

The Habsburg twilight

Archduke Otto von Habsburg, son of the last emperor of Austria-Hungary, died on 4 July 2011, at the age of 98. His passing broke the last living link with the Habsburg monarchy, which had ruled Austria from 1278, when Rudolf I defeated Ottokar II of Bohemia at the Battle on the Marchfeld and assumed control of the Duchies of Austria, Styria and Carinthia, until 1918. The Habsburgs were one of the great dynasties of Europe, an imperial house more ancient and historic, one might argue, than the upstart Hohenzollerns, who had been mere kings of Prussia and had only attained the dignity of German emperors in 1871.

Amazingly, Otto von Habsburg had as a boy shaken the hand of his great-great-uncle, the Emperor Franz Joseph. For Franz Joseph was born in 1830 and had ascended to the imperial throne in 1848, after the revolution that had swept away Chancellor Metternich and the mentally unfit Emperor Ferdinand. But if Otto von Habsburg was a living link to a past that extended back into the first half of the nineteenth century, it was a past overshadowed by the twilight melancholy of apparently unstoppable decline. The Austrian monarchy that had emerged from the convulsions of 1848, having crushed the uprisings in Hungary and northern Italy as well as the popular movement in Vienna, seemed to be strong enough to act as the great power in Central Europe and among the German states; in 1850, under Schwarzenberg, Metternich's successor, Austria was able to impose its will on Prussia, dictating terms to its German rival under the Punctuation of Olmütz.

But appearances were deceptive. In 1859, Austria was defeated by France in the war in Italy, the first in a series of defeats and setbacks that dogged Franz Joseph throughout his reign. Defeat by France was followed in 1866 by defeat by Prussia, which excluded Austria from Germany. By 1879, Austria's weakness in the face of Russian ambitions in the

Balkans obliged it to form an alliance with Bismarck's Germany, and it was as the junior partner in that alliance that Austria entered the First World War, which was to lead to the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918.

In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or Dual Monarchy, that emerged in 1867, the emperor (Kaiser) of Austria was also king (König) of Hungary; hence the title



Otto von Habsburg, 1912-2011

'kaiserlich und königlich', or 'k. und k.', that was regularly bestowed on the Habsburg administration, its institutions and officials. This in turn gave rise to the imaginary realm of Kakanien, a term coined in Robert Musil's novel *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (*The Man without Qualities*), a state administered through an impenetrably hierarchical and immobile bureaucracy. It was this lumbering imperial monolith, incapable of resolving either the national conflicts or the social tensions that beset it, that in 1914 lurched into the conflagration that destroyed it.

A particularly sad figure in the final act of this drama was the last emperor, Karl I, great-nephew of the aged Franz Joseph and father of Otto von Habsburg. When he succeeded Franz Joseph in November 1916, the 29-year-old Karl faced a disastrous situation that he sought desperately to remedy. But he lacked the means to prevent the empire

disintegrating into its national component parts under the enormous strain of the war. For Austria-Hungary had become totally dependent on her German ally; whether she lived or died would ultimately be determined by the success of German arms on the battlefield.

By 1916, Austria's military weakness had become only too apparent. The inability of her forces to resist the Russian armies without German support had been demonstrated early on, when the Russians drove far into Galicia, capturing the key Austrian fortress of Przemyśl; and the Austrian armies were further humiliated by their failure to overcome the resistance of Serbia, which collapsed only when Bulgarian forces invaded the country from the east. Only on the Italian front did the Austrians hold their own, and even then they needed German backing to achieve the victory of Caporetto (1917). The German army's opinion of its ally was expressed succinctly in the phrase 'We are fettered to a corpse.' Internally, the national and social conflicts besetting the empire had hollowed out such cohesion as it still possessed, bringing the spectre of its collapse ever closer.

In this extreme situation, Karl, a decent and (by Habsburg standards) progressive man, sought, in the words of his accession manifesto, 'to win back for my peoples the sorely missed blessings of peace'; his efforts to achieve peace earned him the title 'Friedenskaiser' ('Friede' meaning 'peace'). Karl was married to Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma, and it was her elder brother, Prince Sixtus, a French national, that the emperor attempted to use in 1917 as an intermediary to initiate peace negotiations with the Allies, in the famous 'Sixtus Affair'. But the plan had little chance of success in the face of French and Italian opposition, even though the British prime minister, Lloyd George, supported it. In the final analysis, Austria-Hungary could not abandon Germany, and Germany, effectively controlled by

continued overleaf

The Habsburg twilight cont. from p1

its military leaders, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, had no strategy other than that of securing victory on the battlefield.

When US President Wilson included the principle of national self-determination in his Fourteen Points of January 1918, the writing was on the wall for Habsburg rule over its increasingly restive subject nationalities. With the defeat of the German armies on the western front in autumn 1918, the Habsburg Empire lost its last underpinning. Austria-Hungary disintegrated, leaving Austria as a small rump state, and on 11 November the emperor formally renounced power. But this did not bring an end to Karl's imperial pretensions. In 1921, he twice attempted to seize power in Hungary, in somewhat bizarre bids to regain the imperial crown. The first attempt, the so-called 'Easter Bid', was thwarted when he was outmanoeuvred in negotiations by the Regent of Hungary, Admiral Miklos Horthy, a former officer in the Austro-Hungarian navy, who had in November 1918 sworn never to rest until he had restored the emperor to his thrones in Vienna and Budapest. Then in October 1921 the forces supporting Karl were defeated by those loyal to Horthy in a skirmish in the suburbs of Budapest. This fiasco spelt the end of Karl's political career; a British warship conveyed him to Madeira, where he died in 1922.

The passing of the Habsburg Empire was much mourned, not least by the Empire's Jews, who knew that Franz Joseph had been sympathetic to them throughout his long reign, intervening to protect them from anti-Semitic actions and refusing for two years to confirm the appointment of Karl Lueger, father of political anti-Semitism, as mayor of Vienna. Fittingly, the greatest literary tribute to the monarchy, the novel *Radetzky March* (1932), was written by a Jew from Galicia, Joseph Roth. Even among the Jewish refugees from Austria who settled in Britain after 1938, nostalgia for the monarchy was widespread. I doubt that I was the only son of refugees brought up as an English schoolboy in north-west London in the fifties who also learned to hum the march of the Hoch- und Deutschmeister Regiment Nr. 4, one of the historic regiments of the Habsburg army. In its inimitable Viennese, this has the refrain: 'Mir san (we are) vom k. und k. Infanterieregiment/ Hoch- und Deutschmeister Numero Vier', to which

The Ghetto Fund: A new directive

At the end of July the German government introduced a new directive which significantly improves the entitlements of Holocaust survivors who worked in Nazi-controlled ghettos during the Second World War.

Previously, former ghetto workers could receive either a ghetto pension (known in German by the acronym ZRBG) or a one-time payment of €2,000 (approximately £1,700) from the Ghetto Fund. Under the terms of the new directive, it is now possible to receive *both* payments.

The Ghetto Fund was originally introduced in October 2007 due to long delays in processing applications for a ghetto pension. It was estimated that 50,000 Holocaust survivors worldwide were eligible to apply. Of the 70,000 claims submitted for a ZRBG pension, 61,000 were originally rejected.

Because the Ghetto Fund provides compensation for work voluntarily performed in a ghetto, survivors who received awards from slave labour compensation from

the German Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future are also entitled to apply.

Survivors who have already submitted an application form to the Bundesamt für zentrale Dienste und offene Vermögensfragen (BADV), the government department handling claims to the Ghetto Fund, do not need to submit a new application form or to reapply, even if they have recently received another form in the post.

Anyone who receives a ghetto pension will automatically be sent details and an application form to claim the Ghetto Fund.

The BADV can be contacted at 53221 Bonn, Germany or by telephone on 0049 22899 7030 1324. The AJR can assist with completing and notarising these forms. Claim forms and further information about the Ghetto Fund are also available at http://www.badv.bund.de/002_menu_oben/007_english/005_ghettowork/index.html

Michael Newman

the populace added the appropriate rhyme 'aber stier' ('but we're broke').

The disappearance of Austria-Hungary created a power vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe, where the small states that succeeded it fell under the sway first of Hitler, then of Stalin. It is often argued that, had the Dual Monarchy survived, much of Europe would have been spared the horrors visited upon it by the two dictators. For the very existence of a powerful state in East Central Europe after 1918 would have blocked Hitler's first extensions of German territory (into Austria and Czechoslovakia) as well as the expansion of German influence into Eastern and South-Eastern Europe that was so vital to the creation of a German-dominated power bloc.

Traditionalists are often wont to lament the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918 as the removal of a crucial barrier to Nazi expansionism. On the other hand,

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one can argue that the monarchy, by reason of its inability to reform itself and to adapt itself constitutionally to the era of mass politics, had by 1918 already failed in its mission of creating a viable multinational state uniting the ethnic groups of East Central Europe. Ultimately, the monarchy proved incapable of resolving the conflicting aspirations of its constituent nationalities, which would have meant breaking the hold of the dominant groups, German Austrians and Hungarians, just as it was unable to create truly democratic institutions to satisfy the political demands of the mass of its population. On this argument, the monarchy, far from being the solution to the Central European problem, stands accused of playing an important part in the region's destabilisation.

Anthony Grenville

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Kindred spirits

In response to Edith Argy's 'Anyone for tennis?' in your June issue, I can assure her that she certainly is not in 'a minority – possibly of one' as regards her bent for sports.

As for tennis, which we played at the Henrietta Barnett School in Hampstead Garden Suburb, I pride myself on the fact that I probably hold the record for not managing even once to hit the ball over the net! It would usually land in the net or fly right out of the school grounds and into the road!

As for hockey, I must admit I never grasped the rules of the game no matter how often I played. Well, at least we used to wear pads on our shins, which was not the case at my previous school, the Kensington High School. There, we used to be taken to some field in Kensington Gardens – sounds posh – but being continually hit in the legs by a hard ball really isn't a joke!

However, don't presume from what I've just written that I was simply not cut out for sports. The contrary is the case, believe it or not. Sounds like I'm congratulating myself, but I'll try to explain.

