

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Baghdad's Kristallnacht

On 1-2 June 1941, the Jewish population of Baghdad experienced a pogrom sometimes compared to those that took place in the towns and cities of Nazi Germany on the night of 9-10 November 1938. The *Farhud*, as the anti-Jewish excesses in the Iraqi capital are called, is far less well known in Britain than the so-called 'Crystal Night' pogroms in Germany. Yet Iraq had come under British control in the First World War, when British forces defeated those of the Ottoman Empire, occupying Baghdad on 11 March 1917. The League of Nations subsequently granted Britain a mandate over what became the Kingdom of Iraq, and Britain effectively administered Iraq until its independence in 1932. After that, Britain retained important air bases in Iraq, notably at Habbaniya, some 55 miles west of Baghdad. The strategic importance of Iraq and its huge reserves of oil led Britain to maintain its influence in the country, by preserving the Hashemite monarchy that ruled from 1921 until it was overthrown by the revolution of 1958.

At the end of the First World War, Jews composed about a third of the population of Baghdad – incredible as that may now seem. Jewish settlement in the Baghdad area dates back no less than 2,500 years, to the deportation of the Jews into Babylonian captivity early in the sixth century BCE. The ancient city of Babylon was situated about 50 miles south of present-day Baghdad. When Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, who conquered Babylonia in 539 BCE, allowed the Jews to return to Judea, many chose to remain in Mesopotamia (the Greek term referring to the lands between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates). There they survived the many conflicts, conquests and changes of regime that affected the area.

In 334 BCE, Alexander the Great of Macedon invaded the Persian Empire and defeated Darius, the Persian king; he

planned to establish his capital at Babylon but died in 323 BCE. Subsequently, the city fell under the rule of the Seleucids, the



The *Farhud* pogrom in Baghdad, 1941

successors to Alexander in that part of his empire, then of the Parthians, the eastern foes of the Roman Empire, and then of the Sasanian Empire, which fought the Romans and the Byzantines, the Romans' eastern successors, over several centuries. But in the seventh century CE came the Arab invasion, which brought the area under Muslim rule. The centre of the Arab world moved to Baghdad in 762, when the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mansur founded the city, to the north of the Sasanian capital, Ctesiphon. Baghdad became the glittering capital of a vast empire extending from present-day Pakistan across the Middle East and North Africa into Spain. Baghdad's Jewish community flourished under Muslim rule, producing great Talmudic scholars, though Jews (as *dhimmis*) were regarded as inferior and treated accordingly.

Baghdad's role as one of the great centres of power and culture was ended by incursions from Central Asia, first by the invasion of the Mongols under Hulagu Khan in 1258, when the sack of the city marked the end of the Islamic golden age, then by the capture of the city by Timur (Tamerlane) in 1401, with his trademark slaughter of its inhabitants. The city was later contested between the Ottoman Turks and the Persians. It first fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1534, when it was taken

by the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent (who had besieged Vienna in 1529); the Turks finally established control over Baghdad in 1638. It languished as a provincial capital until the First World War.

The division of the Middle East between the imperialist powers, Britain and France, after the First World War catapulted the area into the era of modern nationalist politics. British policy in Iraq, and in the wider Middle East, greatly affected the fate of Baghdad's Jews after 1918, especially perhaps in its failures. Though they were welcomed as liberators in 1917, the British, attempting to impose a quasi-colonial form of government under guise of their mandate, soon provoked disaffection and active resistance; that burst into outright revolt with the Iraqi uprising of 1920, which was only suppressed by means of substantial military force. From then on, radical Iraqi nationalism was hostile to British power and influence in the country and looked to Britain's enemies for support.

The post-1918 settlement also created a division between Baghdad's Jews, who were on the whole supportive of British rule, and those sections of the Arab population that were opposed to the British administration and, after 1930, to the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty that bound Iraq to Britain. That division between Jews and Arabs was sharpened as a result of British policy in Palestine, where the Balfour Declaration of 1917 had established a Jewish homeland. The situation deteriorated further after 1933, when the Nazi regime in Germany sought to undermine the British position in Iraq by offering support to disaffected army officers eager to throw off all vestiges of British control. In the 1930s, Iraq underwent a period of intense political instability, with a series of changes of government that threatened to erupt into

## Baghdad's Kristallnacht continued

outright violence.

During the Second World War, the constellation of radical Arab nationalism in combination with both anti-British and anti-Jewish sentiment bore malign fruit in Iraq. In spring 1941, the British position in the Middle East had become precarious. General Wavell's successful advance into the Italian colony of Libya had been halted, and by April 1941 the arrival of Rommel's Afrika Korps had pushed the British back to the Egyptian border. British forces had also been unable to stem the German invasion of Greece and were forced to withdraw to Crete, where in May 1941 they came under successful attack from German airborne forces. Pro-Nazi and anti-British officers in the Iraqi army seized on this moment of crisis for the British to launch a *coup d'état*, installing Rashid Ali al-Gaylani as prime minister. This led to the brief Anglo-Iraqi War of 2-31 May 1941, which formed the background to the *Farhud*.

The British, their military forces stretched to the limit, relied mainly on the RAF to garrison Iraq. Initially besieged in their air base at Habbaniya, they nevertheless succeeded in defeating the Iraqis in short order and advanced on the capital. Rashid Ali's regime collapsed; he fled via Iran to Germany. On 1 June 1941, in the power vacuum before the British entered Baghdad and during the Jewish festival of *Shavuot*, a wave of violence erupted, aimed at the city's Jewish community. Shops and businesses were looted and many homes destroyed; marauding armed mobs killed at least 180 people – some estimates put the number far higher – before order was restored on 2 June. This was the first anti-Jewish pogrom in Iraq in modern times; previously, the Jewish community had mostly coexisted peacefully with its Arab neighbours, whose culture they shared in large measure,

considering themselves Iraqis. Despite the atrocities of the *Farhud*, Jews lived unmolested in Baghdad until the defeat of the Arab armies in 1948 and the establishment of the State of Israel sparked fresh anti-Jewish measures that led over the following few years to the mass exodus of Iraq's Jews and the end of two and a half millennia of history.

