

## Thomas Mann and the 'inner emigration'

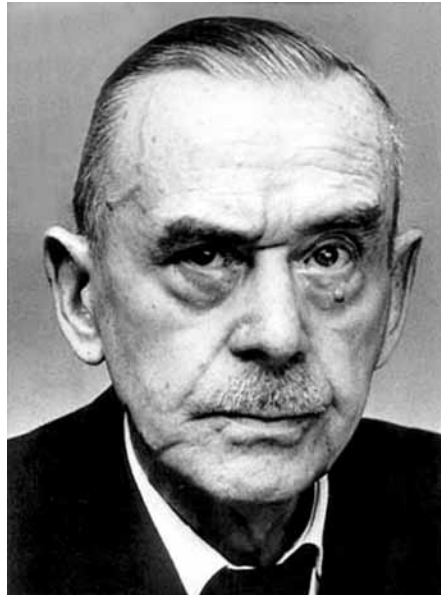
Last month's article on Gerhart Hauptmann contained a reference to the so-called 'inner emigration', a term used to describe those writers who had been opposed to National Socialism but chose to remain in Germany after 1933, conforming at least outwardly to the dictates of the regime. The post-war confrontation between the 'inner emigrants' and those writers who had been driven out of Germany into real exile ignited into a bitter public dispute in summer 1945, in a rare example of a literary controversy that assumed the dimensions of a nationally significant moral and historical-political discussion about German guilt and German attitudes to the Nazi past.

Open opposition to the Nazi regime was impossible for writers after 1933: it would have meant immediate incarceration in a concentration camp. But it was possible for writers to register a degree of non-conformity, if only negatively, by withdrawing into the private sphere and keeping their oppositional writings to themselves. A number of authors, provided they were not Jews or prominent opponents of the Nazis, were able to follow this course. 'Inner emigration' implied that a writer was unwilling to put himself or herself at the disposal of the regime, but did not openly oppose it. After 1945 it became a means by which those who had kept their heads down under the Third Reich sought to prove their anti-fascist credentials, claiming to have engaged in a form of covert resistance – in many cases so covert that little trace of it could ever be discerned. For that reason, 'inner emigration' has become a discredited term.

The writers classified under that category were a disparate group. Some could be seen as genuinely anti-Nazi, like Werner Bergengruen, whose Christian humanism made him unacceptable to the Nazis, or Ernst Wiechert, whose exhortation to an audience of Munich students to preserve a critical attitude towards Nazi ideology earned him a

spell in Buchenwald. But others were mere opportunists, pre-1933 opponents of the Nazis who made the necessary compromises with them once they were in power and then, on the basis of having made only limited concessions to the regime, pronounced themselves resisters and anti-fascists after 1945.

Prime examples of the latter type were Walter von Molo and Frank Thiess, who in 1945 became involved in a celebrated



Thomas Mann, 1875-1955

controversy with the most famous exiled German writer, Thomas Mann. Mann had become the leading public spokesman of the German exiles, thanks to his wartime broadcasts to Germany on the BBC, 'Deutsche Hörer'. He had acquired the status of spokesman for the 'other Germany', those Germans who sought in exile to preserve the values of a humane, democratic Germany in opposition to National Socialism. In that capacity, Mann, after reading reports from the liberated concentration camps in *Time* magazine, wrote an article intended to awaken the conscience of his fellow Germans.

Published in the *Hessische Post* on 12 May 1945 under the title 'Die Konzentrationslager' and in the *Bayerische Landeszeitung* of 18 May 1945 as 'Thomas

Mann über die deutsche Schuld' ('Thomas Mann on German guilt'), it exhorted its 'German readers' to acknowledge that the atrocities revealed in the camps, unique in their scale and horror, were not the work of a small group of criminals, but that a large number of Germans had been involved in them. Everything and everyone German, Mann maintained, was affected by the revelations; the entire German people had been tainted by the crimes of National Socialism, which had been committed in its name; the atrocities were the shame of every German. Mann was painfully aware of the lack of remorse among the German people, their failure to accept responsibility for their part in Hitler's accession to power and his subsequent appalling abuse of that power.

But the responses that Mann's article elicited from his fellow writers showed notably little contrition, shame or awareness of the suffering inflicted on the victims of Nazism. On 4 August 1945, the *Hessische Post* published an open letter to Mann from Walter von Molo, which also appeared in the *Münchener Zeitung* of 13 August. Molo, now forgotten, was a bestselling author whose novels glorifying Germany's 'great men' had failed to win him the favour of the Nazis. So he responded to Mann in the pose of a fellow victim of Nazism, a fellow German untainted by any association with its crimes.

Molo issued a formal invitation to Mann to return to Germany, but not in a spirit of remorse and self-criticism. Instead, he appealed for sympathy, even pity for ordinary Germans: now that he stood on the side of the victors, Mann could surely spare some compassion for the losers who had survived the 'twelve terrible years that have been inflicted on us', for those millions of Germans who had been unlucky enough to be unable to leave a Germany that had become 'one huge concentration camp', where there were only jailors and inmates. One is left

## Thomas Mann cont. from p1

dumbfounded by the grotesque self-pity emanating from these words and their wilful blindness to the sufferings of others. The description of Germany as a giant concentration camp conveyed the wholly false impression that Germans were victims of the SS state in the same way as Jews and other enemies of the regime.

It was little surprise that this exercise in hypocrisy and self-exculpation provoked a damning response from Thomas Mann, first published in the New York-based refugee magazine *Aufbau* on 28 September 1945. Incensed by Molo's attempt to equate the sufferings of Germans with those of their victims and to make out that those who had been forced into exile had had it better than the 'inner emigrants' in Germany, he flatly rejected Molo's invitation to return to Germany and issued a root-and-branch condemnation of everything that had been published in Germany under the Nazis. Far from seeing the literature of 'inner emigration' as a literature of anti-fascist resistance, he declared that 'in my eyes books that could be printed at all from 1933 to 1945 in Germany are less than worthless and not fit to be handled. There is a stench of blood and shame to them. They should all be pulped.'

Mann's dismissal of all literature that had appeared in the Nazi years was arguably too sweeping – it would have included those of his own works that were published in Germany before his final break with the Nazi regime in 1936. Its wider significance lay in the fact that by extension it could be read as condemning everything done in Germany under the auspices of the Nazis, thereby inculcating very large numbers of Germans. Mann was not an advocate of the doctrine of collective guilt, rapidly discredited in the post-war years, but rather of collective shame: he hoped that the revelations from the camps would arouse a sense of moral shame among the German

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population, leading to contrition and the acknowledgment of a due degree of responsibility.

But the actual reaction was very different. While Mann was working on his reply to Molo, an article by Frank Thiess entitled 'Innere Emigration' appeared in the *Münchener Zeitung* of 18 August 1945. Thiess went much further than Molo in discrediting the 'emigrant' writers – he never referred to them as exiles, let alone refugees or 'Vertriebene' (expellees) – and in claiming the moral high ground for those who had stayed in Germany. In a notorious phrase, he claimed to have justified his decision not to emigrate with the argument that if he 'succeeded in surviving' the Nazi years alive, he 'would have emerged from them richer in knowledge and experience than if I had watched the German tragedy from the box seats and stalls of foreign lands' ('aus den Logen und Parterreplätzen des Auslands').

The charge that the exiles had enjoyed an easy life compared to the sufferings of those who had stayed in Germany was a contemptible distortion of the facts, made possible only by the implication that the privileged life Thomas Mann had lived in

Pacific Palisades, California, was typical of exile life in general. Thiess remained fixated on the hardships he had endured, citing hunger and air raids, but never mentioning the Jews and never sparing a word for the threat of persecution, dispossession, incarceration, deportation and death that had motivated his former fellow countrymen to flee abroad.

Thiess claimed that the true patriots were those who had stayed behind and had not abandoned 'our sick mother Germany'. This misrepresented the refugees from Nazism as a group who had freely chosen to leave Germany for an easy life abroad, thus avoiding the trials and tribulations visited upon those Germans who had remained. Thiess never addressed the question of the responsibility of the Germans themselves for those trials and tribulations, nor that of their guilt towards their 'non-Aryan' fellow countrymen. And after 1945, Jews from Germany continued for many years to be seen as outsiders to German society, while those exiles who chose to return were systematically marginalised, their sufferings trivialised and their claims to moral restitution dismissed.

**Anthony Grenville**

## Running with the Torch



AJR member Hanneke Dye ran with the Olympic Torch in Harrogate on 19 June. Part of her nomination was 'Hanneke was born in hiding in Nazi-occupied Holland.'

## Greta Burkill: A uniquely kind and good listener

Any German-Jewish refugee who happened to start a new life in Britain was more than fortunate to be able to do so in Cambridge. Greta Burkill, German by birth, married to a British mathematician and a young mother with three children and a virtual menagerie of animals in her garden, opened her home to us all – men and women allowed entry into this country only as domestic servants, gardeners or chauffeurs – as well as to a large number of children and teenagers.

Greta soon realised that most of the latter came from families who had high hopes for their children, had sent them to grammar schools in their home town, or had given them a chance to become musicians, artists, doctors or lawyers. She was determined that these children and young people should get the best education in Britain at a time when the school-leaving age for most was 14 or 15. She knew everyone in the academic world, she knew staff at a teacher training college, she had access to two of the best public schools, and she worked tirelessly to place her young charges where they could continue their education. There will be many who know that without her help this would not have been possible.

But I want to remember her as the uniquely kind and good listener who had time for us all. The front door to the house in Chaucer Road was never locked – we just entered and heard her high-pitched voice from the kitchen or the nursery or the garden: 'Come in, I'll be with you in a minute.' Then she was there, followed by a dog or two, with or without apron, chatting away to make us feel at ease, cups of

tea, home-made cakes or biscuits, and then *full* attention to whatever we had come to say.

I was one of those teenage girls. When I told her I wasn't happy with my foster parents she found a new family for me. When I pleaded I didn't want to go to school but wanted to try to earn my living as soon as possible, she had me accepted at a teacher training college (although I was too young, didn't have the required school certificate and, at first, knew no English). She comforted young women who were unhappy slaves in households. She took up their causes; she never even thought of herself. It was said that her husband, a brilliant academician, had forbidden the word 'refugee' to be mentioned in the privacy of their bedroom – I'm not sure whether she was able to keep to that!