Already as a toddler, my mother trained me in gymnastics by following a programme she had read. Lying in bed on her back, she would hold me by both hands and let me climb up her belly, which we both enjoyed. I also remember her telling me to scratch myself with my foot behind the ear. I duly obliged and she felt proud of me.

By the time I was five, my mum had enrolled me in a pre-school gymnastics class where I was the star pupil. She felt confident I'd be a gymnastics teacher one day. (It was just one of several professions she envisaged for me during my early childhood, including dentistry, but that's another story which is still making me chuckle.)

Our PE classes were held to the accompaniment of a piano and without any apparatus. On Purim we performed in the hall hired at the best hotel in Fürth as part of a programme organised by the local synagogue ladies' guild. I was chosen to be in the lead of our PE group, as could be expected.

However, the moment I started school, all my ability and flexibility were lost. Our form mistress made us climb up the

wall bars. I counted exactly four rungs, then looked down – and nothing on earth could persuade me to climb up any further.

And so it continued throughout my school days, from school to school, from town to town, from county to county, ten schools in all – first Germany, then Slovenia, and finally England. Incidentally, I was just as hopeless as Edith Argy at Völkerball, known as 'med dvema ognjema' in Slovenia, meaning 'between two fires' (and as 'dodgeball' in England, as far as I know).

Aged 13, I arrived in England. Not many weeks after my arrival, in my first gymnastics lesson at my first school here, St Mary's in Lancaster Gate, I was surprised to see the girls divided into four teams: red, blue, green and yellow.

The word 'yellow' intrigued me. Yell-ow – two syllables instead of one: gelb. The girls were issued with rib-

bons in those colours. What luxury, I thought, compared with the much more modest surrounding I'd been used to in Slovenia. I kept slipping and the soles of my gym shoes were blamed for it. 'You must get yourself plimsolls with rubber soles,' I was told. 'Yours are dangerous!' Dangerous? Everyone wore them in Yugoslavia. They were the standard ones from the internationally renowned Czech shoe company Bat'a!

'Games in the field,' the teacher called out. 'What did she say?,' I asked a fellow-refugee girl from Vienna whose English was fluent. She repeated it slowly and translated. Strange, I was thinking, to be referring to sports as 'games'.

We were taken to a field in Hyde Park to play lacrosse, a game I'd never heard of. One of the girls showed me how to play: 'Round and round and round,' she kept saying. What a language! Sounds like a cat mewing. I can't say I enjoyed the game either.

I do enjoy swimming though – or rather floating, as I'm completely buoyant in any water, just like you see people reading newspapers in the Dead Sea, and I used to be very good at cycling, ice skating and table tennis.

Edith Argy and I seem to be kindred spirits in some ways, it seems to me.

Margarete Stern

The moment I started school, all my ability and flexibility were lost. Our form mistress made us climb up the wall bars. I counted exactly four rungs, then looked down – and nothing on earth could persuade me to climb up any further.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

JEWISH LIFE IN LETCHWORTH

My grandfather, Frederick Kirsch, his wife Liesl and their two young sons, Peter and Hans (Stephen), left Germany in 1936. They came from Chemnitz, a large industrial town in Saxony famous for its textiles, gloves, hosiery and knitwear. Having spent two years working in England as a young man, my grandfather spoke English fluently and was thus able to accept an offer to become the manager of a glove factory in Hitchin, Hertfordshire.

The family settled in the neighbouring town of Letchworth, 35 miles from London. Letchworth was the first Garden City (Welwyn and Hampstead Garden Suburb followed). It was, and still is, a very pleasant place in which to live, with attractive houses of all sizes and interesting, mainly rural-style architecture, each house with its own front and back garden.

Well away from the residential area was a large industrial zone with modern factories. The population was mixed. Attracted by the new concept of living in a country environment, there were idealistic vegetarians in sandals, intellectuals, artists and artisans, as well as professionals, entrepreneurs and people from all over the country looking for work in the new industries. There were over 20 types of denominations and sects, ranging from Theosophists to Catholics, Quakers to C of E. But there were no Jews. The nearest synagogue was in Luton, some ten miles away. It was Orthodox and, while my grandparents were more used to a Reform service, they soon felt at home in this warm and hospitable community.

The family quickly integrated into the life of the town, making friends and earning respect. My grandfather was asked to join the local golf club and my grandmother joined the bridge club. The fact that they were Jews didn't seem to make any difference. My grandmother recalled how on one occasion her new friends apologised for making some uncomplimentary remarks about 'Mr Hitler'. When war broke out, my grandfather was vouched for by several important citizens of the town and was thus not interned.

At the beginning of the Blitz and the evacuations in 1940, people were looking for somewhere to live in relative safety, but close enough to London for the men to carry on their jobs, professions and businesses during the day. Letchworth was the ideal place. It was not under any of the Luftwaffe's flight paths. There were four trains to King's Cross every hour, the fast ones taking 40 minutes, not much longer than the ones that stopped at Finsbury Park, from where there were buses and

tubes to Stamford Hill and Wood Green. And it wasn't difficult to find houses to rent.

Before the outbreak of war a Jewish property company had developed affordable homes on the western outskirts of the town to be let at modest rentals. Many still stood empty. On the eastern side, some of the big houses were available to buy or rent. And in between there were all sizes of house to rent. The news soon spread. It was estimated that by the end of the year there were well over 200 Jewish



Rabbi Solomon Sassoon

households. In a small road connecting the two main shopping streets were a kosher butcher and a kosher grocer. The main service was held in the town's community centre and a smaller one in an auction hall above an estate agent. There was also a Sephardi service and quite a number of other *minyanim*, especially on the western side. It was a changing population throughout the war; as some people came others left. And, of course, there were always lots of visitors who came to see family and friends and spend a holiday in the country, or at least a peaceful Shabbat.

During my childhood in the 60s the Jewish community of Letchworth had shrunk to some 15 families plus a small number of single, elderly refugees. It was a remarkable community in which to grow up. The centre of the community was the Sassoon household, an aristocratic, deeply religious but tolerant and widely educated family of Baghdadi/Indian origin. The household was large, consisting of their extended family and their staff. They had many guests and on such occasions Rabbi Sassoon's mother sat at the head of the table and her daughter and daughter-in-law helped to serve them. Shabbat services were held at their house with alternating Ashkenazi and Sephardi orders of service.

Rabbi Solomon Sassoon was a remark-

able man and an original, enlightened thinker. He spoke at least six languages fluently and had a wide knowledge of science, nature and mathematics and, of course, Judaism. His sister, Mrs Feuchtwanger, who became our *cheder* teacher, was also very knowledgeable. The Sassoons arranged *cheder* classes for children of the community in their garden house. Equally important for our Jewish education were the informal Shabbat groups held after the morning service. These were led by the older children or by visiting Jewish students from nearby Cambridge University who came to spend Shabbat, to listen to Rabbi Sassoon, to be shown some of the ancient manuscripts in his world-famous library and to help strengthen the *minyan*. Many of those who visited went on to achieve great things, among them the current Chivv Rabbi and the renowned teacher Aviva Gottlieb-Zornberg. These students helped to strengthen our Jewish identity by introducing us to B'nai Akiva, encouraging us to go to holiday camps and to meet others of our age in London.

Down the road from the Sassoons lived the indomitable Fachler clan, who were refugees from Germany. Theirs was a truly open house: the level of kindness and hospitality to everyone was extraordinary and made a tremendous impression on me. Here the adults of the community, people of all levels of observance, would meet after prayers every Shabbat for a wonderful home-made Kiddush and join in the lively discussions which followed. On the High Holy Days, the Ashkenazi service was held at the Schischa family, who lived nearby in true Hungarian tradition. The highlights of the year for the children were a glimpse of the lavishly decorated *succah* at the Sassoons, the Purim celebrations complete with fireworks and the burning of Haman, and the communal Chanukah party.

The way in which we saw how Orthodox Judaism lived in the community, with its tolerant, warm and welcoming atmosphere, had a profound effect on our family and a number of the other children in Letchworth, forming the basis of the Orthodox lives we live today. The chance decision of my grandparents to come and live in this sleepy country town had a profound impact on generations to come.

On the death of his mother, Rabbi Sassoon and family fulfilled their long-held wish to live in Israel. At around this time most of the other families moved, either to Israel or, like my family, to London and by 1971 the community had disbanded.

Ruth Keller

Behind the scenes – Jewish immigrant film-makers in Britain from the 1930s to the 1960s

When I was asked by the Jewish Museum to give a talk on Jewish film-makers in Britain as part of the current exhibition on 'Entertaining the Nation', I had no idea how many remarkable figures would turn up – including a large number of immigrants and refugees from Germany. Fleeing Nazi Germany in the 1930s were both experienced film-makers and a few talented youngsters who would join the film industry as adults years later.

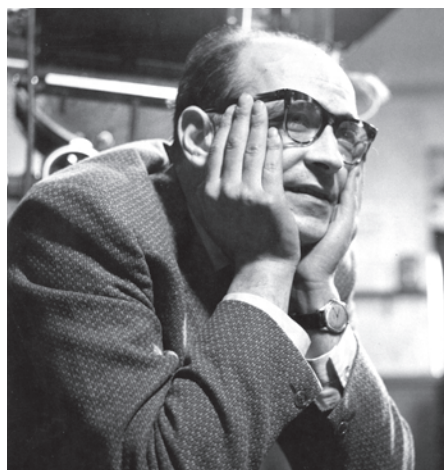
The first group included German cameraman Otto Heller and Mutz Greenbaum, who later changed his name to Max Greene, as well as production designers Alfred Junge and Hein Heckroth along with many brilliant Hungarians who had been employed within the giant German film industry: scriptwriter Emeric Pressberger, director Paul Czinner, animation expert John Halas, and the Austrian-born composer Josef Zmigrod, who later adopted the name Allan Gray. The teenage refugees included Ruth Praver, Klaus (later Ken) Adam and Karel Reisz. Then too, there was the Austrian-born Wolfgang Suschitzky, who arrived in England in 1935 and immediately embarked on a double career as a photographer and documentary cameraman before moving into feature films in the 1950s, while his son Peter (born 1940) also became a leading British cameraman.