Jews from Baghdad played a significant role in British history, in particular those who moved in the nineteenth century to Bombay, where British India offered lucrative commercial opportunities. Probably the most famous family was that of Sir David Sassoon, the 'Rothschilds of the East', who built a huge commercial empire from the trade between India and China in cotton and (regrettably) opium. Sassoon funded the building of one of India's largest and most beautiful synagogues, the Magen David Synagogue in Byculla, Mumbai; his most famous descendant was the writer and war poet Siegfried Sassoon. The brothers Sir Ellis and Sir Eleazer (Elly) Kadoorie established major commercial enterprises in Hong Kong and Shanghai; Elly's son Lawrence was the first Hong Kong-born man to be elevated to the House of Lords. Sir

Naim Dangoor, bearer of a distinguished Baghdadi Jewish name and a leading industrialist and philanthropist, and the eminent scholar Elie Kedourie, an authority on nationalism at the London School of Economics, were other Jews from Baghdad to enrich British life.

Readers will be pleased to know that the history of the Jews of Iraq is being recorded for the future as part of *Sephardi Voices*, a collection of filmed interviews similar to the AJR's *Refugee Voices* and designed to preserve the precious legacy of the entire Sephardi-Mizrahi tradition. Dr Bea Lewkowicz, who created the exhibition *Continental Britons* (2002) with myself and is currently administering the second phase of *Refugee Voices*, is, as Director of Sephardi Voices UK, responsible for the British part of this historically significant endeavour. The new interest in the story of the Jews from the Arab lands has already led to the first event in Britain commemorating the *Farhud*, held at Lauderdale Road Synagogue, London, on 2 June 2016, the 75th anniversary of the *Farhud*. Information on the project is available at [www.sephardivoices.org.uk](http://www.sephardivoices.org.uk).

Anthony Grenville

## KT LUNCH

Wednesday 16 November 2016  
at Alyth Gardens Synagogue  
12.30 pm

We are delighted to be joined by  
**Jonathan Arkush**

President of the Board of Deputies  
of British Jews

Jonathan is a barrister by profession, specialising in property, probate and commercial law as well as a mediator.

He was elected Senior Vice President of the Board of Deputies in May 2009 and chaired the Board's Defence Division for two three-year terms until 2015. His responsibilities included defending the community against antisemitism, discrimination and any threat to Jewish faith and practice in the United Kingdom, and forging deeper understanding between the Jews of Britain and other faiths. He was elected President of the Board in May 2015.



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

We look forward to seeing you

## AJR FILM CLUB

Please join us at our next Film Club.

Our film showing will be at  
Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform  
Synagogue  
120 Oakleigh Road North,  
Whetstone N20 9EZ

on  
**Wednesday 23 November 2016**  
at 12.30 pm

A lunch of smoked salmon bagels,  
Danish pastries and tea or coffee will be  
served first.

### 'WOMAN IN GOLD'

starring Dame Helen Mirren

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

Sixty years after fleeing Vienna, Maria Altmann (Helen Mirren) attempts to reclaim family possessions that were seized by the Nazis. Among them is a famous portrait of Maria's beloved Aunt Adele: Gustave Klimt's 'Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I'. With the help of young lawyer Randy Schoenberg (Ryan Reynolds), Maria embarks on a legal battle to recover this painting and several others, but it will not be easy as Austria considers them national treasures.

£7.00 per person

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
or email [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)

AJR Chief Executive  
Michael Newman

Finance Director  
David Kaye

Heads of Department

Karen Markham Human Resources & Administration  
Sue Kurlander Social Services  
Carol Hart Community & Volunteer Services

AJR Journal

Dr Anthony Grenville Consultant Editor

Dr Howard Spier Executive Editor

Karin Pereira Secretarial / Advertisements

Views expressed in the *AJR Journal* are not necessarily those of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.

## More or less Lamarr

The recent correspondence in the *Journal* about Hedi Lamarr evokes delicious memories. She came into prominence as a result of a brief appearance in the nude in *Ekstase (Ecstasy)*, a film daring in its day but today fit for Children's Hour. Of course, we all went to see it. My cousin watched it 33 times – but then he came from a rich family. Through his good offices I had the unusual advantage of getting glimpses of Hedi *au naturel*, not just on film.

It came about in this way. My cousin lived in a very grand villa in Neubabelsberg, just outside Berlin (Louisenstrasse 23, if you are interested in Jewish geography), next door to an even grander Palais, the home of Lamarr's then boyfriend. She was a regular visitor and in the habit of sunbathing in the nude in the sheltered garden. But there was one weak spot in the otherwise perfect cover and, if one took up position by a particular first-floor window in my cousin's house and craned one's neck at an agonising angle, one could see a wide strip of the lawn next door. As the earth moved – in every sense – so did the sunny strip and with it Hedi. There therefore came a moment when she hove into view in all her splendour. It was a matter of fine calculation to be half-hanging out of the window at the right moment at the right angle. For my cousin, who had both patience and opportunity, this presented not

much of a problem. I was less well placed, living in Charlottenburg, by public transport nearly an hour's ride away. My cousin became adept at calculating when the constellation would be favourable and rang me when it was time to get moving. The reward, subject to sudden changes in the weather not interfering, was overwhelming, as was the crick in my neck. Hitler saved my cervical vertebrae from permanent damage.

Many years later, when Hedi Lamarr (née Kiesler) was a great Hollywood star, and her flesh just a pleasant memory, I had the chance of being introduced to President Reagan as a reward for a minor service rendered to the CIA. It involved a meeting in the Oval Office, scheduled to last precisely three-and-a-half minutes. I was sure the President had been briefed on why I had been accorded this honour, and equally sure he had immediately forgotten. It was therefore up to me to think of something to say as I was being introduced by Melvin Laird, my sponsor and one-time Secretary of State for Defense.