Many years later, when her husband had retired and the couple were living in the Retirement Home of Peterhouse, I had a chance to visit her. She hadn't changed a bit and insisted on reeling off a long list of scientists, researchers, doctors etc who had passed through her hands in those early years. She was so proud of them. And a few years ago, when I happened to be at the Imperial War Museum for the Holocaust Exhibition, something told me to pick up a telephone receiver attached to the wall – there was her voice, so charming and warm, with all those memories of 1939-41, talking about her work and that of her colleagues in the Cambridge Refugees Committee. I won't forget her. Nor will so many others who had the good luck to come under her care.

**Susanne Medas (née Bernstein)**  
See letter by Susanne Medas on page 6 (Ed.).



Greta Burkill in 1984, the year she died

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## Seventy years on: The lost community of Polish Jews is remembered

Throughout mainland Europe, the summer of 1942 was scorching hot. The German army was fully stretched. In spite of this, in what has been termed 'the fateful months of the summer of 1942', the Nazis put into effect the plan for the 'Final Solution'.

The Nazis created, specifically as extermination factories, four new camps: Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec and Treblinka. In addition to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Europe already contained a web of concentration camps. Croatia alone housed six of these. As ghettos and villages were cleared, the camps were effectively holding places as inmates waited their turn for the train ride to eternity.

In Paris, a timely warning by a sympathetic policeman saved my mother, my sister and me from the infamous rounding up known as 'la rafle'. Here 13,000 Jews, many of them women and children of Polish origin, spent several days in a velodrome in stifling heat without facilities before being sent to the camp at Gurs and then onwards to the death camps. As I was a two-year-old, it is unlikely I would have survived even the long weekend without water. We were smuggled into Vichy, then still ostensibly not under Nazi command. For the majority of Jews trapped in Europe, there was nowhere to run.

In the Treblinka death camp, over 800,000 Jews, mainly from Warsaw and the Bialystok region, were murdered in less than a year. Conditions in the Warsaw Ghetto were so desperate that medics euthanised infants to spare them a long drawn-out death from starvation.

For my paternal family in Tarnow, these months of 1942 witnessed the mass murder of almost all the town's Jews. In 1939 Tarnow had a population of 56,000, of whom about 25,000 were Jews. A book by Adam Bartosz, the historian and Director of the Regional Museum, states: 'A significant part of them constituted the intellectual and cultural elite of Tarnow; they were lawyers, physicians, musicians, teachers, and industrialists ... The majority, however, were among the poor.' Soon after the start of the German occupation,

they, together with approximately another 16,000 Jews, herded together from surrounding villages, were forced into ghettos. Notices posted warned Poles of certain death for themselves and their families if they hid or in any way helped a Jew. On 11 June 1942, the mass murders started. Jews were murdered in the town square, 3,000 shot in the cemetery. In the nearby woods of Zbylitowska Gora, 7,000, mainly the elderly and the young, were shot and buried in mass graves. A further 10,000 were sent by train to the death

of the departed, *El Moleh Rachamim*, and Dr Tadeusz Bukowski, the priest from Tarnow Cathedral and Director of the Diocesan Museum, recited prayers in Polish. Together with another survivor, I took part in laying flowers in honour of our families murdered there. A local elderly Pole gave witness to how, as a young boy playing with his friends in the woods, he had witnessed the event when 800 children had been marched from the local Jewish orphanage and shot in the woods. This area is now enclosed and a memorial stone dedicated to these unnamed children.

On the Sunday, we travelled with a group organised by Jonathan Webber to the village of Brzostek. Professor Webber, a social anthropologist, first travelled many years ago to this town, from which his grandfather had emigrated at the turn of the last century. The only apparent evidence that Jews had once lived there was a strip of uncultivated land at the edge of a field

which locals identified as the ancient Jewish cemetery. Except for the fact that the topography differed from the rest of the cultivated field, there was no evidence of its being a cemetery. It was not walled off; no tombstones remained. Determined to reclaim and re-dedicate this as Jewish sacred ground, Webber located an old map. He contacted another descendant of Brzostek and together they financed the work. Determined that the local community should feel connected with this project, he hired local contractors. The area was not to be walled in but enclosed with railings. When the contractor finished the work, he reported to Jonathan that several gravestones had reappeared over night. In all, 55 gravestones of the estimated 450 Jews buried in this cemetery were returned by the local villagers.

On this summer's day in 2012, we said prayers for the Jews buried in the cemetery as well for the 500 Jews of Brzostek who are not buried there but who were murdered by the Nazis. We were accompanied by two elderly survivors of the massacre in Brzostek. Now in their 80s, they recounted their experiences on



Ceremony at Zbylitowska Gora: (from left) Adam Bartosz, Dr Tadeusz Bukowski, Professor Jonathan Webber

camp of Belzec, the first to use stationary gas chambers. It is currently estimated that about 450,000 Jews from that region of Poland died in Belzec. By December 1942 Belzec had served its purpose: there were no Jews in that part of German-occupied Poland left to gas. The camp was dismantled, every trace of its purpose eliminated. Only one person survived this camp to give witness to the terrible events which happened there.

For two decades and more Adam Bartosz has worked tirelessly not only to commemorate the terrible fate of this region's Jews but to portray the lives they lived and their involvement with and contribution to their local communities. This June my husband and I joined the commemorations organised each year by Bartosz. As every year, they commenced in the woods. Here, surrounded by local cadets, schoolchildren and adults, as well as journalists and reporters, Bartosz spoke of the terrible events which took place here exactly 70 years ago. Professor Jonathan Webber, an orthodox Jew living in Poland though originally from London, sang the traditional prayer for the soul

the terrible day in August 1942 when the Nazis rounded up the Jews in the square and humiliated them before shooting them. The few who survived were hidden by neighbours.

We then travelled to the Catholic cemetery, where the son and daughter of Rivka Reiss dedicated a memorial stone to Maria Jalowiec, their mother's neighbour who hid Rivka and another Jewish girl for two years right under the noses of the Germans camped on their farm. Maria's grandson, Tadeusz, now an elderly man, bore witness to how, as an eight-year-old boy, he smuggled food into the barn for the two girls. His grandmother told him the food was for the cows, but he understood the reason for the secrecy and kept it. When the Germans confiscated their house, Maria smuggled the girls out to a local priest who she knew was hiding Jews. He took them in, saying he might as well be shot for 16 Jews as the 14 already hidden. These Poles deserve to be commemorated as Righteous among the Nations.

After this we travelled to a local school, where a magnificent lunch was put on for us and we were welcomed by local dignitaries. Students from the creative arts department put on an entertainment based on their own work created in memory of the Jewish people who had lived and died in the area. We were greeted with Hebrew words and poems and songs about vanished neighbours and a need for tolerance. Professor Webber has initiated an annual prize for the work of the most creative student and last year's winner put on a powerpoint presentation of his travels to Greece paid for by the prize. This year five students were awarded scholarships, financed by an elderly survivor who had been hidden by a local farmer.

Then, the most gruelling event of the day: in temperatures nearing 40 degrees Centigrade, we climbed up into the Podzamcze forest outside the town of Kolaczyce. On another sweltering day on 12 August 1942, 260 Jewish men, women and children were brought to this lonely place from Brzostek, Kolaczyce and the nearby villages to be brutally murdered and then buried here in a mass grave. Then, as in forests all over Poland, the evidence was covered over. An unknown person at an unknown time had placed a stone there marking the site of this mass grave. Now, in co-operation with the Gmina (district) of Kolaczyce, a new memorial has been created by the Brzostek Jewish Heritage Project funded by Professor Webber and other descendants of the Jews of this area. It retains the old memorial stone but now covers the full extent of the mass grave. Although a rough path into the forest had been prepared, in the heat of the afternoon the climb into the forest almost defeated many of us. It was the need to pay homage to those so cruelly murdered

there that drove us on.

It would be naive to ignore Poland's record of anti-Semitism. Stories of pogroms and the blood libel propagated by Catholic priests cannot just be swept away. But the history of the Jews and their Catholic neighbours is a complex one, and not always negative. In Tarnow, documentation dating back to 1667, issued by the owner of Tarnow at that time, reiterates guarantees of freedom given to the Jews by previous owners dating back to 1582 and 1637. In 1906-11, Dr Elijah Goldhammer, a Jewish attorney, was the vice-mayor and a street named after him remains. It is important to note that of all the names of the 'Righteous among the Nations' on the wall of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the names of Poles who sheltered Jews are more numerous than those of any other country. In recent times, Pope John Paul II, who, as a young priest, is on record as having helped the Jews, did much to change the Church's teachings, which historically had poisoned relations between the two religions' communities. The work of inter-faith educators like Bartosz and Webber has done much to erode stereotype notions, which perpetuate fear, which in turn creates hatred.

Throughout these commemorations, we walked openly as a group of Jews. Nowhere did we encounter any evidence of hostility. In every place we were welcomed by the local mayor and local people walked with us. In Tarnow, with

only a handful of Jewish visitors, it was local people who filled the seats at a play based on the testimony of the last commander of the Jewish uprising in Warsaw. At a concert in front of the *bimah*, the only relic remaining in the town of its many synagogues, again there was a full house of locals who clapped hands enthusiastically in time with the Yiddish music. I sat next to a tiny lady beautifully dressed in Roma costume, another of Tarnow's population decimated by the Nazis.

In the woods of Zbylitowska Gora, a bishop stood alongside an orthodox Jew. In the Jewish and Catholic cemeteries of Brzostek and the forest of Podzamcze the Dean of the Parish, Fr Dr Jan Cebulak, and the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Rabbi Michael Schudrich, stood side by side. Jews recited their prayers, Catholics theirs. In our tradition we placed stones in remembrance of the dead, Catholics placed flowers. Two communities united in remembrance of the horrific fate of the Jews of that area.