In fact, the two leading Jewish production companies in England in the 1930s employed many of the new Jewish arrivals. Producer Michael Balcon and director Victor Saville – born Victor Salberg to a Polish immigrant father and the leading Jewish director in the country in the 1930s – hired Mutz Greenbaum on camera and Alfred Junge as art director on a number of their films. Similarly, producer Alexander Korda employed fellow Hungarian director Paul Czinner and his actress wife Elizabeth Bergner to film *Catherine the Great* shortly after they arrived in 1933. He also hired scriptwriter Emeric Pressberger and composer Miklos Rozsa to join his (Hungarian-Jewish) production team, which already included his two talented brothers, director Zoltan and designer Vincent. And one can see this pattern, of a regular collaboration between Jewish film-makers, as a feature of British film-making throughout the years that followed. Fully assimilated and, in most cases, not especially religious, they could often be found

behind the scenes on archetypal British features from *The Four Feathers* and *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* to *The Ladykillers*, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the *Carry On* films, and the James Bond cycle.

For example, *The Four Feathers* (1939) drew on the talents of the Kordas and Miklos Rozsa. *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) was scripted by Emeric Pressberger, designed by Junge, music by Allan Gray, and co-starred Anton Walbrook. (Designers Junge and Hein Heckroth both won Oscars in the 1940s, reflecting the remarkable quality of their work with Powell and Pressberger.)

Skipping on a few years, both Ken Adam and Karel Reisz emerged as major talents in the 1960s. Reisz first collaborated with the scriptwriter Alan Sillitoe, who adapted his own novel, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, while Adam made his name as production designer on the James Bond films and Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove*, with its impressive-looking war room. In fact, this decade saw a veritable explosion of Jewish talent, including British-born directors led by John Schlesinger and Clive Donner, writers Harold Pinter and Frederic Raphael, and new director arrivals from abroad such as Kubrick, Richard Lester and Roman Polanski.



Director Karel Reisz on *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* PHOTO: JOEL FINLER COLLECTION

Peter Suschitzky made his feature debut behind the camera on *It Happened Here*, a powerful attempt to imagine what England would have been like if defeated and occupied by the Nazis, partly filmed along the street from the Belsize Square Synagogue. Otto Heller and Ken Adam even returned briefly to a very different Germany from the country

they had left 30 years before, employed by producer Harry Saltzman on *The Ipcress File* followed by *Funeral in Berlin*, based on the Cold War spy thrillers by Len Deighton.

The 1960s also marked the beginning



Producer Ismail Merchant, writer Ruth Praver Jhabvala, director James Ivory

PHOTO: JOEL FINLER COLLECTION

of novelist Ruth Praver Jhabvala's new career as a scriptwriter, adapting one of her own books, *The Householder*, for the production team of James Ivory and Ismail Merchant. She continued to work with the same pair for the next 40 years, even winning Oscars for *A Room with a View* (1986) and *Howard's End* (1992). (Walter Lassally, a regular cameraman on their films, was himself a (not Jewish) refugee from Germany. As a teenager in Berlin, he later recalled how he had witnessed some of the horrific Nazi attacks of Kristallnacht on the street where he lived.)

As for the others: Karel Reisz directed many interesting features, including *Morgan: A Suitable Case for Treatment* (1966), starring David Warner, *Isadora* (1968), and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), scripted by Harold Pinter and starring Meryl Streep. Wolfgang Suschitzky continued actively as a photographer and cameraman from *The Bespoke Overcoat* (1954), written by Wolf Mankowitz, starring David Kossoff and Alfie Bass, to *Get Carter* (1971) and the Jack Rosenthal comedy *The Chain* (1984), directed by Jack Gold. Finally, Ken Adam left James Bond behind to win Oscars for his designing of Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* in 1975 and *The Madness of King George* in 1994.

And this is only a small part of the story of Jewish film-makers in Britain . . .

Joel Finler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right
to shorten correspondence
submitted for publication

'DON'T LET'S BE BEASTLY TO THE GERMANS!'

Sir – Herbert Haberberg's reference to Dr Grenville's views as 'moralistic claptrap' (July) spoils what is surely a realistic description of the facts. Dr Grenville's reply – 'We fought the war to show that our standards were superior to those of the Nazis ...' – is not convincing. It sounds good, but why we fought the war depends on who we were.

It is unlikely that the large majority of us went into the war on those grounds. The reason for going to war against the Nazis had a variety of facets. The strongest one must surely have been to stop Hitler and the spread of his power and creed. I would not exclude the desire of retribution by many of us, the earliest victims, and by more and more British people as the war went on. Dr Grenville may consider retribution immoral, but then he must find all punitive actions immoral, although they are part of our superior standards. And one huge facet of the reason must surely have been that of defending ourselves against the threatening danger to our lives.

My impression is that Dr Grenville bases his concepts on a fixed standard of morality. He writes 'War is in itself immoral.' The meaning of the term 'war' is not a fixed one. I hold that certain wars are not immoral and, in some cases, *not* going to war is immoral.

Is Dr Grenville old enough to have experienced the Second World War? I believe that all those of us who were involved in that war, which went on and on and became a way of living, had none of the moral inhibitions Dr Grenville suggests we should have had over the bombing of Dresden.

Eric Sanders, London W12

Sir – Some of your correspondents have either forgotten the Second World War or are too young to remember it.

First, Hitler never obtained 99.9 per cent of the German vote, as Eric Bourne (August) suggested. He is thinking of the late Hafez al-Assad. Hitler reached his peak in the 19 April 1932 election, when he obtained 36.8 per cent of the vote. On 31 July 1932, his party won 230 seats out of 608 in the Reichstag, but on 6 November 1932 lost two million votes and 34 seats.

Second, the argument against the strategic bombing offensive was only secondarily a moral one. The prime criticism was that it failed. Its aim was to destroy Germany's war capacity by destroying her production facilities and undermining the morale of her population. 'Bomber' Harris tried to do this by general area bombing, and he was unenthusiastic about attacking specific targets. He even opposed Barnes Wallis's 'bouncing bomb'. In 1942 the bombing was claimed to have reduced Germany's output by an unimpressive 2.5 per cent, a figure later reduced to a niggardly 0.7 per cent of general production and 0.5 per cent of war production. A total of 200,000 tons of bombs were dropped in 1943 and German armaments production rose by 50 per cent. The cost of the offensive was horrendous. During the Battle of the Ruhr alone (March-July 1943), Bomber Command lost 872 planes, with an overall loss rate of 4.7 per cent – close to what it could sustain. In terms of morale, the Germans proved as resilient as the British.

Despite objections from Harris, the bombing campaign changed during the summer of 1944. Precision bombing of Germany's oil installations reduced the Luftwaffe's fuel supply to 10,000 tons out of a monthly requirement of 160,000 tons. This had a more serious impact on Germany's ability to fight than the thousands of tons of bombs dumped on civilian targets.

The biggest Allied mistake was not to bomb the German Haber process plants, which produced fertilisers and explosives for the war effort. The plants were situated on the Rhine near Ludwigshafen and were more accessible and more vulnerable than population centres. The reason they were not attacked was only partly Harris's enthusiasm for attacking civilians. F. A. Lindeman (later Lord Cherwell) was Churchill's scientific adviser and a supporter of carpet bombing. As a physicist who knew little chemistry, he did not realise the significance of the Haber plants.

Bryan Reuben, London N3

Sir – It was November 1940. We were still in Prague when I actually saw Goebbels's article in *Das Reich* in which he coined the word 'kowentrieren'. His grammar wasn't that good but his intention was clearly spelled out: to reduce to rubble every

British city. Surely, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

The Kaiser's army chiefs saw the potential of terrorising civilians with improved versions of Zeppelins filled with hydrogen which raided London, Dover, Southend, Ipswich, Ramsgate, Hull, etc. A total of 557 people were killed and 1,358 injured. They flew above the ceiling of a BE2, an early fighter, which took all of 50 minutes to reach 10,000 ft. The RFC responded with the Sopwith Camel and incendiary bullets which set the hydrogen alight.

Having come to enjoy terrorising the civilian Englaenders, the Kaiser's air force ordered Gotha bombers powered by two Mercedes engines which bombed at night. The 27 raids by Gothas cost 835 civilians killed and 1,990 wounded.

Undeterred by losses and determined to continue blind bombing of civilians, they constructed Zeppelin Straaken giant bombers powered by four Mercedes engines which succeeded in blowing up a wing of the Chelsea Hospital with an enormous 1,000-pound bomb in 1918. A truly heroic achievement!

*Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath
(a 1917 RAF airfield), Suffolk*

FROM HAMBURG TO HARROGATE

Sir – With regard to the article 'British Quakers and the rescue of Jewish refugees' in your June issue, the picture shown was indeed taken in 1939 in Harrogate, Yorkshire, of a Kindertransport from Hamburg in December 1938.

We were 25 girls in a hostel that served in summer as a holiday camp for underprivileged Jewish children. I can identify most of the girls in the picture. I am in the centre wearing a dress with a white collar in the second row. My sister is in the front row, to the left of Eva Wolf, who is wearing glasses.

I was invited to be cared for by a five-person committee of philanthropists from Leeds and Harrogate in December 1938, shortly after my sister Hildegard Gernsheimer, at the time 12 years old, and I (née Simon), 13 months older, arrived. We entrusted our lives to accept the offer made to our group of 25 religious girls to be cared for in Harrogate.

*Ruth Heinemann,
Lantana, Florida, USA*

HISTORY OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT

Sir – Anthony Grenville's review of Vera Fast's *A History of the Kindertransports* in the September issue certainly shows up the deficiencies – so far – in providing a full academic study of the KTs, which they deserve. However, it seems to me that he is a little hard on Vera Fast. To have compressed the complex story into less than 200 pages is a feat accomplished by few; to accuse her of shortcomings on the 1938-39 KT – 'only' 168 out of 198 pages – seems ungracious since that amounts to

85 per cent of the book. That leaves just 30 pages for the rest – but again there is the accusation that ‘only’ 20 pages deal with the ‘later years’.