I decided to mention that I had not only seen Hedi Lamarr in the nude on film (as I was sure he had) but also – ah, bliss! – in the flesh. I also explained briefly about the acrobatics involved. A look of recognition lit up the President's features and, thumping his right fist into the palm of his left hand, he said with great conviction 'Great bust, bad legs!'

Right about that as about so many other things.

Victor Ross



### Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR)

The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at **4 pm on Wednesday 7 December 2016 at Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.**

The following serving Trustees are being proposed for re-election: David Rothenberg, Anthony Spiro and Philippa Strauss.

Any associate member wishing to nominate any other associate member for election as a Trustee must submit a proposal signed by ten associate members to the AJR's Chief Executive, together with the signed agreement of the person being nominated.

The deadline to submit nominations is midday on Friday 4 November 2016, duly received at the AJR's offices: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.



### Visit to Air Transport Auxiliary Museum

Tour led by Paul Lang

TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2016

FLY A SPITFIRE SIMULATOR

Join us for a visit to the **Air Transport Auxiliary Exhibition**. Listen to a forgotten story of courage, skill and sacrifice. 70 years on, it is difficult to believe that Britain was so desperate that the amateur pilots of Air Transport Auxiliary (men and women) were employed to fly dozens of different types of war plane between factories and front-line squadrons.

You will have the opportunity to fly a Spitfire Simulator and we will have lunch in a local restaurant before our return.

For an application form, please call Head Office on 020 8385 3070 or email [esther@ajr.org.uk](mailto:esther@ajr.org.uk)

### OUTING TO THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Monday 12 December 2016

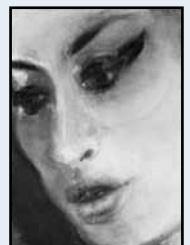
11.00 am followed by lunch

Guided Tour conducted by Rachel Kosky

'Your Loyal Subjects'



Benjamin Disraeli



Amy Winehouse

On Rachel Kosky's fascinating and ever-popular tour of the National Portrait Gallery, discover members of the Jewish community who became representative British subjects in the fields of politics, finance, industry and culture. Their stories and those of the artists are also the

story of the development of the Jewish community in the UK, including the first and only Jewish-born British Prime Minister, two controversial artists who became father and son-in-law, the founding of ICI, and a 1930s Jewish émigré who wrote *The Buildings of England*.

While there is of course some walking involved, there are portable stools which members can take with them around the gallery.

We will arrange travel by coach and, following the tour, lunch in the Portrait Café.

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

## BACK TO MY ROOTS

I am what is colloquially known as a 'second generation survivor' – the child of a Holocaust survivor – as are many people in our community. As the years pass and my parents are unfortunately no longer with us, the desire to find out more about my roots and history has increased.

My mother arrived in this country on the Kindertransport on 14 February 1939 and, in common with so many Holocaust survivors, hardly spoke about her experiences leading up to that day. My father would buy her flowers on that date and for many years I thought it was a romantic Valentine's Day gesture – in reality it was a celebration of the date on which she arrived in England!

In 1987 my eldest nephew in America was working on a family history project at school and was required to interview his grandparents about their life stories. Never having spoken about these distressing memories either to my brother or to me, my mother recorded much of her story for him on tape and, although for many years I found it too painful to listen to, it was this recording that enabled us to piece together some of her story.

My mother was an only child born in Gelsenkirchen, a town in north-west Germany, to Polish parents who ironically had moved to Germany for a better life. In 1927, when she was three, her father died and was buried in the town's Jewish cemetery. A few years later her mother, Sarah, remarried a man with two sons. The family of four remained in Gelsenkirchen until September 1938, when they were all rounded up and taken away. They were deported to a place she describes as 'no man's land' on the borders of Germany and Poland and it was from this camp that she was able to register for a place on the Kindertransport.

Unfortunately, neither of her step-brothers was eligible and, although one was eventually able to escape through Siberia to the USA, the rest of the family perished in, or en route to, the camps. Through the Red Cross, she was able to maintain contact with her mother by letter until 1942 and I am the proud owner of this bundle of letters sent from a loving mother to a daughter living many miles away in a strange country with an English family: seemingly her main concerns in the correspondence were whether she was eating enough, keeping warm enough, and why she didn't write more often! It was the same Red Cross organisation that informed her after the war of the death of her mother.

Although my mother didn't have many memories of her real father, she recalled that he was fondly known at home as 'Leib' and so when my brother

was born in 1948 he was named 'Dovid Leib'. During my childhood years, I recall my mother speaking about her early life in London: how she was 'adopted' by a lovely family with two sons and stories of her refugee friends, many of whom didn't have as positive experiences with their host families as she did. These stories made such an impression on me



Outside mother's house in Gelsenkirchen (from left) Mike Potashnick, Sandy Potashnick, David Feiler

that I wrote my dissertation as part of my sociology degree on 'The Absorption Process of German Jewish Refugees' and dedicated it to her.

Understandably, my mother had no desire ever to return to Germany. However, in the late 1980s, after she had been diagnosed with cancer, she took the incredibly brave and emotional decision to visit her father's grave. My parents made contact with the head of the Jewish community in Gelsenkirchen and they arranged the visit. I recall her commenting on her return how well looked after the cemetery was and how everything in Germany was so well organised – 'typical of the Germans', she said in disgust. The other remarkable thing that came out of that visit was that, according to the headstone, her father's name was actually Yehuda Menachem and not Leib! When my son was born in 1990 we named him Shmuel Yehuda in honour of my grandfather and to continue the family names down the generations.

Mum sadly died in 1993 aged only 69 but having had a happy marriage, a fulfilling life, and having been fortunate enough to have seen both her children married and four grandchildren.