Every nation has its thugs and hooligans who express their self-hatred in acts of hatred against an often unknown and sometimes fictitious enemy. Sadly, anti-Semitic graffiti and desecration of graves occur even here in England. But I can only hope that, thanks to the work of Bartosz and Webber and people like them, the Jews of Tarnow, Brzostek and Kolaczyce will lie undisturbed in their graves.

Joan Salter

## In memory of Yugoslav victims of the Holocaust

Five members of the Child Survivors' Association of Great Britain-AJR (CSA-AJR), including one born in Croatia, attended the annual conference of the European Association of Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust, hosted this year by the Jewish community in Zagreb on 1-3 June.

On the Sunday we joined over 200 members from Jewish communities of the former Yugoslavia for a commemoration service which is held each year on the first Sunday in June at the cemetery in Dakovo. During the occupation there were six concentration camps in Croatia, including one in Dakovo. Housed in a derelict mill near the railway tracks, it was a camp for women and children, the bulk transported from the Sephardi community in Sarajevo, which dated back to the sixteenth century after the expulsions from Spain. Dakovo was run by the Ustase, Croatian fascists, and many of the women and children died under the cruellest conditions. In the six months the camp was in operation, nearly 600 women and children, a fifth of those interned, lost their lives there. Uniquely, the bodies were not disposed of anonymously but buried individually in the local Jewish cemetery. The gravedigger,

Stjepan Kolb, protested against the ruling that the corpses be buried without clothes, and ensured that they were buried in a respectful way. He kept meticulous records as to who was buried where. Looking down on the rows of plaques with the names, ages and places of birth in the section where the infants are buried, it was impossible not to imagine the terrible suffering they had endured.

In total, just under 30,000 Croatian and 14,000 Bosnian Jews were murdered. Of the 5,000 survivors of these communities, the majority had escaped into the Italian Zone by the Dalmatian coast or over the mountains into Italy.

As we recited Kaddish in memory of the Yugoslav-Jewish victims, my thoughts went back to the summer of 1942 and the kindness of the unknown policeman who saved me from a similar fate during the 'round-up' in Paris. It is estimated that 1,500,000 children died during the Holocaust. We, the handful who survived as children under occupation, owe it to those who did not to ensure they are not forgotten.

Joan Salter  
CSA-AJR



# Letters to the Editor

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

## INTEGRATING INTO A NEW WORLD: THE REFUGEE COMMITTEES

Sir – Thinking back to my own arrival in this country via the Kindertransport in 1939, I realise how important it must have been for many of us, including the older people who reached this country on domestic permits, to be taken under the wing of their local Refugee Committees – or, in some cases, Bloomsbury House, the head office of the Jewish Refugees Committee until its closure some years after the war.

I was a member of staff at Bloomsbury House as I had no other means of income. I worked under a Miss Ney in the Children's Section and also under Stella Epstein, who was a lovely, warm-hearted refugee from Austria, much older than myself. I was 23 years old when I started there in 1947.

Whenever I met fellow refugees I would ask them: How did you get to Britain? How old were you at the time? Who was responsible for you? The answers were at first confusing. Some of us came before the war, many after the war and – amazingly – some even during the war. It may be a generalisation, but the younger children – say up to 11 years old and safely living with foster parents or relatives – would not even have known of the existence of a Refugee Committee and its function. This is understandable.

But mention Bloomsbury House and memories come flooding back! The youngsters who went to live in hostels would have known of a member of the local committee who could make decisions regarding pocket money, further education or possible vocations, where to obtain clothing when they had outgrown the wardrobe provided by their parents in the one suitcase or rucksack, and much more.

No doubt the Regional Refugee Committees, often staffed by volunteers, did wonderful work in helping us to become integrated into our new world. Let us celebrate their achievement by giving them credit!

I would like to invite anyone whose memory is still good to write to this journal of their experiences – good, bad or indifferent – so that we can compare notes over this very long distance of time.

*Susanne Medas, London W10*

## 'WE REMEMBER'

Sir – First, I would like to thank you for your monthly magazine, which I always read with great interest.

In the last month's copy I read an article about the book 'We Remember', written by children of the Holocaust who miraculously survived. I decided to order the book from Amazon and just received it today and look forward to reading it.

My late parents were refugees. My mother actually came over on one of the Kindertransports, so it is a subject close to my heart. I had not heard of this book before, so it is actually through your organisation that I became aware of it and thus was able to buy it. Thanks again.

*(Mrs) Hannah Rabinowitz, Gateshead*

## HISTORY OF THE CBF

Sir – George Vulcan, in his interesting – as always – review in your July issue of *Heroes of the Holocaust: Ordinary Britons Who Risked Their Lives to Make a Difference*, questions whether the story of the CBF (Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief) has been written. It has: *Men of Vision* by the late Dr Amy Zahl Gottlieb, was published in 1998 (Weidenfeld & Nicolson) after many years of extensive research.

*Joan Salter, London N10*

## 'LACKING FLEXIBILITY AND TOLERANCE'

Sir – I really do worry about Peter Phillips. He seems to see everything in terms of black-and-white in a rather facile way, unable to understand that, even if you are fully assimilated into British society, you can still regard the country of your birth as your Heimat – a lost Heimat maybe, but still a Heimat.

Like Peter Phillips, I speak English without an accent, having come here at the age of nine. I was, of course, educated here, served in the British army and spent most of my professional life in the British public service. This does not stop me from acknowledging my Berlin origins, feeling comfortable with that knowledge and experiencing every visit to Berlin as a homecoming. By being so didactic and lacking in flexibility and tolerance, Peter Phillips is missing out on a valuable

experience with which to enrich his life.

*Eric Bourne, Milldale, Alstonefield, Derbyshire*

## THERESIENSTADT 'SHOWCASE'

Sir – In connection with Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's recent 'Letter from Israel' about Theresienstadt, a great-aunt of mine, a woman in her eighties whom we visited from time to time at the Jewish old age home in Nuremberg, was sent there along with all the other inmates. My mother said that that in itself summed up the Nazi regime's bestiality: couldn't they have waited for those old people to die naturally – who has ever heard of people from a home for the elderly being sent to a concentration camp?

I well remember my great-aunt. When I saw her last, in the early thirties, she was complaining of dizziness. She had to share her room with another lady who owned a cat, which annoyed her and caused friction between them. Thinking of what happened to her and the others is mind-boggling. She obviously did not survive the camp.

Then there was my father's stepmother from Vienna who had owned a publishing office there. She had been a very active elderly lady, earning her living diligently. She was among those who took a risk by availing herself of an opportunity to be sent to a rehabilitation place in Switzerland. Several of the others in the camp were too scared to accept the offer, fearing they might be sent 'east', i.e. to an extermination camp. Those who accepted were sent to Engelberg, where my step-grandmother wrote her memoirs before passing away.

Another survivor I knew was a lady who moved into a flat opposite ours in London at the end of the war. All survivors of Theresienstadt spoke of the hunger and constant fear they had to endure, yet it was said to be the best of all the camps, a sort of showcase.

*(Mrs) Margarete Stern, London NW3*

## ANGESCHLOSSEN

Sir – One morning in March 1938 we woke peacefully, only to find the street outside packed with field guns and armoured cars, my school opposite (Gymnasium WIEN XIII) taken over by the Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler with fixed bayonets. If that was not occupation, Mr Tait (Letters, July)...?

*Hans Eirew, Manchester*

## DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF WEISSENSEE CEMETERY

Sir – Recently I took my partner on her first visit to Berlin and took the opportunity to visit the graves of my grandparents, who are buried in the Weissensee Cemetery.

Opened in 1880, Weissensee is not only the most extensive inner-city burial ground in Berlin today, but also the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe in terms of area.

However, we were both shocked at the state of the cemetery. It is severely overgrown and there appears to be no one who cares or spends money to improve the condition of the graves. In 1926 there were 200 staff employed to look after the extensive garden section.

The cemetery is still used to this day. Would it be possible to start a fund, to which I am quite willing to contribute, so that something is done about this deplorable situation? The few non-Jewish workers there must have a rather poor impression when they observe how we neglect our previous loved ones!

*Gordon G. Spencer, Barnet, Herts*

#### DIFFERENT OPINIONS

Sir – I refer to the letter from Rose Marie Whalley in your last publication and was very surprised to read that she cancelled her subscription to your excellent magazine. It just makes me wonder if she would also cancel newspapers, magazines etc because they were either so violently anti-Israel or so anti-Semitic or why she started reading a magazine which had a different opinion from her. Perhaps she would like to subscribe to the Iran Government so that they can wipe Israel off the earth.

She rightly has her opinion and I have mine, especially as I lived among the Arabs for a considerable time.

In spite of all the controversies and perhaps because of them, I do love your publication and am delighted to pay my contribution whenever it is due.

*Kitty Schafer, Toronto, Canada*

#### NEW MEMBERS FOR AJR?

Sir – Thanks to the 'Arab Spring', which was naively welcomed and helped by the West, any Jews left in these Middle Eastern countries should flee for their lives. Gratitude to the liberal West was shown by fighters in Benghazi, the birthplace of the 'Libyan Spring', who attempted to assassinate the English consul, killing two of his bodyguards recently. Equally, the rebels' 'humanity' was proved by the bandaged fingers of Saif Gaddafi, held by a group in Zintan, who is unlikely to have nails under the dressings.

The Muslim Brotherhood, in Egypt and in several other countries, has gained power under different names. Their ultimate aim is *sharia* everywhere and a Muslim world order. Some of the toppled regimes were rather distasteful, but on balance preferable to the emerging ones. Hopefully the internal squabbles will delay the radicalisation of the Middle East.

*Janos Fisher, Bushey Heath*

#### ALFRED KERR CONNECTION

Sir – Mention of Alfred Kerr by Anthony Grenville in your July issue ('The case of Gerhart Hauptmann') reminds me that Kerr's daughter Judith was appointed OBE in the June 2012 Honours List for services

to children's literature and Holocaust education. Her father was associated with my erstwhile primary school in Berlin, 13 Volksschule, renamed in his honour Alfred Kerr Grundschule.

