners of Conscience Appeal Fund c/o Lynn Carter 020 7407 6644 or lynn@prisonersofconscience.org

Lee, Jack Charles (Hans Karl Lemberger) Born Vienna 24 September 1923, arrived UK via Kindertransport December 1938. British army 1943, Normandy 1944, Germany 1945. Passed away peacefully 27 July 2009. Deeply mourned and sadly missed by brother, sister and extended family.

Meier, Trude Passed away peacefully on 15 August 2009 after a short illness. Deeply missed by her son Jonathan, her family and her many friends, she was the embodiment of kindness.

Metzer, Gerda Passed away 10 August 2009 aged 96. Deeply mourned and sadly missed by son Kurt, daughter Lilian, grandchildren Tony, Louise, Sylvia and Richard, and great-grandchildren Jonathan, Anya, Rebecca, Theo, Sam, Jonah and Nathan.

CLASSIFIED

Chiropodist. Trevor Goldman at the Paul Balint AJR Centre, Wed 14 and Thur 29 October, 10-11.30 am

AJR TRIP TO ISRAEL

29 November to 8 December 2009

We are arranging a 10-day trip to Israel this November

This will be a fantastic opportunity to visit various places of interest including Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Dead Sea and Masada

We are planning to stay at the 4-star Ramat Rachel Hotel in Jerusalem on a half-board basis

Please note that there will be some walking involved

If you wish to go on this trip, please fill in the form enclosed with this issue of the Journal

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HOLIDAY IN BOURNEMOUTH

Join us for a 7-day holiday at the Queens Hotel in Bournemouth
Sunday 31 January
to Sunday 7 February 2010

Price £370 plus £30 single room supplement

If you wish to book a superior room, there will be an additional charge

Price includes Dinner, Bed & Breakfast, tips at the hotel, transport from and returning to 15 Cleve Road, lunch on journey to Bournemouth, entertainment in hotel

If you haven't already booked, don't leave it too late!

Please call Lorna on 0208 385 3070 or Carol on 020 8385 3085

RABBI JONATHAN WITTENBERG

An evening of appreciation for the children who came with the KINDERTRANSPORT and for members of families who received and welcomed them

8 November 2009

at the Masorti

The New North London Synagogue
The Sternberg Centre for Judaism
80 East End Road, London N3

Details to follow

NORTHERN SECOND GENERATION GATHERING

The next meeting will take place in north Manchester

on Sunday 1 November 2009
10.30 am to 4 pm

Members of Second and Third Generations welcome

For further information please contact Barbara Dresner Dorrity on 0161 368 5088 or at barbara@ajr.org.uk

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OBITUARIES

Karl Overton, 1925-2009

Karl Howard Overton (born Karl Heinz Oberweger) came to the UK in 1939 on the Kindertransport, thus avoiding almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis. Born in the Jewish (second) district of Vienna in 1925, Karl remembered the Anschluss, the anti-Semitic bullying on the way home from school, and his mother and sister being made to scrub the street by the Nazis.

Enrolled in Cooper's Company School in London's East End, he was evacuated to Frome, Somerset in September 1939. Here he was billeted with an English family, who took the greatest possible interest in his welfare. Karl always said that, as a Jew in Vienna, he would not have had the opportunities in life that he had in England.

In 1944 Karl entered the University of London, where he graduated in pharmacy and, subsequently, in chemistry. He did his PhD under the Nobel laureate Professor Sir Derek Barton, and in 1955 was appointed a lecturer at Glasgow University. He stayed in Glasgow all his professional life, working on the structures and synthesis of natural products, teaching generations of chemistry and medical students, and inspiring a succession of gifted PhD students. He was appointed to a Personal Chair of Organic Chemistry



in 1973 and elected to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1979.

Karl's parallel passion was music. Having played the violin from the age of six, he had a deep knowledge of the classical chamber music repertoire, centred on string quartets, and took every opportunity to play

either the violin or the viola in quartets and amateur orchestras.

After retirement and the breakdown of his first marriage in the late 1980s, Karl went to work with the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health, editing a weekly report circulated to local, national and international organisations responsible for the treatment and prevention of the HIV infection. It was at an HIV/AIDS conference in Florence that he met his second wife, moving to Edinburgh in 1998 and remarrying in 2004.