As the years have passed, the desire to visit my grandfather's grave, to see Gelsenkirchen, where my mother grew up, and to find my roots deepened. Unfortunately, she did not leave us any information about the cemetery or the whereabouts of his grave. However, after much research, I made contact with the President of the Jewish Community, Judith Neuwald-Tasbach, and located my grandfather's grave in the old

(closed) town cemetery and, after a few unsuccessful attempts, a visit was finally arranged for November 2015. My brother David came over from Israel and, with my husband Mike, we made that eventful journey to Germany.

Many people asked me before we went how I felt about it. The truth is that although I really wanted to go, I was filled with trepidation at entering a country I had previously never had any desire to visit, with such a horrendous history. I tried to focus on the purpose of the journey – to visit Gelsenkirchen and the cemetery with the help of Judith and we would then escape as quickly as possible. We landed on German soil and, as I got off the plane, I whispered to Mike 'This is the first and last time I will come here and I will not say a *Shehecheyanu* (prayer to celebrate special occasions)!'

Amazingly, the outcome of the trip was far different from this. There were many surprises ahead of us that day. Judith met us on the evening of Sunday 8 November at the new synagogue, built on the site of the synagogue my mother had attended and had been burnt down on Kristallnacht. She informed us of the programme she had planned for the next day – coincidentally the 77th anniversary of Kristallnacht.

When we arrived at the synagogue the next morning there was a large wreath of flowers at the memorial stone on the side of the building. This was an annual gift from the local government. We discovered that Judith's late father, Kurt Neuwald, had been the previous president of the community and the person who had taken my parents to the cemetery some 25 years earlier. He had been taken to the camps with 27 family members and lost his first wife there, but after the war he resolved to return to Gelsenkirchen and rebuild his own life and that of the community. He was determined that Hitler would not destroy all Jewish life. Remarkably, he did just that! There is a huge memorial wall dedicated to the approximately 300 Gelsenkirchen residents who were deported in 1942, but what we also experienced first-hand was a warm and thriving community with a full-time rabbi and a modern building hosting many varied events including a youth theatre group, a sing-along session for senior members and, of course, regular *Shabbat* services. How courageous of one man with a vision and how heart-warming to meet a rabbi and a synagogue president working hard arranging the same kind of activities as we in Edgware and David's synagogue in Netanya.

*continued on page 5* ➔

## My grandmother – the best cook in the world

by Eva Blumenthal

My grandmother, Adele Metall, was born in 1887 into a prosperous family in Lemberg. At that time, Lemberg was still very much part of the Habsburg Empire and she grew up speaking both Polish and German and, since she had a French governess, also French – but heaven forbid, not Yiddish! Her grandfather had made his fortune dealing in timber for the building of the railways. She was the youngest child of the youngest of his five sons and the youngest of 28 cousins. All the sons were left enough money by their father to live as gentlemen of leisure but her father was a gambler: by the time she had grown up, there was only enough money for a small dowry and, when she was 19, a marriage was arranged with a much older pharmacist. Fortunately he had to work for his living and they moved to the centre of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna, where my mother was born and grew up, became a pharmacist like her father, married my father, and eventually gave birth to me in 1936. Almost all my grandmother's cousins remained in Lemberg and were murdered in the Holocaust.

Our family was fairly prosperous and lived a rich social and cultural life. In 1938 everything changed when my father lost his job as company secretary to the largest department store in Vienna, Gerngross, and my mother's pharmacy was 'aryanised'.

My grandmother, like everybody else's grandmother, was the best cook in the world – she really was! – and she told

me two conflicting stories about this talent. My mother was born in Vienna in 1908. As a small child she was travelling on a train with my grandmother and in the same compartment was a man who had a parrot in a cage. My mother put her hand too close and the parrot nipped her. The man was very concerned and the next day a bunch of flowers was delivered to their flat with a card signed 'Franz Lehar', saying he hoped the little girl had recovered; in return, my grandmother, who was a marvellous baker, sent one of her delicious cakes to him. The family became firm friends and Lehar became my mother's Onkel Franz. As a teenager my mother took singing lessons and performed at concerts of his pupils. I still have the concert programmes and a collection of postcards from Onkel Franz's trips to many places.

The other story concerned our escape to England in 1938. My grandmother had two sisters, one of whom had married a dashing but improvident Hungarian who was, luckily for us, unable to make a living in Vienna. He and my great-aunt moved to London in the 1920s and set up a small lampshade manufacturing business. In 1938 my grandmother, parents and I were able to come to England, my grandmother

and mother as domestic servants to the relatives of the improvident Hungarian and my father, a lawyer, as a bookkeeper to the lampshade business. Somehow they managed to bring with them their furniture, including my pink-painted nursery table and chairs. Our home, until my mother died in 1994, looked just like that of Sigmund Freud in Maresfield Gardens (except for the couch).

In the second story, my grandmother explained that when they knew they were leaving their comfortable life in Vienna she asked her cook to teach her everything she knew about cooking. I have detailed exercise books with all her Viennese recipes. I also have her book *Wie koche ich in England* by Kitty Köberle, published in Vienna in 1938. It contains recipes for rissoles, shepherd's pie, bubble and squeak, bread and butter pudding, rhubarb fool, and other English delights, none of which my grandmother ever made. Throughout the war she somehow managed to make the rich Austrian dishes of her pre-war life.

It was my grandmother who cared for me in London while my mother and father went out to work and I used to sit on our kitchen window ledge while she cooked and told me stories about her previous life. Later on I became her



*continued on page 10* ➔

### Back to my roots *continued*

Kurt Neuwald was made an Honorary Citizen of the city of Gelsenkirchen for all his efforts in Jewish renewal and there is a square named after him in the town centre.