From 1932 to 1936 there were three Jewish boys in the same class. Apart from myself, there was Felix Frankfurter, now called Franks and an occasional contributor to the Journal who lives in London, and Walter Bloch, now living in Encino, Los Angeles. We three survived and are in regular contact, including visiting each other. I have visited the school twice and on one occasion gave a talk to assembled children and teachers.

*Rudi Leavor, Bradford*

#### 'STAMP COLLECTING FOR GROWN-UPS'

Sir – Re Fred Jonas's letter (July), Sir Rowland Hill initiated the one penny postage as part of postal reform in the United Kingdom in 1839-40. In May 1840 the first-ever postage stamp appeared – the famous Penny Black. Sir Rowland lived in Hampstead, his stay in the area marked by a plaque on the site of the Royal Free Hospital and a street leading to the Hospital named after him.

*Bernd Koschland, London NW4*

#### SOUP PLATES IN NORWICH

Sir – Five stoneware soup plates were recently left at the door of the Norwich Congregation Synagogue. They are embellished with a Star of David and the word 'fleishig' (meat) below the star. So far, it is assumed that they belonged to a Norwich Jewish boarding school during the war. Can anybody throw light on the provenance of the soup plates? Was there a Jewish boarding school? If so, where? Any clue gratefully received.

*Frank Bright,  
Martlesham Heath, Ipswich*

#### 'TIRED OF LONDON, TIRED OF LIFE'

Sir – Midsummer 2012. At last a day of sunshine is forecast instead of the constant rain, causing floods everywhere. At last the cold wind has turned into a light breeze. A day out in London is on the cards.

We're off to see some art at the Courtauld Institute, where many wonderful Impressionist painters are on view: Van Gogh, Manet, Gauguin, Renoir and more. A superb collection and our pleasure is compounded when we find drawings by Mantegna and Matisse on view as well. Two hours pass by in great bliss and joy.

Then a short break for refreshments in the café before going out into the sunshine to a seat on the terrace above the busy and bustling Embankment. From here one can see the river sparkling in the sunshine, the many boats travelling up and down filled with happy passengers and the dome of St Paul's in the distance.

The road below is teeming with people, holidaymakers from all over the world enjoying a pleasant stroll by the side of

## HOWICK HALL GARDENS



We are delighted to invite you to a day out at the beautiful Howick Hall Gardens – home of Earl Grey, after whom the famous tea is named

on 5 August 2012  
£15 pp including entrance fee

Refreshments (not included)  
available in Earl Grey Tea Room

For further details, please contact  
Agnes Isaacs, AJR Scotland &  
Newcastle Groups Co-ordinator,  
on 0755 1968 593

the Thames. Many Barclays bicycles go by – obviously a tremendous hit with many people both young and old.

How true Dr Johnson's adage that 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life'!

*(Mrs) Meta Roseneil,  
Buckhurst Hill, Essex*

#### THE AJR'S 'MERCURY SULPHIDE' GROUP

Sir – Michael Spiro, Professor of Chemistry at Imperial College London, who recently spoke to our St John's Wood Group, asked me to send him programmes of all the groups. On seeing the programme for HGS (Hampstead Garden Suburb), he thought it rather odd that there should be an AJR group named after Mercury sulphide – HgS!

*Hazel Beiny,  
AJR Southern Region Outreach Co-ordinator*

## OUTING TO REGENTS PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE

### RAGTIME THE MUSICAL

Wednesday 15 August 2012  
at 2.15 pm (finishes 5.00 pm)



book by Terrence McNally  
music by Stephen Flaherty  
lyrics by Lynn Ahrens  
based on the novel Ragtime  
by E. L. Doctorow

Tragic, poignant and ultimately triumphant, Ragtime is a modern classic. Set at the turn of the 20th century, this powerful musical unites three families separated by race and destiny. The timeless contradictions of wealth and poverty, freedom and prejudice, hope and despair, make this a theatre experience not to be missed.

If, due to bad weather, the performance cannot be completed, tickets will be exchanged for an alternative performance. If you are unable to make the alternative date arranged by the AJR, there is no time limit on exchanging your tickets so long as you keep your original tickets. No refunds will be given.

£18.00 per person

For further details, please contact  
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
or at [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

# ART NOTES

Gloria Tessler

The Royal Academy's (RA) Summer Exhibition (to 12 August 2012), now entering its 244th year, is all about surprise. Inevitably, the quality is uneven as nearly 1,500 exhibits vie for attention and are sometimes so densely hung that they morph into a sea of colour and shapes. RA members' works hang beside those of unknown artists – the egalitarian spirit has thankfully



Kenny Hunter *Monument to a Mouse* Courtesy of the artist © Studio Kenny Hunter

returned to the Royal Academy after a few years of pandering to celebrities.

The show opens in vibrant colours in the Wohl Central Hall – a homage to Matisse's *The Red Studio*. Here William Bowyer's *Hammersmith Bridge* comes to life, while Eileen Cooper's *Duet* shows a girl with flying hair giving her foot to her surprised boyfriend. One or two works offer Olympic themes.

There are sadly few portraits but Nadia Hebson's haunting painting of a dark-haired girl recalls Lucian Freud and John Wragg's witty character poised on a chair against an orange and fuschia background, *Waiting to Know*, is titillating.

The exhibition does tongue-in-cheek very well, even if the joke's on us. Few can define art these days and real talent may pass unnoticed if it isn't crazy enough. Take Tracy Emin's absurd *Upset* scrawled on an ugly board and going for a cool £165,000! As she is now a professor, Emin's engraving of a cute bird gets celebrity status, attracting a frieze of red dots at a price of £275 each. Even though most punters could have drawn it too.

Some ideas are graphic, others are wild. Olu Shobowale has made a chair out of chicken bones. Michael Coombs's *Dyslexia* is a jumble of books. There are painted clothes pegs by Annie Morris and numbered piano keys by Stephen Farthing. Lucy Glendinning's *Feather Child* is cringe-making but imaginative. David Mach's *Spike* is a leopard made from coat-hangers and his Michaelangelo-style *David* piece from unlit matchstick heads.

C. J. Lim's sculpture has turned London into a Victorian sponge cake. The London experience is further borne out in Adam Dant's lithograph of the city's trendy Hoxton Square. But crossing the pond, Jock McFadyen's *Buffalo Grill* has a colourful simplicity. The eponymous American eating-house is painted red with white windows and appears to be drowning in an apple green sea and sky, dreamily pleasing to the eye. Mick Moon's mysterious *Redwoods*, tall sparse trees with the moon reflected in the water, also has a sense of peace and tranquillity. Bernard Dunstan's *Rehearsal* gives a fluid sense of an orchestra, emphasising the harpist. The muted colours seem busy with sound.

Bill Jacklin's *Battery Park Under the Tree* has a colourful, smudgy feel, recalling Seurat's *Bathers at Asnières*. And James Fisher's *Migraine Weather* conveys the blinding yellow of a headache.

Anselm Kiefer's *Samson* has political edge with a sign indicating Gaza below a thickly impasto mountainous region. The work is bisected by a long rifle marked 'Samson'. More optimistic is Alaleh Alamir's upward tapering cypress tree.

Often the best works are the exquisite miniatures in the Small Weston Room. Sadly, this year they are replaced by a film of a cello making hypnotic sounds.

## REVIEWS

### From living memory to cultural memory

STIMMEN DER FLUCHT.  
ÖSTERREICHISCHE EMIGRATION NACH  
GROßBRITANNIEN AB 1938  
(Refugee Voices: Austrian Emigration  
to Great Britain from 1938)  
by Anthony Grenville

Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2011, hardback  
264 pp., €24.90,  
ISBN 978-3-7076-0395-8

Volumes concerned with the emigration of individuals due to the so-called 'seizure of power' by National Socialists and its consequences, including the Anschluss, have not been uncommon over the past few years. In *Stimmen der Flucht*, however, we have something slightly different, namely an account of the lives of a whole group – that of the Austrian Jews who left for Britain in the 1930s and settled here. Official records are incomplete, but it is estimated that over 30,000 came, which, according to no less an authority than the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Vienna, made Britain, along with the USA, the most important country of refuge for Jews who fled Austria. To put it differently, of the 120,000 Viennese Jews who survived the Holocaust one quarter did so thanks to having been taken in by Great Britain.

The raw material that underpins this fascinating book forms part of *Refugee Voices*, the collection of in-depth interviews conducted by two scholars, Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz, and others, with ex-refugees from Central Europe between 2003 and 2008. Drs Grenville and Lewkowicz need no introduction to readers of this magazine, of course. Dr Grenville has used the 25 'Austrian' interviews in the collection to form the basis of his account, which actually spans a much longer period than the title would suggest, as it starts with the parents – even grandparents – of the interviewees and thus reaches back into the later 19th century, well before the break-up of the Hapsburg Empire. Surprising as it may seem for such a distinct group, their story had not been fully researched in its particularity: only a few separate topics had been addressed. This was largely due to the fact that it is not easy to access, as the post-war sources – even *AJR Information* – mostly do not differentiate between Austrians and Germans.

The scrupulous tracing of the backgrounds of the group and their lives in Vienna occupies roughly the first third of the volume and is told through their recollections, their voices – *Stimmen* – having pride of place. All bar one were

born in the Austrian capital between 1912 and 1937 and together they represent a cross-section of that society. The account is thus no less than a social history of Vienna, which by the close of the previous century had become one of the great European Jewish metropolises. Grenville then goes on to chronicle their uprooting, flight and settlement in Britain, where they developed a particular mix of Continental (Central European) and British culture and greatly enriched life in what came to be their adopted land. Their influence in a wide range of fields is, thankfully, now being recognised. Their number is, however, fast diminishing; hence the direct link is being broken to the extraordinary set of circumstances through which they lived in the country of their birth and that forced them into flight. In a word, living memory is being replaced by cultural memory and their story is moving into the realm of history. So it is all the more precious to have a chronicle of their lives and identities filtered through their own experience, as we do in this book.