The AJR is indeed not a subject for just a couple of footnotes. So the conclusion must be to agree with the final sentence of his review – that ‘a truly authoritative history of the subject remains to be written.’ Now, by whom better than Dr Grenville himself – and when better than as soon as possible after June 2011’s successful 70th anniversary celebratory event, which for a whole week added greatly to understanding how most of the German-speaking Jewish refugees integrated successfully into British life!

Eric Mark, Brussels

Sir – Anthony Grenville states: ‘Surprisingly, no proper academic history of the Kindertransports in English exists.’ I would refer to my doctoral thesis ‘Anglo-Jewry and the Refugee Children 1938-1945’ (University of London 2001). This is a fairly comprehensive account of the work of the Refugee Children’s Movement, the rescue activities of Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld under the auspices of the Chief Rabbi’s Religious Emergency Council, and contains a final chapter based on interviews with and testimonies of some of those who came on the Kindertransports.

Surprisingly, my work is listed (fairly high) on the resources page of the American Kindertransport Association (www.kindertransport.org). I am, however, not aware of any such list having been created by the KT Association in England.

Paula Hill, PhD, Jerusalem

Anthony Grenville: This is an unpublished PhD thesis.

‘DE-JUDAISATION’ OF THE HOLOCAUST

Sir – Further to my letter last month voicing concern that the Holocaust is being steadily de-Judaised in the UK, it has even been hinted that this approach is desirable by certain letter-writers in these columns – where I would least have expected it.

Now we read that France is to ban the word Shoah as ‘too Jewish’ and replace it with an innocuous French word for ‘annihilation’: anéantissement.

Apparently the term Holocaust is not used in France but, by implication, they of course mean that too. School textbooks, on instruction from the education ministry, are to avoid any Jewish connotation for the genocide of the Jews. French Holocaust deniers have been handed a victory. I wonder how long it will take for the idea to cross the Channel and for something similar to be introduced here. They will have a dilemma with the designation *Holocaust Memorial Day* – but then anything goes and nothing is sacred in the post-modern times we live in, all in the interests of universalism and political correctness.

Rubin Katz, London NW11

RESTITUTION IN AUSTRIA

Sir – Victor Ross (May, Letters) will be relieved to learn that the pictures he saw on the walls of the Austrian Ambassador’s residence at 18 Belgrave Square come neither from a museum nor from looted art treasures – they have been there for a long time. Except for a recently added portrait of Franz Joseph, they were certainly there in 1937, when my late brother saw them at the then Austrian Legation, and had probably been there since the building first became the Austro-Hungarian embassy in the 1860s.

F. M. M. Steiner, Deddington, Banbury

A GREAT LADY

Sir – In response to Nicholas Reed’s enquiry about Eleanor Rathbone’s funeral: Eleanor left it to her closest friends, Elizabeth Macadam and Eva Hubback, to decide how her remains should be dealt with. As she was not a practising Christian, she was cremated, although where is uncertain. There followed a private service at Highgate Unitarian Chapel and her remains are believed to have been interred in the family crypt in Smithdown Road, Liverpool. Her name and dates are certainly on the obelisk, along with those of her parents and other family members.

Three memorial services were held in her honour: at St Margaret’s Westminster, at Liverpool Cathedral for family and friends, and at Bloomsbury House, London, attended by people involved in the refugee cause.

Although Mr Reed mentions Eleanor’s long-running and ultimately successful campaign for the family allowance, this was only one aspect of her working life as a great humanitarian activist. I was disappointed, and surprised, that he did not refer to her immensely important role as a refugee activist from 1933 until her death in 1946. From the moment in April 1933 when she stood up in the House of Commons and denounced Hitler and his regime, she became the most ardent campaigner on behalf of refugees, especially Jews, from Europe, committing herself wholeheartedly to championing their cause both inside and outside Parliament, and destroying her health along the way. I would recommend that Mr Reed read my monograph, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees*, so that he can get a real picture of this great lady, who had no equal and deserves much greater public recognition.

(Dr) Susan Cohen. London NW11

A LOVELY LADY

Sir – I would like to endorse Anthony Grenville’s praise of Hannah Horovitz in your September issue. I became acquainted with Hannah while I was at Oxford through a friend of mine, John Wood, who, sadly, like Hannah, died last

year. I saw much of her in the early to late fifties, but then we lost touch.

Just a very few years back, at the Groucho Club, there was a tap on my shoulder. ‘Excuse me, are you Peter Pfeffer?’ I was asked. I hadn’t a clue who this person was. ‘I’m Hannah Horovitz,’ she said, ‘Don’t you remember me?’ Of course I remembered her but, admittedly, I failed to recognise her. How she recognised *me*, after 50 years, is unbelievable! We had a drink. She was a lovely, highly intelligent lady and fully deserved the honour of the concert held for her at the Royal Academy of Music.

*Peter Phillips (born Peter Pfeffer),
Loudwater, Herts*

EXAMPLE OF THE KINDERTRANSPORTEES

Sir – Our present government is currently involved in persuading the young unemployed to find employment and so become independent of state assistance. An examination of an event in 1938-39 might offer some guidance! Some 10,000 children without parents, money or personal goods arrived in the UK. Community support was provided for their existence. Their ages varied between 6 and 14. On closer examination, you will find that in later years the vast majority became ‘middle class’. What was the drive that made this possible?

Michael Sherwood, Bushey

WHO PAYS FOR THE RIOTS?

Sir – You guessed it! The cost of rounding up the mobile-communicating mob and charging them – the trials, solicitors’ fees (typically £400 per hour) and the courts – is just the beginning. The expense of rebuilding people’s homes and businesses, cars, cleaning up, repairs, restocking etc is immeasurable, resulting in more price rises. Add the recall of Parliament, police, fire service, provision of cells, incarcerating the criminals, their supervision, appeals, not forgetting the ‘human rights’ of their families! How does one compensate the families who have lost their homes, their jobs, and the mental damage done? The list is endless, the cost astronomical.

One thing is certain: insurance charges will be eye-watering, surpassing any previous ones. Inevitably, so will taxes in one form or another. Who is responsible for all this? Why should we bystanders have to foot the bill? Ultimately, we will have to blame ourselves. We entrust the politicians, the police and financial ‘experts’ with our lives and livelihood. Obviously our trust is widely misplaced. The Establishment is in disarray, blaming one another for the catastrophe for which they should be held responsible. The basic cause of the events and dealing

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ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The Austrian Cultural Forum's summer exhibition, **Double Exposure: Jewish Refugees from Austria in Britain**, included artists and musicians of every genre in its focus on 25 refugees who came to Britain to escape Nazi-occupied Europe. All took part in the AJR 'Continental Britons' and 'Refugee Voices' audio-visual history projects, whose testimony included views on tolerance, history, humanity and identity.

From the Jewish diaspora to that of the



Barrington Watson, *Beauty* (1993)

African Caribbean: in **RCA Black**, the **Royal College of Art** has collaborated with the African and African Caribbean Design Diaspora to celebrate 60 years of their artistic achievement. Conscious of its own image as a predominately white university, the College is showcasing the work of 22 postgraduates in the hope of attracting more students from the African and African Caribbean diaspora. In his preface to the catalogue, RCA Rector Dr Paul Thompson describes the barriers that often prevent artists in this area from achieving academic qualifications. Some of the art is highly original; some is merely crying out to be seen and heard.

Frank Bowling OBE RA has a political message in his paintings, one of which offers lurid images of abortion. It suggests the tortured semi-abstracts of Francis Bacon, with a touch of Chagall in the mystical figures flying around the canvas.

Barrington Watson trained in several European art academies and says his mission is to educate aspiring Caribbean artists. His portrait of a girl entitled *Beauty* shows a subtle interplay of light on features and is certainly one of the most striking works, being both unpretentious and authentic.

Swedish-Kenyan artist **Catherine Anyango's** graphic novel adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was commissioned in 2009 as an attempt to understand the horrors of colonial Congo. It was named *The Observer's* Graphic Novel of the Month. Her extract is a graphite, watercolour rendering of a haunted face, somehow reminiscent of Michael Jackson. Anyango has worked in many creative spheres and has produced live film events for London spaces, including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Film Theatre. She teaches at the Royal College.

Emamoke Ukeleghe is a devout Christian storyteller who works in printed fabrics to tell her story of displacement.

One of Britain's leading textile designers, **Althea McNish**, sees herself as an artist of all cultures. *Golden Harvest*, a series of three screen-prints, recalls her final year at the RCA in an Essex artists' community,

when the sun shining through golden wheat fields inspired her vibrant designs. The prints have been exhibited and sold internationally as an example of colourful British textiles. They are represented in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Whitworth Museum. Althea entered the RCA with a scholarship in graphics, but opted instead for printed textiles under the influence of Eduardo Paolozzi and the colours and sensations of her native Trinidad. Described as Britain's first and most distinguished black textile designer, Althea has undertaken many commissions for Liberty.

REVIEWS

Survival against the odds

NICHT MIT UNS: DAS LEBEN VON LEONIE UND WALTER FRANKENSTEIN (Not With Us: The Life of Leonie and Walter Frankenstein)
by Klaus Hillenbrand

Frankfurt am Main: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008, 251 pp. hardback, €19.80, ISBN 978-3-633-54232-1

I met Walter Frankenstein at a recent reunion of men who had lived in the Jewish Boys' Orphanage in Pankow-Berlin before the war (see August 2011 issue of the Journal). He had lived for several years in that other Jewish orphanage in Berlin, the Auerbachsche Waisenhaus, but had spent a couple of months in Pankow and had therefore qualified for inclusion. It was here that I learned about the quite extraordinary story of how he, his young wife and two tiny tots survived the last two-and-a-half years underground in Berlin, and heard that a book recounting his life had been published in German in 2008.