Aside from this, our personal family journey was emotional and uplifting. Unknown to us, Judith had enlisted the help of a local historian who had uncovered two handwritten documents showing the addresses where our mother had lived. We visited both locations with Judith. One was a flat above a shop (possibly the family furniture business), the other a large house, which we guessed would have been occupied by more than one family. At the house we were interviewed by the local TV station, who asked us about our feelings towards modern Germany. We both expressed our mixed feelings that day: the intense emotions of our family's history, seeing how our mother's family's lives were cut down, together with many reminders all over the town of who and what had been destroyed, contrasting with the renewed faith we felt within the

current Jewish community – a community financially supported by today's German government in what appeared a sincere attempt at *T'shuva* (repentance). This interview later appeared as part of a news item commemorating Kristallnacht. I never expected my first (and probably only) TV appearance to be on German TV with my words dubbed into German!

We then went to the old cemetery – the original main purpose of the trip. We were saddened to see several double headstones with only one name engraved on them of someone who had died before the war: their spouse presumably had no burial place just like our own grandmother. It was, of course, an emotionally charged moment finally to be standing at the grave of the grandfather we never had the privilege of knowing but, as we recited *Tehillim* (Psalms) and *El Male Rachamim*, I looked at the names on the stone and realised how my grandfather lives on through my son Sam and my grandmother Sarah – who has no burial place or headstone – lives on in me,

'Sarah Chaya'. Whilst Hitler had destroyed and devastated so many of our families and communities, he had not won.

That evening, before we flew home, we participated in a memorial march to the old cemetery in the presence of the mayor and other dignitaries, who made speeches on remembrance and tolerance. That Kristallnacht memorial march is an annual event sponsored by the city with the participation also of many non-Jews.

We came home physically and emotionally exhausted and deeply moved by so many events in 24 hours, but at the same time uplifted, having experienced the warmth of the Jewish community in a small town that was almost destroyed in the *Shoah* but has risen up and revitalised itself and – please God – will continue to go from strength to strength. We can never forgive or forget but there was some personal closure that day and a new friend was made. I feel sure I will return to Germany one day despite my original misgivings.

Sandy Potashnick



# Letters to the Editor

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

## AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

Sir – It was an honour to be part of the AJR's recognition of the work of Sir Rudolf Bing and his vision to establish the tradition that is now Glyndebourne.

Prior to the dedication, as we in Surrey waited patiently for our coach, we had enough time to admire how glamorous we were and how evening attire had swept away the years. It was unfortunate that due to circumstances beyond our control we were a little late. However, kindly, the assembled gathering waited for us before beginning the dedication of the AJR plaque to Sir Rudolf.

Following the ceremony it was great to explore. The sunshine, together with the picnickers in their evening finery scattered around the beautiful lawns, made for a picture perfect scene.

The opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* – well, what can I say! The beautiful, effortless singing was a joy made more so because the cast seemed to enjoy their performance as much as the audience did.

With the long intermission we were in for another treat. Arranged by the AJR, with their usual attention to detail, buggies were laid on for those in need to take them to the restaurant. Every detail for dining must have been planned down to the last coffee and truffle. Thankfully the walk back to the auditorium was downhill – I would never have made it uphill!

Back to enjoy – and enjoy I did in no small measure – the second half of the opera.

Home by midnight. What an evening! Thank you, AJR.

*June Wertheim, Esher, Surrey*

Sir – As one of your oldest members, may I thank you for the most wonderful outing. We arrived just in time for the unveiling of the plaque to Sir Rudolf Bing, which was a wonderful beginning to a fantastic evening.

Having loved and experienced Glyndebourne in all its stages since I arrived in England with my family in 1937, I never thought I would be able to visit the opera house one more time.

It was such a typical hot English

summer day, with the colourful picnickers in the grounds followed by an excellent performance of *The Marriage of Figaro* and an enjoyable dinner. My daughter and I would like to thank you so much for organising this visit, which was the highlight of my summer.

*Marion Stenham, Elstree, Herts*

Sir – On a perfect summer's day, with not a cloud in the sky, a group of AJR members went to the opera – Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at Glyndebourne. And what a treat it was. The performance was outstanding as expected, the singing superb and, as always, it was a bonus to meet old friends. The dinner during the interval was delicious with more opportunities to chat to colleagues. It was a long day but full of pleasure and we all left Glyndebourne with Mozart's wonderful music still ringing in our ears.

Our thanks to Esther, Kathryn and Rosemary for their support as always and to the AJR for making this trip possible.

*Meta Roseneil, Buckhurst Hill, Essex*

Sir – Beryl and I would like to thank the AJR for organising such a successful and enjoyable outing to Glyndebourne. It was an unforgettable experience for both of us.

*Gabor and Beryl Otvos, Pinner, Middlesex*

*See report on unveiling of plaque on page 11 (Ed.).*

## LABOUR AND ANTISEMITISM

Sir – As a Labour Party member and the spouse of a Kindertransport refugee (now sadly deceased), I should like to speak up in support of Heinz Grünewald, who in my opinion was unjustly criticised by several correspondents in your September issue.

In my local constituency, we have many active Jewish members and from our Facebook blog I judge that although a few of them would side with Mr Grünewald's critics, the vast majority would agree with him.

Recently, a constituency meeting for the Labour leadership nomination that had been arranged to take place on a

Saturday was cancelled about 24 hours beforehand in deference to objections by one (or some) nameless Jewish member(s). As there was insufficient time to arrange another meeting, we were unable to make a nomination. Some of the most vociferous objectors to this came from the other Jewish Labour supporters themselves. Plainly, *they* do not consider that the Party is antisemitic.

*John Buck, London N15*

Sir – Mr Grünewald's letter reminds me of an old English proverb: 'There are none so blind as those that do not want to see and none so dumb as those that do not want to learn.'

Perhaps a reminder of the post-Second World War government action against survivors anxious to get to Palestine might reignite a spark: the interception of clapped-out ships and the internment of passengers in camps in Cyprus – not unlike those these people had experienced during the war; and the culmination of the return to Hamburg of the *Exodus* passengers followed by their incarceration in a camp in Lübeck previously used to house forced and slave labour for the local steel industry. Yes, Mr Grünewald, those actions were ordered by a Labour government under a department controlled by Ernest Bevin! Certainly such actions could not have been motivated by anything other than anti-Jewish bias.