This is a scholarly account, but as it is also intended for the general reader it does not include any methodological discussion. It is highly readable. It is to be hoped that the original English version of the manuscript will find a publisher so that this crucial contribution to the history of immigrants into twentieth-century Britain can be made easily accessible to non-German speakers, which of course includes many of the descendants of the interviewees. Since interest in life histories has grown so much over the past decades, it would also be welcomed by a wider public.

Marian Malet

## Games of survival

**WHEN THE DANUBE RAN RED**  
by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth

Syracuse University Press, 2010,  
hardcover 184 pp., \$17.95,  
ISBN 9780815609803

Many child survivors of the Holocaust owed their lives to games that enabled them to adjust to dangerous situations – sometimes even to control them – and to relieve tension in relative safety.

In a memoir reminiscent of Anne Frank's diary, Professor Zsuzsanna Ozsváth of the University of Texas describes the role played by games in her own childhood victory over death during the Holocaust in Hungary that ended in the 1944-5 Soviet siege of Budapest. The book is a profoundly moving work of literary and academic merit.

Her experience of the life-preserving games of Jewish children is very close to my own. Other accounts are turning up elsewhere.

She was then devotedly preparing

for the promise of a career as a concert pianist. Her solitary game at the height of the battle of playing the piano in the absence of an instrument probably saved her life.

The author is a distinguished Holocaust scholar. The title of her book refers to a scene she witnessed as a child, enacted nightly along the banks of the River Danube throughout the siege when the Hungarian Nazis murdered thousands of Jewish civilians.

The Jews crammed into the vermin-infested ghetto tenements of Budapest escaped deportation to Auschwitz. Instead, they faced the constant threat of murder and worse – there was worse – meted out by the uniformed thugs of the Hungarian Arrow Cross, the role models of the neo-Nazi rabble on the rise today in parts of Europe.

The imagination of the ghetto children intensified as they played in an atmosphere approaching the state of collective hysteria endured by their families. They acted out well-known dramas or invented new ones, reflecting the cultural pursuits of their community.

'Good morning, Ophelia,' the ghetto children no longer allowed to attend school greeted each other in the morning, or 'Good morning, Tristan,' or 'Good morning, Rigoletto.' And the person thus addressed would meet the challenge by stepping into the chosen theatrical role .... They played feverishly together throughout the day and rehearsed new scenes alone in their minds late into the night.

Some children managed to save lives through play by defusing potentially lethal situations, adds George Eisen of Nazareth College of Rochester, New York. His study *Children and Play in the Holocaust: Games Among the Shadows* (Massachusetts University Press, 1988) cites instances of children's games staged to divert the attention of guards from activities punishable by death, such as smuggling food or participating in educational activities.

Professor Eisen, another child survivor of the Hungarian Holocaust, quotes a five-year-old girl engaged in serious conversation with her doll: 'Do not cry, little one! When the Germans come to grab you ... I will not leave you.'

The most poignant record of a survival game I know is in Professor Ozsváth's book. It describes the triumph of a terrified child over a nightmare at the height of the siege when she was confined to a cupboard in an abandoned apartment, exposed to bombing and machine-gun fire. She recalls: 'I decided to practice the piano in my head ... and imagined I was playing Beethoven's F minor sonata, op. 3, from the first measure to the last. Some passages went well, some didn't. While my right hand's fingers were really singing in the second part, my left hand's fingers were too slow playing the triplets

in the fourth part.

I need to practice this more, I thought ... and I thought through each note. Meanwhile, the bombing resumed, and I prayed.'

Thomas Ország-Land

*Thomas Ország-Land is a poet and award-winning foreign correspondent who writes from London and his native Budapest.*

## Music

### Kindertransport 'Singspiel'

**LAST TRAIN TO TOMORROW**  
Bridgewater Hall, Manchester,  
17 June 2012

composed and conducted  
by Carl Davis

directed by David Shirley,  
text by Hiawyn Oram

The Hallé Orchestra and the Hallé Children's Choir performed – so was it a concert? Six young actors on their first professional appearance took part – so was it a play? The German word 'Singspiel' comes to mind.

The distinguished composer and conductor Carl Davis, creator of extensive film and television music, was fascinated with the story of the Kindertransport. When the Hallé Society commissioned him to write a piece featuring a children's choir, he felt inspired to write a serious piece of music with words spoken by actors and sung by children, showing why it had been necessary for children to leave their country and their parents as well as the various stages of the journey and arrival in England.

The world premiere of *Last Train to Tomorrow* filled the second half of the performance, which was preceded by 'Vltava' (its principal theme very similar to 'Hatikva'), from Smetana's patriotic cycle *Ma vlast* (My Country – Czechoslovakia, the origin of many of the 'transported' children), played by the orchestra. There followed the children's choir singing the well-known piece 'Brother, come and dance with me' from Humperdinck's opera *Hansel and Gretel* – also a story of children left to their own devices – and finally Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, brilliantly played by the orchestra and described by the actors.

The main item made a tremendous emotional impact, especially on the 40-plus AJR members from Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool who were in the audience and whom Carl Davis welcomed. For me, the stars were the Hallé Children's Choir. Fresh-faced, immaculately dressed in red T-shirts, perfectly tutored, enjoying every minute, and very, very musical, they sang like angels. Many of them went up to the microphone to sing solos, duos and trios, cool as cucumbers and pitch-perfect. Delightful.

Marc Schatzberger

Reviews continued overleaf

## DVD

**A selfless and heroic man**

**THE STORY OF A FORGOTTEN HERO:  
WILFRID ISRAEL, THE SAVIOR  
FROM BERLIN**

directed by Yonatan Nir

*copies (in English, German or Hebrew)  
£12, including postage, obtainable  
from Ophir Baer at ophirb@amdocs.com  
or from Ruth Barnett at  
ruthelcb@googlemail.com*

I recently encountered the young Israeli filmmaker Yonatan Nir, whose last film, *Dolphin Boy*, was aired on Channel 4 and won many international awards. He gave me a copy of the above DVD. Wilfrid Israel was totally unknown to me, which is extraordinary as he is credited with having provided the inspiration for the Kindertransports. A very wealthy Berlin Jew, he was nonetheless self-effacing and had the misfortune of flying from Lisbon to London in 1943 in an English plane, only to be shot down over the Bay of Biscay. Although the DVD, which is 30 minutes long and inspired by Naomi Shepherd's biography *Wilfrid Israel: German Jewry's Secret Ambassador*, almost certainly gives him more credit than he deserves – there were many other individuals and agencies involved in the creation of the Kindertransports, in Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain – his is certainly an astonishing story that deserves to be more widely known.

Wilfrid Israel had inherited his family's vast department store in Berlin, employing some 2,000 people, including about 700 Jews. He was not by temperament a businessman: he was far more interested in art and in his twenties he made a world tour that included the Far East, during the course of which he acquired hundreds of sculptures and other artefacts. He donated this priceless collection to the Kibbutz Hazorea, on the slopes of Mount Carmel, which he had helped to found in 1936. Whilst the collection was not welcomed by all kibbutzniks at a time when they had more pressing matters on their minds, it was decided to build a museum for the collection, where hundreds of his acquisitions are now gloriously displayed.

Not a great deal of archival material about Wilfrid Israel has survived but, with the aid of photographs, a few documents, eyewitness interviews, and archival material relating to the rise of the Nazis, Yonatan Nir and his colleagues have created a fascinating picture of a man who was driven by his determination to save as many lives as possible. He saw the writing on the wall long before the great majority of German Jews and decided to use his great wealth for the rescue of as many people as possible. For example, he

provided the finance for the creation of a children's settlement in Palestine, helped hundreds of his employees to emigrate (paying them two years' wages!), and not only inspired the Kindertransport movement but supported the operation financially.

He counted Albert Einstein, Martin Buber and Chaim Weitzmann among his friends, and a touching letter written by Einstein, praising Wilfrid Israel's commitment to saving lives, features in the film. Apparently he also tried to alert Neville Chamberlain to the plight of German Jewry. He worked in London as a consultant to Chatham House, formerly known as the Royal Institute for International Affairs, and in 1943 he was sent by the Jewish Agency to Lisbon, where he managed to secure the safe passage of a number of Jewish refugees who were stranded there and who still speak reverently of him. A saviour indeed!

Yonatan Nir is well aware of the fact that the story needs to be retold in the context of what else was happening in Berlin, Amsterdam and London at the time and for this reason he has decided to make this DVD available only to individuals. Nir and his team are now in the early production stages of a full-length documentary about Wilfrid Israel, with the aim of telling his story more extensively. Nonetheless, this short DVD paints a compellingly vivid picture of a selfless and heroic man.

Leslie Baruch Brent

**Biography of a philanthropist**

**SIR SIGMUND STERNBERG:  
THE KNIGHT WITH MANY HATS**  
by Emma Klein

*Valentine Mitchell, 2012, 264 pp.  
hardcover, £25, ISBN 9780853038351*

The name of Sir Sigmund Sternberg is to a large extent associated with the interfaith movement and his diplomatic skills have helped avert some pretty unpleasant disasters between Christian and Jew.

Like many refugees, Sigi, as he is affectionately known, had to tear up his comfortable, middle-class roots in Hungary and escape to Britain as a teenager. He landed on his feet helping his cousin, Solomon Schonfeld, future founder of the Hasmonean and Jewish secondary school movement and whom he asked to help rescue Jewish children from Germany. Sigi knew poverty from his experience as an 'enemy alien' but soon saw an opening in the scrap metal business and from there rose to become an entrepreneur in the metals industry. He discovered, however, that he was not interested in business for business's sake: his true vocation was a career in charity and philanthropy.

In her wide-ranging biography of the

90-year-old philosopher-entrepreneur, Emma Klein has left no stone unturned in her attempt to uncover the man who was drawn to Jewish-Christian relations essentially as a result of the Holocaust. His anguish that religious differences could lead to so much evil led him to play his part in changing the course of Catholic-Jewish relations, following the 1965 *Nostra Aetate*, the papal doctrine which absolved Jews of the sin of killing Christ. In time, he turned his attention to the Muslim world, launching the Three Faiths Forum with the Reverend Marcus Braybrooke and the late Imam, Zaki Badawi.