In these later years of his life, Karl's Jewish identity became increasingly important to him. Reconnecting with other Kindertransportees, he travelled to Israel, Vienna and Zyleschiki in western Ukraine to search out his father's village. It was his last wish to be buried near his mother in the Jewish cemetery in Glasgow.

Karl leaves his wife, Karin, four children from his first marriage - Ann, Dennis, John and Ruth - and five grandchildren.

Ann Overton and Karin Froebel

Debora Kadisch, 1907-2009

Born in Upper Silesia on 8 June 1907, Debora Kadisch was priceless as a mother, grandmother, grandmother-in-law and great-grandmother.

Her father, a chazan, and mother died at an early age in Germany. She very reluctantly had to leave her grandmother there and lost six uncles (all her relations as none of them married or had children) in the concentration camps when she came over from Germany as a refugee in 1939. She had many unhappy domestic jobs until, after a couple of years, she landed on her feet with a wealthy Jewish family who actually looked after her welfare.

In 1942 she married my father (although she was previously engaged to someone who died in the concentration camps too). My father not only lost a sister, but also her six-year-old son, in Belsen concentration camp. When my father died after 15 years of marriage, I remember my mother



doing typical war work as well as invisibly mending nylons, taking in ironing and doing washing for neighbours. She then worked as a secretary in a typewriting shop in Fairfax Road.

She taught me right from wrong at a very young age and I continued to learn everything from her until recently, when she became ill.

Her lack of hearing was the bane of her life: she felt she was not included in conversations around her and couldn't even go to places like the Sobell Centre, where there were plenty of people and the noise level would have been disastrous. Latterly, she felt that a few people did not come to visit her because of her lack of hearing, although there were naturally several good friends who did come and she loved every moment of their visits.

We had very many happy times and many sad times together (for example, when my husband died).

She was, until recently, my secretary

AJR REPORT

Michael Newman

Central Office for Holocaust Claims

Austrian pensions improvement

The Austrian government has extended the terms of its *Begünstigtenpension* (retirement benefits) to enable Jewish victims of the Nazis born in Austria after the Anschluss (12 March 1938) and before the end of the Second World War (8 May 1945) to claim an Austrian state pension.

The new law entitles eligible applicants to retroactively purchase insurance months (contributions) that could not previously have been paid in order to qualify for an Austrian state pension. Specifically, the change in the rules enables persons persecuted by the National Socialist regime who had to emigrate and acquired few or no insurance months in Austria to pay contributions to the pension system at a preferential rate, if they were born:

- between 13 March 1938 and 8 May 1945 and were persecuted in Austria or another country and at least one parent had his/her residence on the territory of the Republic of Austria on 12 March 1938, or
- before 13 March 1938 and had their domicile on the territory of the Republic of Austria on 12 March 1938.

It is thought that some 400 former Austrian Nazi victims worldwide will now be entitled to a pension. Prior to the extension of the *Begünstigtenpension*, it was considered that following the Anschluss these victims had ceased to be Austrian residents or citizens and had become part of the 'German Reich'.

The new law in no way affects existing pensions paid by the Austrian government.

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

in my capacity as chair of Dollis Hill Synagogue Ladies Guild. Her letters were always highly praised.

Her main hobby was writing poetry. In later years, she restricted these to family and friends' birthdays etc and they were always very well received.

She will always be remembered as the nicest, kindest, most generous person I have ever known and as the best mother in the world. To me and many other people she was the best woman of worth. I consider myself extremely lucky to have had her for more than 66 years and I will miss her more than life itself.

Margaret Mager



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Maestro Mendi Rodan

One of the subscription concert series my husband and I attend regularly is given by the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. The concerts are held in an imposing auditorium situated on the Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus and focus on a different composer or school of music each year. During the academic year the audience is treated to brief lectures by members of the faculty about the chosen composer as well as to a performance of some of his music, usually by a soloist or a chamber ensemble. Once again, it is mainly faculty members, most of them seasoned performers, who are the performers.

Over the course of the years we have been treated to series about Schubert, Mozart, Russian composers, and the French school of the nineteenth century. This year, under the heading 'The Titan', the subject was Beethoven. Although over a dozen concerts are given in the course of a nine-month period, it has been possible to touch upon merely a small portion of Beethoven's mammoth *oeuvre*.