The writer's diatribe of dislike for the State of Israel signifies his mindset.

*Herbert Haberberg, Barnet, Herts*

## KINDERTRANSPORT BOYS IN LEEDS

Sir – I am researching the reception given by the Leeds Jewish community to the Kindertransport children, in particular the establishment and running of the boys' hostel in Stainbeck Lane. I would be interested to hear any information that readers may have of the names of boys who stayed there during the war years, any recollections about life in the hostel and the experiences of the boys, and if any photographs still exist.

*Ian Vellins,*

*173 Alwoodley Lane, Leeds LS177PG*

*tel 011 3268 5747*

*email vellins@ntlworld.com*

## A FISHY STORY

Sir – On reading Fran Horwich's article about Hull in your August issue, I was reminded of my mother's and my arrival in Hull in mid-June 1939 as refugees from Nazi oppression.

Our journey to Hull took place because of the purser of the German liner we were booked on to go to America, where we had relations who had sponsored us. Our luggage was thrown off the boat as the purser shouted 'We have enough bloody Jews on board!'

We were stranded in Hamburg without money (as with so many other people, my

mother's bank account had been frozen by the Nazis). We stayed in a convent until the Jewish community found us a British fishing boat going to Hull. The boat had about ten passengers. The crossing was extremely rough even though it was June. My poor mother was very seasick and I thought I would arrive in Britain as an orphan. The captain and a lady looked after us, assuring me mother would survive – a relief to my 16-year-old ears!

In Hull, members of the Jewish community saw us to our train for Scotland, bought us sandwiches and, as a special treat, a large bar of Cadbury's milk and nut chocolate for our onward journey to Stirling to take up our positions as cook general for mother and me as housemaid – but that's another story.

That is my memory of Hull together with the smell of fish! When I visited the city a few years ago the smell of fish was gone ....

*Ruth Young, Sidcup, Kent*

### GENEALOGICAL PATHWAYS

Sir – Reading Anthony Grenville's article and its mention of a 1975 victim of the IRA, Professor Gordon Hamilton Fairley, gave me a different memory slant on the episode. I first met Gordon in 1958 when I was a clinical medical student at Barts Hospital. Even then I was interested in family history and I knew he had married a Jewish distant cousin of mine. I showed him the family tree and for the next few years, while I qualified and worked as a junior doctor at Barts, we saw quite a lot of each other. He was aware of his wife's well established Anglo-Jewish ancestry, extending back to our communities in Falmouth and Penzance in the early eighteenth century, as well as her connection to similarly well established 'aristocracy' of the early Australian-Jewish community.

In May this year Matthew Parris wrote an article in *The Times* about an interview with Charles Moore, a former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and Moore's choice of a 'great life'. Despite his biography of Margaret Thatcher, his choice was his late neighbour, Gordon Hamilton Fairley. The recording interview was with Gordon's widow and (now adult) children in the studio at the time.

Another tangential connection of possible interest to your readership is that David Lang, a frequent reporter of AJR events in your columns, is equally a distant cousin of mine and of Daphne Hamilton Fairley through the same genealogical pathways.

*(Dr) Anthony Joseph,*

*Emeritus President, Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, Smethwick, West Midlands*

### 'A RIDICULOUS LANGUAGE'

Sir – David Wirth's article in your September issue makes for interesting, if slightly

enigmatic, reading.

As I am a native speaker of Hungarian – that 'ridiculous language' – it would give me pleasure to translate into English the captions in his late grandfather's sketchbook.

Thank you for the interesting *Journal* – I look forward to reading it every month.

*(Mrs) Martha Weissbart, London NW11*

### A HUGE HONOUR

Sir – In my article on my recent visits to Berlin and Koszalin (August issue), modesty forbade me to mention one episode that I now feel I should not have omitted in deference to Professor P.A. Albrecht and Anna Essinger, whose name was adopted for the combined schools in Zehlendorf, Berlin.

After I had given my account of Anna Essinger's personality and achievements Professor Albrecht made a short impassioned speech in which he announced the setting up of an annual prize for the three pupils who had done most to further multicultural and social development in the school: the Anna Essinger and Leslie Baruch Brent Prize. I did my best, but unsuccessfully, to have my name taken off, but it is of course a huge honour for me to be linked in this way to Anna Essinger.

It is the second annual prize set up in my name in the last couple of years: the Leslie Baruch Brent Prize is given by The (international) Transplantation Society for the best basic science paper published in its journal *Transplantation*.

*Leslie Baruch Brent (Emeritus Professor), London N19*

### 'SECOND GENERATION MEMORIES'

Sir – Referring to Anthony Grenville's recent article, I was born in Berlin in 1929 and fled with my parents in 1933, therefore retaining few memories of that life. Not many more of the following two years in Prague either. I only really started remembering after we got to London in 1935.

Eventually I married into the Anglo-Jewish community and, for reasons some of which were perhaps not unconnected to past events, went through a catastrophic divorce before the children were old enough for intelligent conversation about the past. However, I never entirely lost contact with my younger son and began to worry that he was growing up not knowing where he had come from although my parents lived long enough for him to experience their warmth.

I can well understand that to some people the past was so painful that they tried to expunge it, but my parents were able to view it as just another part of our family history. That I couldn't talk this over with my son as he grew up seemed to me next door to a dereliction of duty. This decided me to write down a short sort of autobiography, which I gave to my son

when he was old enough and the dust had settled. Hopefully it will be passed on to my grandson in due course – but, since he is only two now, I will once again be unable to pass on 'oral history'.

*Michael Feld, London N3*

### 'MEMORIES OF A GERMAN CHILDHOOD'

Sir – Rachel Mendel's letter in your August issue rang not just a bell but set in motion an entire tintinnabulation.