Sigi was knighted in 1976 for services to industry, made a papal knight by Pope John Paul II in 1985, and in 1998 won the Templeton Prize for 'affirming life's spiritual dimension'.

There is his notable achievement in gaining international recognition for wartime Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who risked his life to save Jews from the Nazis, only to disappear into the Soviet mists. Sigi helped facilitate the Vatican's recognition of the State of Israel and ease the process of reconciliation.

This is one of several excellent chapters in Klein's biography, illuminating the way Sternberg silently works to achieve harmony. Regrettably, she has also had to include so many accolades that are less interesting to the reader than the fascinating insights into his actual character.

But there are several memorable touches. In Klein's vivid portrayal of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Rome's Great Synagogue, aided by Sigi, she has us visualise the two thrones for the Pope and the Chief Rabbi of Rome flanked by 12 cardinals in ermine robes and 12 rabbis in white.

Klein, who has authored another book on the removal of the controversial Carmelite convent from Auschwitz, here provides further details on the attempts by some American Jews to force the nuns out, nearly overturning the process of reconciliation that was beginning to bear fruit between the communities. Sigi's calm diplomacy, we are told, achieved what raw passions and political intervention could not. Interestingly, he reflects to his biographer that 'it would have been better if they had left the nuns there. So much bad blood and so much energy have been wasted.'

Emma Klein's attempt to discover the human being within the philanthropist is best achieved in a chapter on the collapse of his first marriage to Ruth Schiff, a gentle and artistic woman who was perhaps not best suited to this restrained and highly ambitious man. The author writes with great sensitivity of this period in Sigi's life and it is this chapter which, more than any other, delivers real insight into what made Sir Sigmund Sternberg the character he is.

Gloria Tessler

## RETURN TO THE BEAUTIFUL CITY

**W**hen I left Vienna on 28 August 1939 my feeling was one of huge relief. The idea of returning one day seemed out of the question. But life is unpredictable and I did return many times for different reasons.

My first return was in 1977, leading a group of senior girls from the school where I was teaching. I was fortunate in having intelligent, motivated students who responded to the preparations I had organised for them. I asked an art teacher to talk to them about art in Vienna and a history teacher about the history. I read various works about 20th-century Vienna which left me amazed at important developments in Vienna in the fields of art, literature, science and psychology.

The trip, sponsored by the Anglo-Austrian Society, was well organised and much enjoyed by the students and the colleagues I invited to join me. My own feelings were very mixed – even the map with street names was highly evocative. Was this really the square where, according to family legend, I had, at the age of about three, been in a buggy pushed by my father, who, deep in conversation with a friend, hadn't noticed I'd got out and somehow negotiated the traffic on my own? Was this the glamorous shopping street where, as a rare treat, we got fancy open sandwiches from an automat? The park where my mother and I had often met my grandmother turned out much smaller than in my memory.

On a free afternoon, I visited the block of flats where my father and his brothers had had their dental surgery next door to my grandparents' flat and where we had spent many evenings. As I was there, staring and thinking, a tenant from upstairs asked me what I was doing. I told her. She asked my father's and uncle's names. Schatzberg, I told her. She said: 'Oh yes, the Schatzbergs. Wonderful men!' At this, I burst into tears. She said: 'Go away, there's nothing for you here!' She meant it kindly: Don't torture yourself! I had to wear dark glasses for the rest of the afternoon.

The visit was also an eye-opener to me – we lived in a suburb and rarely came into the centre so I had little idea of its fine buildings and palaces, though I knew their names.

The visit was very successful and was repeated the following year. This time, we stayed in a youth hostel, where I

heard the warden, who didn't realise I understood German, say something viciously anti-Semitic to a fellow worker. Suddenly my perspective changed and memories flooded back.

My next visit to Vienna was in 1988 with my husband, who had been invited there by a pharmaceutical company for which he was a consultant. This was in luxury, staying at the Hilton and being wined and dined at top places – a completely new experience for me. As my husband's work was relevant



The author in 1939 . . .

. . . and with President Heinz Fischer in 2010



to psychiatric illness we were taken to the Steinhof, a famous mental hospital I knew of as a child from the ditty 'Steinhof, Steinhof, die Toren auf, Die x kommt im Dauerlauf' (Steinhof, Steinhof, open your gates, x is coming fast). Now, I learned it was a humane, progressive institution where patients were treated kindly, encouraged to wander in beautiful surroundings and worship in a chapel designed by a famous architect, Otto Wagner.

Another highlight was a dinner at a palace on the Ring, where we were entertained by a glamorous female orchestra.

My last visit was in 2010, sponsored

by the Jewish Welcome Service, which invited back former citizens who had left during the Nazi regime. They arranged various activities for us. I took my elder daughter mainly because I wanted her to see the beautiful city and wander down 'memory lane' with me. We visited some obvious highlights. I fell in love with the painter Klimt all over again and discovered the art and philosophy of an Austrian painter called Hundertwasser.

I showed my daughter some places of special significance for me, including the flat where my grandparents had lived. The tenants invited us in with many apologies for its untidiness. But there was now a fitted kitchen! It wasn't as I had remembered it. I didn't need to look further – a memory had been rubbed out.

It was interesting to meet other members of the group. Few were from the UK. Strange to think of this effect of the Nazi regime. We were the lucky few who had survived and had mostly prospered.

The group was welcomed to the town hall by the mayor. A special visit was to the Austrian President's private apartments in the Hofburg which were only open to the public one day a year. All very beautiful – but more important was the welcome by the President, Heinz Fischer, whose address was warm and convincing. On the way to see him we were told he was very philo-Semitic and had spent some time in a kibbutz, so he qualified in my view.

We were given time to wander around and chat to him. I surprised myself by asking him to pose with me for a photograph. He agreed readily, put his arm round me and joked about how long it took my daughter to take the snap. Life can have some strange twists!

On another evening, we were taken to a Heuriger in the Vienna Woods, where we drank the customary new wine and ate good Austrian food. Musicians played popular Austrian songs with some members of our party joining in. How strange! Elderly former Austrian Jews lustily singing the songs of their youth and of their oppressors. A part of me couldn't help feeling nostalgic.

I suppose this sums up my feelings about Vienna – a mixture of love for the beautiful city and horrific memories of 1938-9. Sometimes a tune, not necessarily a classical one, grabs me by the throat and brings tears to my eyes.

**Stella Curzon**

# INSIDE the AJR

## Combining Aspects of Scottish Genius – the Falkirk Wheel

Scotland is well known for its picturesque scenery and the Scottish people for their talent for innovative engineering. We set out to a destination that somehow combines both these aspects of Scottish genius: Falkirk. The scenery was somewhat marred, but not obliterated, by the continuous rain, with only occasional short flashes of sunshine. The engineering, on the other hand, was most impressive. The gist of it is that two canals, the Forth and Clyde and the Union, are united at that place, although one is 35 metres higher than the other and also at an angle to it. Traditionally, to sail from one to the other, one would need to construct and man some 12 locks. This spectacular machine, the Wheel, does the job in four minutes. It takes four minutes to lift a canal boat from the lower-level canal and deposit it in a canal 35 metres higher. At present, the construction is there purely as a tourist attraction, but sometime in the future it will be useful for conveying goods.

Our group, some 14 persons, had a splendid time on the boat and also at the Tourist Centre and restaurant. Thanks to Agnes and Anthea for the excellent way they looked after us.

*Halina Moss*

## Ilford Rescued Scrolls

It was very worthwhile to hear again Evelyn Friedlander's story of the Czech Memorial Scrolls – over 1,500 Torah scrolls retrieved and saved from Nazi and Communist hands. It is gratifying to know that they are in service once more.

*Meta Roseneil*

## Pinner Jews and 20th-Century Popular Music

Brian Nathan's thoroughly researched presentation included the exceptional contributions of Irving Berlin, Al Jolson, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim, Danny Kaye, Sophie Tucker and many more.

*Walter Weg*

## HGS The Wonderful Marx Brothers

Die-hard Marx fans joined us to watch clips of some of the wonderful Marx Brothers films. Warren Ashton was a source of fascinating information on the family background of the original six brothers and how their dominating

mother became their agent. What a wonderfully entertaining morning!

*Hazel Beiny*

## Edinburgh 'Music at its Best'

Our get-together kindly hosted yet again by Francoise R, it was a delight to enjoy a veritable symphony of our members' musical tastes: the foot-tapping Czardas, the light-hearted Lehar, the solemn Kol Nidre and the tinkling of Swan Lake were accompanied by a graceful ballet improvisation by Lili. A real treat for Joe Henderson and Margaret's first visit to our group.

*Jonathan Kish*

## Essex (Westcliff)

### Welcome to 'Vestcliff'

Chairman Otto Deutsch welcomed out-of-towners to what he charmingly called 'Vestcliff'. He gave a fascinating historical insight into Leigh-on-Sea, Southend, Thorpe Bay and Shrewbury, with a chance for visitors to spot the landmarks he mentioned from a dry coach window.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## Operatic Afternoon with Lavish Cream Tea

A party of 26, led by Esther and Hazel and comprising AJR members from a wide number of groups, met at the sumptuous Grim's Dyke Hotel in Harrow Weald. We gathered in the lovely gardens and, after nice chats and photos, we were treated to an extensive tour of the hotel and its beautiful gardens – the former home of W. S. Gilbert and where he wrote some of his famous pieces. We then partook of a lavish cream tea in the impressive Music Room, followed by a wonderful live performance of songs from *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, *Ruddigore*, and *The Pirates of Penzance*. The resident singers were of a high calibre and we loved their performance. The afternoon was hugely enjoyed by all of us.

*Leslie Sommer*

## Welwyn GC Discussing every subject under the sun

A lovely afternoon spent at the home of Monica, where every subject under the sun was discussed.

*Hazel Beiny*

## St John's Wood Food for Thought

Dr Michael Spiro told us about the fascinating life and loves of Alfred Nobel, who never married. We all agreed it would make a wonderful film. Currently, there are 170 Jewish Nobel Prize-winners, representing 22 per cent of the total, whereas Jews represent only 1 quarter of 1 per cent of the world's population. Food for thought.