At one of the last concerts, the Academy's student orchestra, conducted by Maestro Mendi Rodan, played Beethoven's

Fourth Symphony and the 'Emperor' *Piano Concerto*, with Professor Assaf Zohar as soloist. The young musicians played confidently under Mendi Rodan's baton and the entire concert was an uplifting experience.

Just a few months ago, in May, we were stunned to hear that Maestro Rodan had died quite suddenly. Since immigrating to Israel from Romania in 1960, he had conducted all Israel's major orchestras as well as several abroad, headed the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and taught conducting there for many years, and had also been awarded the Israel Prize for his outstanding work in the field of music.

A few weeks later, there was a suspicious lack of activity as we approached the hall where we thought the last concert in the series was to be held. In fact, the place was deserted except for a lady who had also come for the concert. It soon became obvious that there was not going to be any concert there that evening. Nonplussed, the three of us decided to walk to the nearby Music Academy to find out what had happened.

On the path, we met a gentleman who

informed us that all the Academy faculty were attending a concert in memory of Mendi Rodan and that it was highly unlikely that two Academy concerts would be held simultaneously. We decided to investigate further, and soon found ourselves inside a packed hall just as a chamber ensemble was taking its place on the stage. There was no applause at the end of the movement from a Debussy trio which they played and, almost immediately, Chayuta Dvir, a well-known radio announcer and producer, stepped up to the podium to introduce the next speaker.

Throughout the following two hours members of the faculty came up on stage, spoke in affectionate and reverential terms about Maestro Rodan, and played a movement from a sonata or a passage of music in his memory. Some of them found it difficult to speak, so overcome with emotion were they, reminding me that artists' emotions are often nearer the surface than those of other people.

Chayuta Dvir gave her own, somewhat humorous recollection of a radio broadcast from the north of Israel during the First Lebanon War, when Mendi Rodan had conducted for troops and time was running short before the scheduled news broadcast.

We found out that we had missed the final subscription concert, which had been held the previous evening in Tel Aviv. But we felt we had been more than compensated.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

INSIDE THE AJR *cont from page 13*

Cleve Road: The reach of WJR

WJR volunteer Graham Craig told us that after the USSR broke up in 1991, they began providing help for needy Jews in Ukraine and Belarus. They also help non-Jews in Eastern Europe and Darfur. *David Lang*
Next meeting: 27 Oct. David Lawson, 'The Jews of Ostrava'

Harrogate CF:

Sharing early experiences

We met at our summer venue at Rosl and Marc Schatzberger's lovely home in York. A most interesting afternoon, in which we shared early experiences, speaking about people who helped shape our lives. We also heard about the successful holiday in St Annes and forthcoming events.

Inge Little

Next meeting: 18 November, in Harrogate

North London's 8th birthday

We celebrated our 8th birthday with cake and candle and assorted treats. A good

crowd turned out to hear Ruth Bourne speak about John Constable, a talk illustrated with some of his paintings and many of her photographs taken on a visit to the Flatford Mill area.

Hanne R. Freedman

Next meeting: 29 Oct. Judith Kelner, 'Desert Island Discs'

Hello Dolly

We saw a wonderful performance of *Hello Dolly* at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. A superb cast led by Samantha Spiro, a brilliant band and great staging made this a memorable performance. A very pleasant way to spend a glorious sunny afternoon. *Anita Lutterkort*

Newcastle: An eyewitness account

We saw the film of Rabbi Melcher and the talk he gave in Glasgow on Yom Hashoah this year. His dramatic eyewitness account

of how 7,500 Jews were saved in Sweden was extremely moving. We also enjoyed a delicious spread.

Walter Knoblauch

ALSO THIS MONTH

5 Oct. Visit to House of Lords. Details in Sept issue of Journal

15 Oct. Bristol/Bath. Lunch and speaker, details to be sent out

22 Oct. Special showing of 'Churchill's German Army' in Kent, 1.30 pm.

Details sent out separately

28 Oct. Birmingham Regional

Bea Klug MBE

Last month's Edgware Group report may have implied that Mrs Bea Klug has been blind all her life. In fact, she became blind in recent years. We apologise to Mrs Klug for any distress this misunderstanding may have caused her (Ed.).