Walter's father had died in 1929. The family lived in Flatow, a small town in West Prussia, and his mother looked after him until, in 1936 and at the age of 11, he was unable to continue his schooling. That was when he was enrolled in the Auerbachsche Waisenhaus, and it was there, in 1941, that he met his future wife Leonie, four years his senior. Leonie's Jewish mother had married a left-wing Christian German and had herself been baptised, but Leonie lost her job in a Jewish institution for the deaf and dumb and found employment as a housemother in the Auerbachsche Waisenhaus. When they met it was love at first sight and it wasn't long before they married. Both managed to get by in Berlin until the infamous 'factory action' in 1943, when thousands of Jews were rounded up; their first child was then a year old. They were both forced labourers, she in a factory making transformers and he as a mechanic with an outfit carrying out all manner of repairs. (Frankenstein recalls that he once had to carry out some electrical work in the office of a high-ranking SS officer, who later turned out to be Adolf Eichmann.)

The young couple were determined not to be deported, like their relatives and many friends – hence the book's title – and decided to go underground. (About 6,000 Berlin Jews did likewise, but only half survived as the SS was

constantly on the lookout for them and there were many informers, among them even a few Jews.) The description of their survival is hair-raising. They were helped by non-Jewish friends, who risked their lives by sheltering and often feeding them, and by one or two Jewish men who were also on the run but unencumbered by children. When it became dangerous for them to continue leaning on friends (one woman who had made her flat available was a well disposed prostitute!) they lived in bombed-out houses in unbelievably trying circumstances. Naturally they felt unable to enter air raid shelters when Allied aircraft released their bombs, but somehow they survived. Extraordinary as it may seem, their second boy was born in 1944 – Leonie explains that she had always hoped to have six children – so adding to their problems of survival.

Earlier, Leonie had taken their first child to Leipzig to live in a tiny flat with her mother and non-Jewish stepfather, whilst Walter was hidden in the workshop of a Social Democratic and courageous carpenter until a neighbour became suspicious and he had to return to the anonymity of Berlin, separated from wife and child. During a dream, in which she had to find a way out of a house, Leonie jumped out of the first-floor window and was found by her stepfather unconscious and bleeding. As they couldn't call a doctor they had to wait for her to recover spontaneously. When her presence in the house became known to neighbours, she returned to Berlin to rejoin her husband, leaving her child with her mother who, thanks to her non-Jewish husband, was less at risk.

To summarise a story full of twists and turns and a constant battle for survival without passes and ration cards – the whole family did survive the war and the arrival of the Soviet army. Leonie had become an ardent Zionist before the war and their only life-line was emigration to Palestine; they felt they couldn't spend one day more than necessary in the country that had hounded them and had murdered many of their relatives and friends. That too was full of hazards: Leonie and the children eventually succeeded in reaching Palestine, whilst Walter, thanks to the severe and, it must be said, inhumane, restrictions placed by the British on the immigration of survivors, found himself interned in Cyprus for two years, having first helped to convert a Greek steamer into a ship capable of carrying 75 passengers. (The French authorities in Marseille turned a blind eye to this illegal activity.) Within

sight of the Palestinian coast, the British authorities turned the ship back to Cyprus, and yet another agonising saga unfolded. In 1948 Walter was finally reunited with his family.

Happy as they were in their Jewish environment, where they felt safe at last, life was very hard and they had to live in a miniscule flat. Walter was recruited into the Hagana and later spent several years in the Israeli army. But despite their, and especially Leonie's, enthusiasm for Israel, they reluctantly decided in 1956 to move to Sweden, where an old Berlin friend had prepared the ground for them. Although able to lead normal lives there, with Swedish citizenship, Israel remained their spiritual home.

So, a happy ending after all! Leonie, who died two years ago, never lost her fierce antagonism towards all things German, whereas Walter now feels comfortable in Berlin and visits that city frequently.

The book is written in the present tense, which may not be to everyone's taste, and there are a large number of reminiscences and quotations from both Leonie and Walter. The author has made it easy to read by using relatively short sentences, so that even readers whose German is imperfect should be able to cope. It does read like an exciting novel but, alas, it is a true story.

There are two morals to this tale. First, a not insignificant number of Germans risked their lives by sheltering and supporting Jews living underground. Indeed, this will be clear to anyone visiting the relatively new and fascinating Berlin museum *Stille Helden* (Secret Heroes). Second, for us Kindertransport arrivals, the book is indeed chastening. From time to time, correspondents to the *Journal* complain bitterly about the treatment they received in English families. The story of the Frankensteins reminds us how exceedingly fortunate we were to have found a safe haven in Britain.

Leslie Baruch Brent

An extraordinary personal story

INSIDE NUREMBERG PRISON
by Helen Fry

Kindle edition, Amazon, £4.29 including free wireless delivery and VAT

It is most unlikely that we or future generations will ever be deprived of the pleasure of holding a book. We may, however, become increasingly used to reading books in an entirely different

way, either on a hand-held electronic device such as a Kindle or on a computer. I was somewhat dubious about this possible change in reading habits, but tried it on a new e-book by Helen Fry so as to keep up with 'progress'. To my pleasant surprise, I found that with a bit of practice it was remarkably easy to read the book on my laptop and enjoy the experience.

Inside Nuremberg Prison is a remarkable book, relating the experiences of Howard Triest, a young German-born Jewish soldier who becomes one of the interpreters at the Nuremberg trials of the Nazi war criminals. To make it even more poignant, by the time of the trials Howard knew that his parents had been murdered in Auschwitz and he had to deal face-to-face with those responsible. Over a period of 18 months, Helen Fry spent many hours and days talking to Howard about his story and his impressions of those he was forced to meet. The result is not only an unusual personal story but also a historic document concerning the personalities of the leading Nazis and their responsibilities for the world's most horrific war crimes.

The book consists of three separate parts: Howard's personal story and the fate of his parents; a history of the events leading up to the Nuremberg trials and a commentary relating to these; and the impressions given to Howard of each individual war criminal.

Howard, born in Munich in 1923, experienced the rise of Nazism and the events of Kristallnacht. He and his parents and sister were able to leave Germany in early 1940 and he managed to get to the United States. His parents, however, were caught by the Vichy French and eventually deported to Auschwitz. His sister survived after escaping to Switzerland. Howard later joined the US army, landed in France and took part in the liberation of Buchenwald. The latter experience left a lasting impression on him.

The main part of the book describes Howard's work as an interpreter at the Nuremberg trials, where he worked with one of the leading psychiatrists, Dr Douglas Kelley, on interviewing the prisoners. The interviews were not concerned with obtaining evidence for the trials, but with examining the motives and psychology which had led these men to commit their crimes. Surprisingly there was some rapport between the prisoners, Dr Kelley and Howard, and, in the later discussions with the author, he said he had been

continued overleaf

Sar-El: Volunteering for the IDF

When the first Lebanon War broke out in 1982, reservists from the north of Israel were called up and, as a result, the shortage of manpower on farms became a problem. General Aharon Davidi, former head of the IDF Paratroopers and Infantry Corps, sent *shlichim* (emissaries) to the US to recruit volunteers. This was an immediate success: 650 volunteers arrived in Israel. The following year, Sar-El (Hebrew: Service for Israel) was born. Sar-El has grown from strength to strength and today some 4,000 volunteers a year help the Israeli army with civilian duties. There are also special youth programmes during the summer holidays.

Volunteers come from all four corners of the globe: people of all ages, secular and religious, Jews and Christians from every conceivable background. While all are committed to doing their share for the Israeli army on a one-, two- or three-week programme, probably their biggest contribution is the moral support they give to the young soldiers. The latter greatly appreciate their presence on camp and ask them 'We have to do this – but you?' The answer is that many Jews in the Diaspora feel the need to help support Israel in defending their Jewish homeland. The soldiers also realise that they're not alone and that, in their words, 'Not everyone hates us.' How sad that some young people who know how much their country contributes to the good of humanity

should feel that way.

I have always had a soft spot for the young Israelis who, immediately after having finished their secondary education, are called upon to serve their country. Volunteering to help the IDF was what I wanted to do and I first joined Sar-El in 2002. My doctor had no problem confirming that I was physically fit, but had to be convinced that joining Sar-El at my age wasn't a sign of a mental disorder! After my security status was approved, I joined my group in Israel at a designated meeting point. I spoke to new, apprehensive 'recruits' and to some returning *Sarelniks* and saw it as a good sign if people kept coming back.

We were soon divided into groups and sent to our respective bases. Some camps have better facilities than others, but you can't pick and choose: 'You're in the army now!' Every group is escorted by soldiers, *madrichim* who are in charge of the volunteers for the duration of the programme. After boarding our coach and a brief introduction, we were read the Army Rules, the most important of which are: no alcohol, no drugs, no proselytising, boys and girls sleep in separate quarters.

Patience and a well-developed sense of humour are a must. On the base, we were first shown to our barracks, which usually sleep four to six. We could choose any of the 2 ft 6in-wide beds with a 2 1/2

inch-thick mattress. Oy vey! But who cares – you only sleep there anyway! No time for unpacking as we are rushed off to get our uniforms – the highlight of the day. Uniforms are laundered but not ironed and they come in four sizes: too short, too long, too big, too small! Back at the barracks, we slip on our uniform and hope it will fit. Finally, we put on our adjustable belt and secure our cap under the epaulette. Suddenly, a change of mood comes over us: we stand upright and proud, our laughter fades and emotions take over – we now really feel part of the country!

The work varies from folding uniforms to checking gas masks, from painting to sorting out medical supplies, depending on what is needed at the time. The work can be repetitive but it needs to be done. The more demanding physical jobs are usually given to strapping young men.

We were to remain on the base all week and there would be no wandering out on shopping expeditions. Back at the barracks, unpacking is quick as there is very little storage space. I found my padlock, enabling me to lock away my valuables when the cleaners would come to do the room – but I soon discovered we were the cleaners.

The next morning, we joined the regular soldiers on the parade ground. We stood at ease, then to attention, then at ease again and I was honoured with

continued opposite

REVIEWS *continued from page 9*

able to act professionally and without hatred. The interviews extended over many months, and sometimes Howard himself dealt directly with the prisoners. At some stage he obtained books written by the criminals, and each of them was even willing to put an inscription in them. Some of these were quite lengthy and could almost be considered friendly dedications to their interrogator. Altogether, 22 books with inscriptions were sent back to America by Howard – it is not stated what later became of these. Throughout the interviews, Howard never revealed that he was Jewish and this probably helped in making the prisoners talk more freely. What would their reaction have been if they had known!