*David Lang*

## Brighton & Hove Sarid Spiritual Journey

Historian Mark Perry Nash took us on a spiritual journey of his youth, which was

spent in a town in the USA where the population was predominantly Jewish; he described how welcome he had felt in the community. In later years, he discovered that his great-grandmother was Jewish, but he 'married out', losing contact with the family.

*Ceska Abrahams*

## Bradford CF

### Reminiscences and Reminders

Enjoyable reminiscences and reminders, e.g. the genuine welcome from ordinary British people, the 1930s-60s, an official letter from London advising on Continental travel in 1942!

*Anna Greenwood*

## Bromley CF A Lovely Day

Following a wonderful lunch at the home of Lianne Segal, an in-depth conversation on the trauma of the second generation ensued. A lovely day had by all.

*Hazel Beiny*

## Edgware Distributing Charity Money

Julia Samuel of the Anglo-Jewish Society spoke to us about her job – distributing monies from charities. Julia has to apply good judgement so as not to be tricked, even on a rare occasion by a dishonest applicant.

*Felix Winkler*

## Café Imperial Visitors Welcome

An impressive turnout and an overseas visitor, the daughter of one of our members. We have visitors at this group should you wish to join us! Subjects discussed: internment camps and past experiences.

*Hazel Beiny*

## Kent Unclear Future

Ten of us met for a most interesting and lucid talk by Bank of England agent Phil Eckersley about our present financial situation. The future remains unclear!

*Inge Ball*

## Oxford Easy Ways of Shoplifting

Retired Met police officer David Wass showed us the many easy ways of shoplifting by customers as well as by store staff. It's the honest customers who lose!

*Anne Selinger*

## Radlett 'You Never Had It So Good'

Myra Sampson, ably assisted by her husband/projectionist, who showed evocative pictures of the era, spoke about the art, architecture, music and fashions of the 1950s. A pleasant variant to some of our more serious get-togethers.

*Fritz Starer*

## Newcastle

### Writing and Producing BBC Drama

A most interesting account from Edinburgh-based David Neville on his BBC Radio work, writing and producing drama.

## AUGUST GROUP MEETINGS

<b>Kingston</b>	1 Aug	Lunchtime Social Get-together
<b>Newcastle</b>	5 Aug	Outing to Howick Hall Gardens
<b>Sheffield</b>	5 Aug	'Our First Impressions of First Days at School'
<b>Ilford</b>	6 Aug	10th Anniversary
<b>Ealing</b>	7 Aug	Angela Schluter, 'Jewish Mother, Nazi Father'
<b>St John's Wood</b>	8 Aug	Alan Bilgora
<b>HGS</b>	13 Aug	Zoe Bermant, Director of Marketing at El Al
<b>Café Imperial</b>	14 Aug	Social Get-together
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	14 Aug	Angela Schluter, 'Jewish Mother, Nazi Father'
<b>Welwyn GC</b>	14 Aug	Social Get-together
<b>Radlett</b>	15 Aug	Shirley Jaffe: Poetry Reading
<b>Cambridge</b>	16 Aug	Wiener Library
<b>Surrey</b>	19 Aug	Coffee Morning
<b>Brighton &amp; Hove Sarid</b>	20 Aug	Discussion Group: 'An Item of Sentimentality'
<b>Harrogate/York</b>	20 Aug	At the home of Rosl and Marc Schatzberger
<b>Hendon</b>	20 Aug	David Lawson, 'The Story of Eve Erben'
<b>Edgware</b>	21 Aug	Zoe Bermant, Director of Marketing at El Al
<b>Kent</b>	21 Aug	David Lawson, 'The Story of Eve Erben'
<b>Wembley</b>	22 Aug	Social Get-together
<b>Oxford</b>	23 Aug	Annual Garden Party
<b>Marlow</b>	28 Aug	Social Get-together
<b>Temple Fortune</b>	28 Aug	Jackie Waltz, 'Dance Moves'
<b>Book Club</b>	29 Aug	Social and Discussion
<b>Cheshire CF</b>	30 Aug	At home of Ben Brettler
<b>Glasgow Book Club</b>	30 Aug	At home of Agnes Isaacs
<b>North London</b>	30 Aug	11th Anniversary

### DAY TRIP TO BRIGHTON

**Thursday 9 August**

**Trip to Ralli Hall  
Lunch and Social Club**

Three-course kosher meal  
(salt beef and latkes)

Drive/walk along the sea/beach

**Depart AJR Head Office at Stanmore  
at 9.30 am, back around 6.00 pm**

£10.00 per person

For further details, please call  
Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070

*This trip is subsidised by a kind donor*

A Q&A session followed by tea and a chat completed the afternoon.

*Anthea Berg*

### Oxford River Boat Outing

What a wonderful time we had following in the footsteps of Lewis Carroll. We climbed aboard the comfortable *Serafina II* and for the next couple of hours sat back and listened to the expert commentary of Mark Davies and enjoyed a delicious lunch. Mark pointed out scenes the author was only too familiar with in the company of Alice Liddell, whom he immortalised in the Alice novels. Alice was the daughter of Henry Liddell, Dean of Christ Church. A great day out, very relaxing and interesting and a chance to catch up with old friends.

*Janet Weston*

## ARTS AND EVENTS DIARY

**To 16 Sept 2012 World City: Refugee Stories** The stories of 9 individuals from countries as diverse as Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Chile and Cameroon who have come to London since the 1930s. Jewish Museum, London NW1, tel 020 7284 7384

**Fri 3 Aug Prof Peter Beck, 'A "Test Case" for the 1936 Berlin Olympics? The 1935 England-Germany Football International at White Hart Lane'** Wiener Library, 1.00 pm. Admission free but please tel 020 7636 7247 to reserve a space

**Mon 20 to Thur 23 Aug Seminar: 'From Poland to Polo in Three Generations? Day 1 'Do Jews Make Their Own Identity or is it Made for Us?' Day 2 'Is "Britain" Good for the Jews?' Day 3 'Identity Requires An Other' Day 4 'Looking Forward'** £15 a session, £35 a day, £125 for the week. Speakers include Dr Helen Fry, Trudy Gold, Judy Ironside, Clive Lawton. At London Jewish Cultural Centre, tel 020 8457 5000

### Cambridge Life of Jewish Refugees in New Zealand

Dr Michael Spiro gave us a wonderful account of his and his family's life as Jewish refugees in New Zealand, his schooling and subsequent studies in a country where Jewish refugees were a rarity.

*Keith Lawson*

### Norfolk A Feast in Norwich

Another get-together in Norwich for a feast, courtesy of Myrna. We also had

### Meals-on-Wheels

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### KT-AJR

**Kindertransport special  
interest group**

**Tuesday 7 August 2012**

**David Lawson**

**'Eva Erben's Journey'**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT LUNCH  
WILL BE SERVED AT 12.30 PM**

**Reservations required  
Please telephone 020 7431 2744**

## AUGUST ACTIVITIES

*The Computer Club will be taken by Lisa Gehrlein on Tuesday mornings*

- |                |                              |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Thur 2</b>  | Olympic theme – indoor games |
|                | Exercise with Rosalie        |
| <b>Tue 7</b>   | Exercise with Jackie         |
|                | Computer Club                |
| <b>Thur 9</b>  | Exercise with Rosalie        |
| <b>Tue 14</b>  | Exercise with Jackie         |
|                | Computer Club                |
| <b>Thur 16</b> | Exercise with Rosalie        |
| <b>Tue 21</b>  | Exercise with Jackie         |
|                | Computer Club                |
| <b>Thur 23</b> | Exercise with Rosalie        |
| <b>Tue 28</b>  | Exercise with Jackie         |
|                | Computer Club                |
| <b>Thur 30</b> | Exercise with Rosalie        |

*All activities begin at 10.30 am. Admission is £7 to include lunch from 12.30 pm, or £2 for activity alone. There is a nominal charge of £3 for a carer accompanying a member for the day, including lunch.*

## AUGUST ENTERTAINMENT

- |                |                                   |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Thur 2</b>  | Top Hat                           |
| <b>Tue 7</b>   | KT LUNCH                          |
| <b>Thur 9</b>  | Frank Crocker                     |
| <b>Tue 14</b>  | Margaret Opdahl                   |
| <b>Thur 16</b> | Mike Mirandi                      |
| <b>Tue 21</b>  | Paul Toshner                      |
| <b>Thur 23</b> | Ronnie Goldberg                   |
| <b>Tue 28</b>  | Rule Britannia with Lynn Radnedge |
| <b>Thur 30</b> | Lynda Stryan                      |

a talk on quilts and admired a design based on the Underground Railroad, the route taken by slaves escaping from the southern states of the USA to the north.

*Frank Bright*

### Glasgow Book Club A Good Read

Meeting at the home of Eva Szirmai, we discussed *The Credit Draper* by local

*continued on page 16* ➔

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Deaths**

**Munk, Ann**, who was a longstanding member of the AJR, died on 4 July 2012. She will be sadly missed by her family and friends.

**Pilchik, Herta** (née Thorsch), born Angern, Austria 30 January 1920, died London 3 July 2012. Deeply mourned by daughters Helene and Sonya, son-in-law Maurice, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**AJR and German-Jewish Studies Centre to hold September seminar**

The AJR is joining forces with the Centre for German-Jewish Studies at Sussex University to hold a series of lectures, discussions and interviews at the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC) on 12-13 September.

The two-day seminar will highlight the cultural legacy of the Jewish German and Austrian refugees who fled Nazism and celebrate their remarkable contribution to life in Britain.

*If you wish to attend, please complete the enclosed form and return it to the LJCC asap.*

Dr Anthony Grenville's book *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970* has been reprinted. For copies (paperback), write to Anthony Grenville at the AJR, enclosing cheque for £22.50 (incl. postage and packing) made out to the author.



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## OBITUARIES

### Erika Magda Chary, 8 February 1923 – 8 May 2012

**E**rika Chary (née Weiner) was born in Vienna to Ignaz Weiner and Mariska Gonda. They lived at Blüten-gasse 9 in the Third District. Erika attended the Volksschule, Löwengasse, and the Luithlen Lycée on the Tuchlauben. Her mother taught her the piano and, as a youngster, she performed at the Palais Palfy in Vienna. At 15 she escaped Austria via the Kindertransport, while her older brother, Hans, emigrated to the USA. Her parents were deported to Minsk, where they perished.