My mother knew by heart not only the whole of 'Das Lied von der Glocke' but all Schiller's poems and plays, it would seem, as well as all the German classics in general. She and my father would amuse themselves by making a sort of game out of it: he'd go to the bookcase, take out any volume, open it on any page and read one line out to her, whereupon she would tell him instantly where it occurred, just like some modern-day computer.

But what really threw me were those quotations with some funny line added on that she heard from her mother. They were the very same ones I used to hear from my mother in a different context but equally funny, e.g. 'Raum ist in der kleinsten Hütte' (There's room in the smallest hut, from Schiller's poem 'Der Jüngling am Bache'), our hairdresser's name having been 'Raum' and his shop in Fürth a small hut.

As for the oft quoted 'Der Wahn ist kurz, die Reu ist lang' (Illusion is brief but regret is long-lasting, from 'Das Lied von der Glocke'), walking through the park as a child in Maribor, Slovenia, one day, I overheard a German-speaking lady say to her friend in an Austrian accent what I understood as 'Der Wagen (Wag'n) ist kurz, die Reu ist lang' (The carriage is short but the journey is long). When I reported this to my mother she said this was one of the best jokes she had heard and that I must have misunderstood – what the lady must have said was: 'Der Wahn ist kurz, die Reu ist lang.'

As for Peter Phillip's letter in your August issue, all it does is furnish further proof of my point as, once again, it doesn't make sense. I hadn't written that '[W]ives don't want to sit next to their husbands in shul.' I clearly stated that couples who opt to sit next to each other in synagogue 'will obviously not even contemplate attending Orthodox services.'

No one but the most unintelligent or devious person could have got my meaning wrong – but then 'logic' is not in Mr Phillips's dictionary. As for the rest, I need to take a deep breath and leave it at that.

*Margarete Stern, London NW3*

### KEEPING UP THE TRADITION

Sir – I recently read about AJR members' problem with regard to sitting – or not sitting – next to their wives in synagogue. In Budapest, where I come from, there is a



# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

A Modernist painter who developed shapes and forms from her private fantasy world, **Georgia O'Keeffe's** imagination peaked when she visited Taos and Alcalde in New Mexico in 1929. She was mesmerised by the colours of the sky, the earth-built architecture, the mountain plateaux and the ubiquitous crosses.



Georgia O'Keeffe photographed in 1918 by Alfred Stieglitz. Photograph: The J. Paul Getty Museum/Alfred Stieglitz

Tate Modern's (until 30 October 2016) most significant exhibition of her work outside the US charts her progress from floral shapes in primary colours – particularly her celebrated flower painting *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1* (1932) – to red desertscapes and, later still, her exploration of animal bones found in the desert. She was less interested in the pelvic bones themselves than in the blue sky she glimpsed through the holes in them. Working in the 1940s, the era of the Second World War, she read its metaphor into the bones, suggesting that the blue would survive 'all man's destruction'.

The Tate has assembled over 100 major works from lenders across 23 US states. Her famous depiction of the humble white garden weed is on loan from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas and is the most expensive painting sold at auction

by a woman artist.

To some, her *oeuvre* is the ultimate expression of the female body; others hear musical notation. But there are Cubist influences too in *New York Street with Moon*, while *Black Cross with Stars and Blue* from her New Mexico period merges the deep blue landscape and paler blue starry night with the brooding black cross, only partially conveyed, which ingeniously suggests that Christian influence over the elemental Mexican landscape.

O'Keeffe is an artist equally dominated by colour. In 1934 she discovered Ghost Ranch, where tourists discovered a fake Wild West effect. She bought the house in 1940 and painted the subtle mood and colour shifts seen from the window: 'I wish you could see what I see – the earth pink and yellow cliffs to the north – the full pale moon about to go out in an early morning lavender sky – it is a very beautiful world.'

In a career spanning seven decades (she died at 98), she became the best known female artist in photographer Alfred Stieglitz's avant-garde circle. She later married him.

Her first abstracts were in charcoal: she resisted any colour except black and white but her colour skills became evident in her vivid watercolours of Virginia and Texas.

Her abstracts in oils demonstrate the relationship of form to music, colour and composition, preceded by her famed flower abstractions. But frustrated by critics who saw her paintings as erotic, she moved into less popular, Cubist-inspired work.

From 1925 she painted New York cityscapes but the city lost its magic for her after the Wall Street crash of 1929. Her love of New Mexico was possibly rooted in her paintings of Lake George, with its maple colours, its soft blues and greens and, of course, her eternal flower.

'Nobody sees a flower – really – it is so small – we haven't time – and to see takes time,' she wrote.

## Annely Juda Fine Art

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

CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE



## REVIEWS

### A magnificent work

#### MY DEAR ONES: ONE FAMILY AND THE FINAL SOLUTION

by Jonathan Wittenberg

London: William Collins, 2016, 354 pp. hardback including Notes, ISBN 978-0-00-815803-3

Before it was agreed that I should review this book there was discussion as to whether I was maybe 'too close' to the author for professional reasons but, since Rabbi Wittenberg and I work for different movements in different countries, I felt this should not be a problem. Soon after opening the book, however, I realised that there was indeed a closeness, not in terms of our profession but a personal one for we have stories which are closely parallel – both of us searching for the history of a lost family, recreating from salvaged documents a sequence of events, and trying to clothe the scraps of knowledge and fill the gaps with surmise, a surmise compounded with regret at not having asked these questions earlier when there might have been more chance of discovering the information that would fill some of the aching gaps. And the book is filled with aching gaps, chronicling the lives and relationships of many family members and in many – in most – cases describing how all their best efforts met with no success and, trapped in a tightening net, they met their brutal and undeserved fates.