In separate chapters the author describes Howard's memories of the behaviour and attitudes of the main criminals, including Göring, Streicher and Hess, but his most challenging time was when he had to confront Hans Frank, the 'Butcher of Poland', and Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz. By that time, he knew his

parents had been murdered there and he found it difficult to be sitting close to these Nazis in a small cell.

From a historical point of view, the main interest in the book relates to the description of the attitudes of the defendants to the defeat of Germany, and their attempts to rationalise and defend their actions. The interviews had no bearing on the verdicts, which were based on the factual evidence given in court and are listed in the book.

The actual experiences of Howard Triest, before the war and, more importantly, after its end, form an interesting separate story-line, especially when he returns to the city of his birth and meets people he had known five years earlier. He also describes how he discovered that his 70-year-old grandmother had survived in Theresienstadt and he was able to drive her back to Munich in an army jeep, wearing an American army greatcoat. The experiences of Howard's sister Margot are also chronicled and do not reflect well on the behaviour of the Vichy French. It was only with great difficulty that she was able to escape over the mountains into Switzerland. When Howard visited her, she was able

to show him the last letter sent by their parents when they were already on their way to Auschwitz.

In 2003 Howard took his son Brent back to Munich and his story was filmed as a documentary, 'Journey to Justice'. This included his encounter with a school friend who had become a soldier in the Panzer SS.

Part of the book covers the history of the events leading up to Kristallnacht and will be very familiar to readers of the Journal, but serves as a good background to those less informed about the early stages of what eventually became the *Shoah*. A minor criticism is that the pre- and post-war events are sometimes not clearly separated in the text, and a more chronological presentation might have been better. I also found it unfortunate that the opening two paragraphs of the book are written as if for a novel and can sadly only be based on imagination. This may put off readers from what is otherwise a factually-based book. It may also serve as an interesting introduction to the concept of electronic books.

The e-book concludes with a useful biography relating to the Nuremberg trials and relevant aspects of the war.

George Vulkan

An era comes to an end: Finance Director Gordon Greenfield to retire

Finance Director **Gordon Greenfield**, for so many years a towering presence at the AJR, is to retire.

During his 17 years with the AJR, Gordon successfully oversaw the development of the entire Claims Conference grant processes each year, from writing the applications through to the giving of funds to claimants in accordance with the many and varied criteria specified within the terms of the grants. This year, these grants will total £2.5m, and the tally over the 11 years of the grants is now up to £15m. This is a measure of the extent to which survivors and refugees have benefited.

Managing this work, together with his involvement with the various emergency fund committees, gave Gordon considerable insight into the lives and circumstances of the AJR's members. This in turn led to his taking the lead in suggesting new and creative ways of assisting members, whether to persuade others of the need to change the rules of the programmes so that more people could benefit or to project future needs.

In so doing, Gordon's role developed beyond that of a finance director and his suggestions and contributions in all areas of work were both constructive and based on a genuine appreciation of members' needs. In addition to his role of Co-Director, in recent years Gordon also became the AJR's link with its Kindertrans-



port special interest group.

Andrew Kaufman, Chairman of the AJR, said that 'Everyone at the AJR – not least our members – owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Gordon for his endeavours, achievements and outstanding contribution. We all wish him the very best for a healthy, contented and lengthy retirement.'

David Rothenberg, who as AJR Treasurer worked especially closely with Gordon, echoed these remarks and added that

Gordon had introduced 'a much-needed level of professionalism as the AJR's affairs have become more complex over the years. He has also developed the systems needed for the Claims Conference grant application process, which has taken a significant part of his time over recent years. This has enabled the AJR to maintain and extend support for our members with critical social and welfare programmes. He has always done this with a cheerful and helpful demeanour and, as Treasurer of the AJR, I shall miss him.'

The AJR Trustees hosted a reception for Gordon at Belsize Square Synagogue in late September (see further report in next month's issue of the Journal).

Receptionist and Membership Secretary Vivi returns home to Buenos Aires

Viviana Markstein is leaving the AJR and returning to Argentina. Her father, a refugee from Vienna, sadly passed away earlier this year and she has decided to return to Buenos Aires to be with her mother and family.



Vivi came to England in 1997 and began working for the AJR in September that year, when the offices were in Hampstead.

'From day one, everyone has been friendly and helped me,' Vivi says. 'I felt I was part of a big family. The fact that I have been in reception and looking after the membership enabled me both to get to know many of the members and to understand more about my family's past.'

AJR Director Carol Rossen said Vivi had been 'a most capable, efficient and popular member of staff. I fully understand the reason she is leaving, but she will be enormously missed nonetheless.'

Inga's diary 'in venerable company'

Inga Joseph, who came to the UK from Vienna by Kindertransport, is delighted that Oxford University's renowned Bodleian Library has accepted the manuscripts of her diaries dating back to 1939.

Inga, a retired teacher of modern languages who lives in Sheffield, chronicled her experiences, including coping with the news that her mother had died in a concentration camp, in a series of memoirs entitled *My Darling Diary* under the pen name Ingrid Jacoby.

Recently, the Bodleian acquired *The Watsons*, an unfinished novel by Jane Austen. 'I never expected my diaries to end up in such venerable company,' Inga says, adding that the Sheffield section of her diaries has been promised to Sheffield Archives.

NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF

David Kaye, who succeeds Gordon Greenfield as Finance Director, is a qualified accountant who has spent 35 years in various companies including Unilever and Tyco International. He believes it is highly appropriate to have made the move into the charitable sector, and particularly into the AJR, as he is a 'second generation' member: his mother, Cilla, is a 'Kind' and member of the AJR.

Originally from west London, David lives in Pinner. He and his wife Estelle have three children. David is a keen Chelsea fan.

☆

Karin Pereira, who replaces Viviana Markstein on reception, was born in Heidelberg and left Germany for the UK in 1985. Karin, who is married to AJR Centre Caretaker Joseph – they have two children – started working for the Centre in 2003 doing administrative work, including booking the entertainment. In 2009 she moved to reception at the Centre, meeting and greeting members.

Sar-El: Volunteering for the IDF cont. raising the flag. I was overwhelmed. I could hear my heart beat as I ran up the flag. Tears rolled down my cheeks and I felt a knot in my throat when we sang the *HaTikvah* while I stood to attention next to our flag.

On another base, the project for our group of ten was to paint certain areas and re-arrange the plants to produce a manicured garden ready for the welcome reception for the new base commander. It worked like a military operation. The next day, the officer in charge called us together around a table bedecked with drinks, biscuits and fruit and thanked us profusely in Hebrew, finishing with 'Atem tsevet min haShamaim' (You are a team from Heaven).

Each time spent at Sar-El is a different 'adventure', has a different 'flavour' and awakens different emotions. But the 'good-feeling' for the *Neshama* (the soul), the camaraderie and the good humour never change.

We Sar-El volunteers support the IDF because *we are part of 'Am Israel'*.

If you would like to participate in the Sar-El experience, please visit their website at www.sar-el.org or contact Jennie Goldstone at sarelvolunteers@btinternet.com

Michèle Katz

This is an edited version of an article which appeared in HaGan, the magazine of Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue.

ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY OCTOBER

Mon 10 'New Directions in Holocaust Research' Free one-day conference at Imperial War Museum North, organised by the Centre for Jewish Studies and the Department of Religions and Theology, University of Manchester and Imperial War Museum North, 9.30 am-4.00 pm. For further details, please contact Victoria Howarth at vhowarth@iwm.org.uk

Mon 17 Ken Baldry, 'Schubert and the Power of Song' Club 43

Mon 24 Dr Anthony Grenville, 'The Settlement of the Refugees from Germany and Austria in North West London from 1933' Club 43

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

INSIDE the AJR

Ealing Improving matters

Meeting in Ealing Synagogue's lovely new hall, we had a lively discussion on interaction between the Orthodox, Masorti, Liberal and Reform communities and came up with common-sense suggestions to improve matters. *Leslie Sommer*

No October meeting due to Yom Tov

Welwyn GC 6th anniversary Jewish music programme

Jane Rosenberg entertained us with Jewish music, including typical pieces from Russia, Ambrose's dance music of the 20s, and her own lovely voice. *Alfred Simms*

No October meeting due to Yom Tov

Iford 9th birthday

Our 9th birthday was a great success thanks to the heroic efforts of Myrna and devoted volunteers. The delightful Lynne Bradley entertained us to her musical autobiography that was hilarious and moving in equal parts. *Edith Poulsen*

No October meeting due to Yom Tov

Bromley CF Not a dull moment

Meeting at Liane Segal's home, we were shown Ruth Young's 90th birthday photo album, containing many reminders of German children's books. Another member brought equally fascinating photos from her mother's family. Not a dull moment. *Hazel Beiny*

Next meeting: 25 Oct. Lunch and screening of Watermarks

OUTING TO ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2011 11.00 am

The Royal Courts of Justice building accommodates both the Court of Appeal and the High Court. This guided tour will last approximately 1½ hours and involve a fair amount of walking and stairs (disabled access is available throughout the building).

After the tour we will have lunch in the Courts restaurant and be joined by Lord Neuberger. The Rt. Hon. Lord Neuberger of Abbotsbury was appointed Master of the Rolls with effect from 1 October 2009. The Master of the Rolls is the Head of Civil Justice and the second most senior judge in England and Wales.

Places are limited, so please book early. For further details, call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070.

Pinner spirits not dampened

After several sunny days, the day of our annual garden party turned out thoroughly wet and miserable. So we gathered in Vera's house to enjoy a lovely tea and lots of conversation. Our spirits were not dampened! *Paul Samet*

Next meeting: 6 Oct. Outing to see Czech Scrolls at Westminster Synagogue

Liverpool Tracing relatives

We met at the home of Inge and Eric Goldrein, where we welcomed a new second generation member. We discussed tracing relatives. Some members had discovered long lost and previously unknown relatives, some relatives had been found by searchers at Yad Vashem, one member found he had a second cousin living in Europe who produced a family tree running to 16 pages. *Guido Alis*

Next meeting: 2 Nov at same venue

HGS Story of a war volunteer

Ronnie Green, who was born in Israel, gave us a fascinating account of the Yom Kippur war, in which he volunteered to fight as a platoon commander. *Laszlo Roman*

Next meeting: 10 Oct. Andrea Cameron, 'History of the City of London'

Café Imperial Bring back the Home Guard!