In London, Chary became a domestic help. To cure a congenital cataract, she endured multiple surgeries to gain her sight. Once, while practising piano at Bloomsbury House, King George VI happened to visit and he stopped to listen to her. During the war years she also worked as a cleaning woman, waitress and

salesperson. At 21 she received formal lessons and eventually earned her Associate of the Royal College of Music, Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music, and a Music Education Certificate from the University of London. Her teacher was the famous Viennese pianist Edith Vogel.



In 1943 Erika met her future husband, Henry Heinz Chary, a fellow Kindertransport refugee from Vienna, at a piano recital in London. Having been labelled an 'enemy alien' by the British government, he had been interned and deported to Canada; he was later released and returned to enlist in the British army. That night he walked her home and, while waiting in a bomb shelter during an air raid, they fell in love. The next summer

he landed in Normandy. They married in November 1945 and built a house in Radlett, Hertfordshire. She taught music at Radlett Preparatory School, gave private lessons, and performed both solo and in the Fidelio Trio. In 1966 they emigrated to the United States, where Henry worked as an aircraft engineer in California.

Music was Chary's life and her work flourished. She taught at the Marymount Grammar School and for 50 years taught hundreds of students in her private studio. She performed in Los Angeles and taught master classes in Europe and China. As a member of the Music Teachers' Association of California and the European Piano Teachers' Association, she was a figure of global renown. She established the International Young Artists' Peninsula Music Festival, a competition for classical musicians of all instruments below the age of 25. Young musicians from around the world were selected by a committee of accomplished musicians to perform during a weekend at the Norris Center on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The 30th and final festival was held in 2006.

Several prizes were established in Erika's name: the Erika Chary Senior Instrumentalist Award, by MTAC South Bay Branch; the Gonda-Weiner Prize, awarded to the best pianist of the International Beethoven Competition, Vienna (1994); and the Erika Chary Award, by the Vienna University Conservatory (2009). Erika was awarded the MTAC South Bay Branch Distinguished Lifetime Service to Music Award (2008), the Golden Order of Merit of Austria (1997), and the Honour Medal of Vienna (2008). In her acceptance speech on receiving the medal, she said 'I am naturally grateful for my English citizenship and am just as proud of my American citizenship ... But now Vienna is again my homeland!' Seventy years after her escape from Vienna as a refugee, Chary's hometown recognised her as an 'honoured citizen'.

Erika Chary is survived by Henry, her loving husband of 66 years; niece Stephanie Smith and her husband Lawrence Smith; great-niece Alexandra; niece-in-law Diane Gilbert; great-nephew Gavin; and great-niece Claire.

**Robin C. Chiang**

### Frederick Leslie Kenett, 12 July 1924 – 2 May 2012

**W**riting in *The Listener* in 1966, the publisher T. G. Rosenthal pronounced Fred Kenett 'the greatest photographer of sculpture in the world'. Writing in the *New Statesman* in 1963, the poet and art critic Geoffrey Grigson described Fred Kenett's photographs in the folios of the *Acanthus History of Sculpture* as 'one of the finest things in art publishing anywhere, ever'.

Born in Berlin the son of a Jewish doctor and a Catholic nurse, Manfred Cohn – later Frederick Leslie Kenett – came to England from the Sudetenland in 1938. During the war, he worked for the US Intelligence Corps and here he developed his interest in photography. When the war ended he studied at the Guildford Academy.

Fred Kenett pioneered a means of lighting sculpture for photography which attracted the interest of Delves Molesworth, Curator of Sculpture at the V&A, and, through the publisher George Rainbird, published the *Acanthus* series. Praised as a 'photographer of sculpture *par excellence*', in 1960 he was commissioned to take colour photographs in Egypt of the Tutankhamun museum collection. He worked with difficulty under surveillance and was at one point accused of damaging an item until he proved his innocence using existing B&W photographs. The book's author, Christiane Desroches Noblecourt, Chief Curator of the National Museum of France, thanking George Rainbird, said it was 'his pulsating enthusiasm and determination' to produce the book with Kenett's colour photographs that forced her to write the book. Kenett also worked with Mme Noblecourt on the B&W photographs of the Egyptian collection in

the *Acanthus* series.

The recognition Fred Kenett achieved was the product of a deep intimacy with his subject and, albeit an unconventional route, it was little surprise when in the mid-60s he ceased work as a photographer of sculpture to become a sculptor himself. Not more than two years after he had made the transition to sculpture, *The Listener* again wrote of him: '[T]here is a sense of ease and power one usually finds only in work by senior and more illustrious names.' At this time, his work took centre stage on the front cover of *The Arts Review*, which again praised the 'perfect form' of his work.

Fred Kenett was a very private man. Nevertheless, he had met and come to know artists such as Picasso and Henry Moore. He aroused the interest of leading London galleries and his work was exhibited with much attention. Suddenly, against this backdrop, Fred did not stop sculpting but effectively did stop exhibiting. Despite and through this almost self-imposed isolation, his work grew stronger. He was prolific in his output, despite the restrictions of a studio flat in Kensington. That said, from the 70s onwards, much of his work remained uncast. Up to the very end he continued to sculpt. *The Arts Review*, further commenting on his work, said '[W]hat we see – the way we see his work is exactly as the artist intended.'

In Fred's own words, art 'is not a cleverness, not a shrewd stratagem. It is a way of living, a mode of conduct. It is also about questions leading to more questions.'



Fred Kenett did not intellectualise art. Although he made it difficult for people to get to know him he was a man of great sensitivity and humility. He was my neighbour and a dear friend who is greatly missed. I hope the art world and those who come to be inspired by art can once more see and appreciate the beauty of this man's work.

**Chris Lanyon**



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson



### Strange new world

It is well over 20 years since our children were teenagers, and it was with some trepidation that my husband and I agreed to leave our comfortable home and spend a week in Zikhron Ya'akov attending to our three grandsons while their parents took a well-deserved break abroad.

Like everywhere else in the civilised world, Israel has undergone many changes in the last two decades, and especially in the sphere of gadgetry. The teenage ethos has also moved with the times, and seems to be preoccupied to an even greater extent than before with extra-mural activities.

So, armed with the various appurtenances that we thought would enable us to cushion ourselves against the loss of our home environment (laptops, books, mobile phones, painting things, exercise equipment, etc), we embarked on the journey to another planet – the world of the teenager that lay just one and a half hour's drive away.

Our daughter is a very hardworking young woman and had not had time to prepare food in advance, so the first task in hand was to roll up one's sleeves and

get into the kitchen – or order pizza. Naturally, the second option was the one that was preferred, and so it continued for most of the week. Nevertheless, in the course of the next few days I found myself doing more cooking than I had for years. Teenage boys are perpetually hungry, and don't really seem to care much what they eat provided it's there when they come home. They don't actually mind too much who provides it, either.

We soon discovered that our main function while in Zikhron Ya'akov was to ferry the various youngsters to and from school (the youngest boy is only seven and attends a school quite far away from home) as well as to and from their various after-school activities. There is a surfing club at the nearby kibbutz of Ma'agan Michael and the two older ones, aged 16 and 12, are keen surfers. It did not matter that the weather was neither warm nor sunny. They donned their wet suits and off we all went, to seek out the highest wave and the whitest surf. The little one, for his part, would get into his football gear, the royal blue kit of Zikhron Ya'akov's youth squad, and race around the football pitch as earnestly as any young Wayne Rooney.

Have I mentioned Skatepark? That's another of Zikhron Ya'akov's attractions. No matter what the time of day or night, or the state of the weather, the asphalted area that has been set aside for skateboarding, with its hills and ridges for the various acrobatics that youngsters like to perform, is floodlit after dark. Of course, it is situated on the other side of town, so that the enthusiastic young skateboarder had to be taken there, and collected subsequently too.

But all those journeys gave me a chance to enjoy the sight of the Carmel Mountains to the west and the Mediterranean Sea to the east. Not to mention the traffic roundabouts, which are a gorgeous sight in spring, with an abundance of cyclamen and other wild flowers. The town is certainly well looked after, with greenery and plantings that would do credit to any town in Western Europe.

When the week came to an end and the boys' parents returned from their holiday we packed up the things we had brought with us and had barely touched. Once back home, however, we missed not having to look after the youngsters any more. Now we're looking forward to the next time.

### INSIDE THE AJR *continued from page 13*

novelist J. David Simons. It was generally agreed to be a 'good read'. As usual, proceedings were rounded off by a delightful tea thanks to Anthea, Agnes and our hostess Eva. *Halina Moss*

#### **Hendon** **Jews in Regency London**

David Barnett provided us with a different view of familiar locations. In 1775 London was Europe's foremost shopping location as tourists were attracted by the numerous small specialist shops and coffee rooms lining the roads from Cheapside to Oxford Street and surrounding area. A riveting historical survey. *Shirley Rodwell*

#### **Temple Fortune Jack the Ripper** **'Conspiracy'**

Myra Sampson told us about the conspiracy theory concerning Jack the Ripper. The case has an impressive list of characters which includes Prince 'Eddy' and Prime Minister Lord Salisbury. *David Lang*

#### **Book Club French Society in 1939**

Irène Némirovsky's *Suite Française* was commented on favourably mainly for its fascinating depiction of French society in 1939 and the turmoil caused by the German occupation. Next book: Alison Light's *Mrs Woolf and the Servants*. *Gabriele Weil*

#### **Wembley CF Volunteer from Vienna**

Besides discussions of the TV programme 'Strictly Kosher', the beginnings of the AJR and the AJR recipe book, we heard from Julia Ringl, a 17-year-old from Vienna who has been volunteering at the AJR Centre, at Head Office and at group meetings for several weeks. *Myrna Glass*

#### **North London Second Meeting** **Demanded**

David Barnett gave a most interesting talk on 'Jewish Trade in Regency London'. A subject well worth a second meeting. *Herbert Haberberg*