'Dad's Yiddishche Army' (newly named by Andre) discussed the awfulness of the London riots. Bring back the Home Guard! *Esther Rinkoff*

East Midlands Summer meeting

Meeting at Ruth and Jurgen Schwiens's lovely old home in deepest Leicestershire, we had a good turnout. Our hosts laid on a delicious lunch and even arranged four super musicians to entertain us with klezmer music. We missed our centenarian member, who passed away earlier this year. We hope to hold our next meeting at the beginning of November. *RJN*

Marlow CF Inaugural meeting

We gathered, talked and decided happily to continue to meet, hopefully for years to come. *Alan Kaye*

Next meeting: 17 Oct. Social get-together

Temple Fortune Talk by Jenny Manson

Jenny Manson told us about her first book 'What It Feels Like to Be Me' and mentioned her forthcoming book 'What Happened to the Public Sector?' We ended with a Q&A session and round-table discussion. *David Lang*

No October meeting due to Yom Tov

**ALSO IN OCTOBER
Cardiff 24 Oct. Lunchtime
get-together plus speaker
Essex No meeting due to Yom Tov**

Brighton & Hove Sarid The worries of a Jewish grandmother

We were treated to a morning of poetry written and read by Shirley Jaffe. The poems were family-oriented, reflecting the love and worries of a Jewish grandmother. *Ceska Abrahams*

Next meeting: 17 Oct. Evelyn Friedlander, 'The History of Synagogues in Germany'

Cambridge A reminder of past horrors

Eva Clarke gave a fascinating account of her parents' survival in various concentration camps and her own birth at a train stop between Auschwitz and Mauthausen. Her 94-year-old mother attended our meeting and added wonderfully to a very special

Worth waiting 90 years for

'At 90 – a balloon trip?!' Yes. I wanted a balloon trip. At least it just came out when my daughter Stella asked what I wanted for my birthday.

She immediately had the wires humming. One of two possible trips was at 6 o'clock on the morning before my birthday. That was out – I'm not in the army any more! So it had to be at 6 o'clock on the afternoon of my birthday. Stella booked a place for me, herself and her brother Jon's daughters Eleanor and Susannah.

On the day, the wind was too gusty and flights were cancelled. Six weeks later came a Monday when the wind was kind: 'Go to a field marked "Pick Your Own, Wednesday Boot Sale and Dog Training".' We duly found it, with Jon and family already there. Soon a van arrived with the big basket and a black bag. 'Sorry folks, the wind forecast was wrong – from here we would have flown straight into Luton Airport!' So we drove north to Shuttleworth.

The mysterious black bag was opened and out came a long red snake. When it was finally unrolled, two huge fans blew cold air into the balloon. The fans were taken away and the burner was allowed two short bursts. Majestically the balloon rose into the air, and we scrambled into the basket. The burners inflated the balloon until it was nearly full. A further small puff, the basket slithered a few yards and we were off. Soon we were high in the air, feeling wonderfully free and elated.

The pilot pointed out landmarks, the most obvious being the control tower at Luton Airport. Once we reached a height of 1,800 feet – had it been less misty, we could have seen the Malvern Hills 60 miles away.

Gradually we sank lower and lower. 'Oh look, a big house straight ahead!' Not just a house, but a beautifully restored Baroque palace – Wrest Park House, due to be opened to the public in a few days. The magnificent Renaissance gardens came into view. Touchdown on the floral parquet seemed inevitable, with trees in front of us! The pilot gave a massive burner burst, we jumped up a little, almost clearing a tree, as we plonked down in the ploughed field behind the manicured gardens of Wrest Park. The English Heritage Security – an elderly lady in a jeep – was speechless but glad we had caused no damage.

A glass of champagne and a certificate signed by Sir Richard Branson ended a glorious experience. Well worth the wait of 90 years. *Alfred Simms*

reminder of past horrors. *Keith Lawson*
Next meeting: 27 October. David Barnett, 'Shops and Shopping in Regency London'

Edgware Lewis Carroll in Germany

Roger Scowen from the Lewis Carroll Society gave us a presentation on Lewis

Annual Northern Get-together and AJR 70th Anniversary Celebration

From Sheffield to Kendal, from Liverpool to Newcastle and Sunderland, from Bradford and Leeds to north and south Manchester – over 80 AJR members came together for an interactive day in Leeds chaired by Michael Newman. About a third of those present were from the second and third generations.

This year was special because we also celebrated our 70th anniversary with a history of the AJR by AJR Journal Consultant Editor Dr Anthony Grenville.

Following a delicious lunch provided by the Sinai Synagogue Ladies Committee, Linda Paterson, Chief Executive of British Friends of Yad Vashem, gave insight into new developments at Yad Vashem.

We split up into discussion groups with

topics of interest to all the generations. In the morning, there was also a discussion group led by Sir Erich Reich and Sue Kurlander on 'First Impressions of the UK'.



(From left) Back Susanne Green, Alice Rubinstein, Michael Newman, Rachel Hunter, Linda Paterson, Jeanette Rubinstein Front Barbara Dresner Dorrity, Sue Kurlander, Sir Erich Reich, Heinz Skyte, Bronia Veitch

Topics of other discussion groups included Israel and there was an inter-generational discussion on the future of Holocaust education and on some of the exciting educational projects developing at Leeds HSFA and Manchester Jewish Museum.

A special anniversary cake was cut by Lola Michaelis, at 97 the oldest member present. Hannah Strong, 10, of the third generation, joined in as the youngest member present.

A memorable 70th anniversary celebration and inter-generational get-together!

Susanne Green

Carroll's only trip abroad. The tour was mainly of Germany and of particular interest was his visit to the Neue Synagoge in Berlin.

Hazel Beiny

Next meeting: 18 Oct. Howard Lanning, '80 Years in the Film Industry'

AJR GROUP CONTACTS

Bradford Continental Friends
Lilly and Albert Waxman 01274 581189

Brighton & Hove (Sussex Region)
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3070

Bristol/Bath
Kitty Balint-Kurti 0117 973 1150

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Hazel Beiny 020 8385 3070

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Myrna Glass 020 8385 3077

Cleve Road, AJR Centre
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Trude Silman 0113 237 1872

Liverpool
Susanne Green 0151 291 5734

Manchester
Werner Lachs 0161 773 4091

Newcastle
Walter Knoblauch 0191 2855339

Radlett Hits from the early 1900s

Alf Keiles played us recordings of musical hits from the early 1900s. Then, in a general knowledge quiz, Esther managed to demonstrate the deplorable knowledge of at least one of the participants!

Fritz Starer

Next meeting: Gerald Curzon, 'Jews on the Silk Road'; 4th anniversary

Harrogate/York CF

Meeting at the Schatzbergers, we bemoaned the loss of Stefan Ruff, noting that he had been determined to be buried in Vienna, the city of his birth. Most of the afternoon was devoted to discussing 'What is Jewishness?' Otto Greenfield (Grunfeld) and Arek Hersh met up for the first time since they were in the Lake District, where the 'Boys' from

continued on page 15

Norfolk (Norwich)
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North London
Ruth Jacobs 020 8445 3366

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Susie Bates 01235 526 702

Pinner (HA Postal District)
Vera Gellman 020 8866 4833

Radlett
Esther Rinkoff 020 8385 3077

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Lore Robinson 020 8670 7926

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Weald of Kent
Janet Weston 01959 564 520

Wembley
Laura Levy 020 8904 5527

Wessex (Bournemouth)
Mark Goldfinger 01202 552 434

West Midlands (Birmingham)
Fred Austin 01384 252310

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

KT-AJR

Kindertransport special interest group

3 October 2011

Anthony Grenville
will talk about his book
Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria

KINDLY NOTE THAT LUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 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 Entertainment

Mon	3	KT LUNCH – Kards & Games Klub
Tue	4	CLOSED
Wed	5	Ronnie Goldberg
Thur	6	Douglas Poster
Mon	10	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	11	CLOSED
Wed	12	Ann Shirley & Margaret Colby
Thur	13	CLOSED – Succot
Mon	17	Kards & Games Klub – Monday Movie Matinee
Tue	18	CLOSED
Wed	19	Jen Gould
Thur	20	CLOSED – Shemini Atzereth
Mon	24	Kards & Games Klub
Tue	25	CLOSED
Wed	26	Paul Toshner
Thur	27	Margaret Opdahl

'DROP IN' ADVICE SERVICE

Members requiring benefit advice please telephone Linda Kasir on 020 8385 3070 to make an appointment at AJR, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL

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

Hellman, Joanna (née Strauss) died on 15 August. She is greatly missed by her daughter Jacqueline and son Michael; grandsons Isaac, Nathan, Solomon and Benjamin; seven great-grandchildren; and Walter Goddard, George Strauss and Herbert Graf. Until recently she enjoyed going regularly to the AJR Centre in Cleve Road.

Weinberg, Rolf, 1919-2011 Missed and always remembered by all his family and friends. Shalom, dear Rolf, your companion for many years, Ruth.

TRIP TO ISRAEL

We are hoping to arrange a trip to Israel from 29 November to 8 December 2011 staying half-board at the King Solomon Hotel in Netanya. £1,300 pp in twin/double room, £200 supplement for single room

Price includes El Al flights from Heathrow, transfers to and from hotel, sightseeing most days, entrance fees where necessary.

We have been able to book the excellent guide we had on our last trip.

For further details, please contact Carol Rossen or Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070.

This will be a fairly full itinerary which will involve some walking.

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 Telephone: 020 8455 2286

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If so please contact:

Jane Kessler
 0208 455 3652

or

House Manager
 Margaret
 01923 213964

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

To run a bridge club, art club and book club

For further details, please telephone Carol Hart, Head of Volunteer Services, on 020 8385 3083

**AJR CENTRE
 AT BELSIZE SQUARE
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 (and not Mondays and Thursdays
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OBITUARY

Yogi Mayer, 8 September 1912 – 8 July 2011

A dynamic personality and powerful sportsman, Paul Mayer – always known as Yogi though the reasons were never explained – was also an outstanding youth leader and a serious sports historian and ethicist.

Growing up in south-west Germany with step-parents (his mother died when he was six and his father when he was 12), he developed self-reliance and love of adventure. He studied art and sport at Berlin and Frankfurt universities until Hitler expelled Jews from higher education. He then taught PE at a Jewish school in the Black Forest. He was deeply involved in the Jewish youth movement, for which he was taken to task by the Gestapo.

In the months before the 1936 Berlin Olympics, he trained for the pentathlon at a special Olympics camp for Jews in Ettlingen, near the Black Forest – in case there was international pressure to admit them, which never happened.

He left Germany in May 1939 with his wife, Ilse, and baby son. He worked in a leather factory but enrolled in the Pioneer Corps immediately it accepted German Jews and joined the Special Operations Executive, where he trained men on how to speak and act when infiltrated behind enemy lines in Germany.

After the war he worked in Stepney as a sports and art instructor at Brady Boys' Club, to which he returned after running the Primrose Club in 1947-51. The Primrose Club was set up by the Jewish Refugees



flowed to the UK from August 1945 and placed in hostels.

Yogi became a father figure, giving them sports, social graces, continental food, and a place they could look on as home, and motivated them to excel in their chosen paths in life. When 'the Boys' became the '45 Aid Society, named after the year they arrived in Britain, Yogi became life deputy president.

Back at Brady as club leader and then director in 1951-65, he focused on shaping the boys' aspirations regarding their own futures. With a programme of sport, art, debate, drama and plenty of competition, he introduced them to a wider world. He took them camping around Britain and on Alpine treks, and made use of weekends at Skeet, the Kent country house bought for the club as a retreat during the war. Brady boys were among the first to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, initiated in 1956.

In 1965-80 Yogi was youth officer for Islington Council, whose huge council estates gave him scope for his pioneering

Committee to help integrate teenage survivors of Nazi camps into normal life. A total of 732 youngsters, including 80 girls – all came to be known as 'the Boys' – were

ideas to harness youthful energy. He gave local boys time and space for football by persuading the council to install floodlighting and AstroTurf. He started a boat club and youth theatre, brought in youth workers to engage with boys who did not join in communal activities, and developed centres for school non-attenders.

In retirement, he contributed his expertise in training youth workers through courses at North London College and was a governor of Islington College. He turned increasingly to documenting sport from the start of the modern Olympic Games and, in particular, the contribution made by Jews. His book *Jews and the Olympic Games: Sport – A Springboard for Minorities* was published in 2004.

In 1997 he was appointed MBE for services to young people and in 1998 was awarded an honorary doctorate from Potsdam University in recognition of his lifetime devotion to sporting practice, theory, ethics and history.

He died in 2006 after 65 years of marriage. With his daughters' devoted care, he remained independent at home, maintaining his personal and professional relationships here and in Germany until the start of this year, when he moved into Jewish Care's Lady Sarah Cohen House – and promptly became its star attraction.

He is survived by his son Thomas, daughters Monica and Carol, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Ruth Rothenberg

INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

Theresienstadt were repatriated in 1945.

Marc Schatzberger

Next meeting: 5 Oct. At the home of the Littles

Wembley CF bumper crop

A bumper crop of people attended our social get-together, including three newcomers. Talking of bumper crops, Myrna came loaded with plums from her garden, begging us to take some home.

Irene Stanton

No October meeting due to Yom Tov

Hendon An amusing anecdote

Jewish Museum volunteer Larry Ross led us through each floor of this heritage site. Amusing anecdote from a little girl: 'Please sir, what's the difference between a mikvah and a barmikvah?'

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 24 Oct. Rita Best, costume designer

Book Club 'The English German Girl'

Eight members, consisting of 3 over 90's, 2 at 89 and the rest in their 80s – a young, active group! – discussed 'The English German Girl'. Most found it excellent; some said it was upsetting. *Hazel Beiny*

Next meeting: 26 Oct. Natasha Solomon's 'The Novel in the Viola'

Leeds CF Rain doesn't stop play

We held our annual garden party at the home of volunteer Pippa Landey – in the lounge looking out on the rain-washed countryside. But we weren't deterred from enjoying an afternoon of lively chat and a fun quiz.

Barbara Cammerman

Next meeting: 10 Oct.

Kent The tale of scroll 129

David Lawson told us the tale of scroll 129, a sefer torah dating back to 1911 and originally housed in Ostrava. The scroll is now safely ensconced in Kingston Synagogue after a fascinating journey.

Esther Rinkoff

Next meeting: 25 Oct. DVD: Bruno Muller returns to Crakow

Friendly company at Oxford summer lunch

Meeting at the home of Susie and John Bates, we enjoyed a variety of home-cooked and continental foods and, as always, friendly company. Thank you from all of us!

Anne Selinger

North London 10th birthday in style

We celebrated our 10th birthday in style. A lovely cold lunch was provided and Harry Harris gave us a musical rendition. Thank you, Myrna, for your hard work and thank you to all the volunteers helping her.

Herbert Haberberg

Next meeting: 27 Oct. Renée Tyack, 'They Called Her Cassandra'

Surrey summer get-together

Our summer get-together was held once again in Edmee's wonderfully hospitable home. Over 20 members attended, enjoying lively conversation and the usual lavish food.

Eva Gold-Young

Cleve Road A most successful meeting

Renée Tyack read extracts from her book 'They Called Her Cassandra', about how her mother Ruth had been primarily responsible for getting her family to England from Leipzig just two days before the war. A most successful meeting.

David Lang

Next meeting: 25 Oct. Val Alliez, 'Southwark and the Globe Theatre'



LETTER FROM ISRAEL



Eilat festival

A trip to Eilat is always a pleasure, and especially in the winter, when the weather in Jerusalem is cold and rainy. The four-hour drive takes one through the Judean Desert, along the Dead Sea, and down to the Negev. The mountains in Jordan, on the far side of the Dead Sea, look distant and romantic in shades of pink, yellow and purple, while on our side they seem to be dusty and brown. One wonders if ours look romantic from the other side, and whether from close up those, too, are dusty and brown.

Along the way one also passes the caves of Qumran, the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, brought to light by an accident of fate and obtained for Israel through the acuity of Yigael Yadin's father, scholar and professor of archaeology, Eliezer Sukenik. A little further along we come in sight of Massada, the mountain on which King Herod built his winter palace and where the last zealots of the Jewish Revolt held out against the Romans, only to take their own lives rather than accept a fate of slavery. It also marks the archaeological site that was excavated by Yigael Yadin – almost a family business, one might say. In

the springtime, the Israel Opera gives spectacular performances of operas there to audiences numbering 7,000 at a time.

But we press on to Eilat, where last winter we attended the final weekend of concerts in the framework of the Eilat Chamber Music Festival. Outstanding musicians from Israel and abroad, among them Peter Wispelwey, Dejan Lazic and Antony Pay, to name but a few, played some of the gems of the chamber music repertoire. The performances were given over two weekends, and in the intervening week young musicians from all over the world attended master classes. The gala concert on the last day of the festival consisted of a performance of Bach's St. John Passion performed by the Gabrieli Consort conducted by Paul McCreech. Personally, I found the performance a little too low-key for my taste. We were told that that's the way Bach performed it, but I prefer a larger choir.

Earlier that day, however, we were treated to a spectacle of a different kind. The talented young musicians who had participated in the master classes, three pianists and three violinists, ranging in age from 16 to 26 and originating from Israel,

Russia and Holland, came on to the stage one by one and played for our delectation. The technical mastery and musicality these youngsters displayed left us all open-mouthed, and hopefully they will all go on to successful careers in their chosen fields.

The festival in Eilat is sponsored by one of Israel's leading banks, as well as by the Eilat municipality and the British Council. The audience is drawn from local music-lovers as well as tourists and Israelis from other parts of the country who come to Eilat to get away from the winter in the north and enjoy the opportunity to hear some top-notch interpreters of chamber music. But the Eilat Chamber Music Festival has to compete with at least two other music festivals held in Eilat each winter, so that the auditorium in which the concerts were given was not always full.

Each year we are told that the future of the festival is uncertain, but each year it returns with even more stellar performers. So it is to be hoped that all those who have helped to fund it until now will continue to do so in the future, so that we can continue to benefit from its unique contribution to Israel's musical scene.

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *continued from page 7*

with them are the concerns of the top echelons of society. They failed utterly. We saw in disbelief the inaction of the police and the government, which fiddled while England burned! The top policemen had resigned. The Mayor of London wielded a new broom. Those who wreaked havoc were not even made to clean it up!

Instead of apprehending 'a handful' of looters, over 2,500 so far, at the scene of their crime, 16,000 officers – too many and too late – relied on CCTVs, stating 'Police will hunt down rioters for two years!' No problem: we will pay for it!

*Fred Stern,
Wembley, Middx*

GROWN IN ISRAEL

Sir – Post-war anti-Semitism has taken some odd twists and turns along its ugly route. Picture this: a rather scruffy-looking, local green grocer displaying many boxes filled with self-destructing fruit and veg placed on the pavement outside the shop. On that particular day, much of the fruit was certainly on the turn, but winking at me invitingly was a large heap of fragrant, fully ripe mangoes in a box marked 'Grown in Israel'.

Unable to resist any longer, I grabbed one of the mangoes and hurried inside to pay. Imagine my surprise/horror when the shop owner wrenched the fruit from

my hand. Smiling broadly, he looked around to the other startled customers, presumably to ensure they would listen and watch.

'Oh Madam, no Madam,' he yelled, 'You don't want to buy no mangoes. Them's Jew food – they're grown in Palestine. No, Madam, you don't want that – it's Jewish!'

I never returned to this shop but, even one year on, my mind still boggles at the sheer stupidity of a trader who buys 'Jewish' food grown in Israel, but then warns his customers not to buy it.

*Laura Meyer Levy
(address not supplied)*

Published by the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL
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