Rabbi Wittenberg's search began with an encounter while clearing the home of a deceased relative, stumbling over an old suitcase on a balcony in Rehavia in Jerusalem. Unopened for 60 years or so, the suitcase proved to contain letters, documents, receipts, and all sorts of things including a *Ketubah* (Jewish marriage contract), receipts for funeral expenses and photographs – a true treasure trove. The story the documents tell is one familiar to many readers of this journal so it doesn't need to be explained at length. Jonathan discovers family members



Jonathan Wittenberg

from Berlin and Breslau, from Posen and Holesov, and explores on the basis of the few facts available and occasional family anecdotes handed down. He describes in a moving, clear and readable style how they met and married, their piety, their impressive and respected rabbinic careers, the families they raised, how they later tried to escape the tightening controls around them, how they worked so hard to save each other as well as themselves, writing and pleading for a visa here, a guarantee there, an opening anywhere.

All is placed in historical context, for instance Hitler's speech on 30 January 1939 threatening 'annihilation' for Europe's Jews. The author is excellent at describing how Nazi policy gradually changed as the war progressed, how there were internal disputes about what best to do – to force emigration or prevent it, to use labour or eliminate people, to deport them east of the Urals or shoot them straight away, or to let them starve and die of hunger, cold and exhaustion ...

Letters, hopeful, personal letters describing to those in America or Palestine what those in Germany or the 'Protectorate' or even in obscure transit camps are doing, are contrasted with the official instructions not to let Jews use telephones (p.208) or arguments between various groups as to who might profit from destroyed synagogues, or the letter by Höppner of the Reichssicherheitsdienst in Posen putting forward a suggestion that it might be more merciful to kill the Jews rather than just let them die – the 'final solution' was to be a 'most humane solution' (p.236). This is highly valuable in terms of establishing the context for it is clear that the victims could not have known what was to happen if even the perpetrators were unsure what to do next.

There are beautiful insights. One person, having safely got to England after a stormy ferry crossing from Hoek van Holland in January 1939, writes to his mother still in Berlin 'We were all seasick during the night. It's an illness most people long for the opportunity to have.' There are personal connections to a set of old prayer books which survived or the manner in which parents and grandparents had preserved fruit in jars – and yet the time comes to

discard the old and rusted artefacts. There are references to the traumas one inherits when a father suddenly snaps 'Don't write your religion on that official form – that's how they found the Jews!'

If an intelligent teenager is to read any one book about the Shoah this should be the one. Although it references historical events and cites from speeches by Nazi leaders it is not a listing of statistics but a passionate, moving description of the destruction of a family of innocent people: mothers and fathers, grandmothers, cousins and aunts and children, some of whom survived physically but all of whom were devastated, both keeping and hiding documents from the past.

In a sense, the core of the book is a personal comment on p. 240f: '[T]hey decided they had had enough. "We couldn't take any more," Jenny told me. They had known [the writers] and could hear their voices in every word ... I and those like me belonging to the second and third generations were free to follow our inner compulsion to know what had happened without experiencing a similar impact of immediate personal pain.' And this is it – the effort of the following generations to decipher, to translate, to explore, to visit and to understand what happened to the grandparents and great-aunts and uncles and cousins whom they never met. Just ordinary people. 'My dear ones.'

Shining through the book too is an endless faith in a God who is frequently called upon to protect and help and save the 'dear ones'. Not all readers may share this faith, not all will be able to balance the 'theodicy' question – the role of God in a tragic family saga which continues through the post-war tragedies (one of the family members is murdered in the 'Hadassah Convoy Massacre' during the build-up to the independence of the State of Israel) – to the present, the author himself as a rabbi clearly feeling strongly connected to the faith of his ancestors. In Alfred's last letter before his murder he described his efforts to establish legal principles for the nascent state: 'I'm responsible for the departments of religious, family and inheritance law. There are many difficult issues that could be resolved if only our rabbis were of the right calibre.' One could – should – write a book on this statement alone.

I noted one slight typo – where 'Siberia' should read 'Silesia'. But this is nitpicking. It is a magnificent work.

Walter Rothschild

### A precious record

#### A BERLIN DIARY 1943-1944: THE COMPLETE GERMAN-ENGLISH ANNOTATED DIARY OF CÄCILIE LEWISSOHN

Stephen Graeme Hodgson (ed.)  
Saarbrücken: Editiones Originum,  
2013, 162 pp. paperback,  
ISBN 9783639540062

This book is the record of the last months of the life of a Jewish woman in war-torn Berlin. In her diary, Mrs Lewissohn chronicles the nightly Allied bombing raids and her panic to get to the shelter in time. Food is a daily preoccupation, all the more so for her as she has left the *Judenhaus* to which she had been moved and is living illegally with a forged identity among friends and family, constantly dependent on their goodwill. In her sixties at the time of writing, she is not always in good health. Her children and other family members, long absent, are a source of anguish to her. She finds some solace in her music: she is an outstanding pianist and continues to give lessons to supplement her very restricted income.

This account could stand alone, poignant and revealing, with some background information to contextualise it. Instead, the editor has chosen to add more than double the text and here some subjects are more useful than others. For example, a tour of the streets and places of Berlin that are her shrinking world is most helpful as it tells us what has been bombed and when and what her city would have looked like then. Interesting too is the account of wartime films that Cäcilie went to see or some that were also being shown at that time. What messages did they give? Were they propaganda films in disguise?

Less useful and frankly puzzling is a section on the use of language in the diaries. The editor claims that 'transliteration [of her handwriting] reveals more about intonation, stress and rhythmic meter.' There are some six pages on this theme, bringing in Shelly [sic], John Locke and the poetry

continued on page 10 ➔

## HISTORY, GENEALOGY, AND GENETICS OF EUROPEAN JEWS

by Edward Gelles

I have had a lifelong interest in European history but my deeper studies of the Jews in Europe began about 20 years ago with a search for my family roots. This involved the records and memorial books of many Jewish communities, the study of documents including birth, marriage, death and property records, tombstone inscriptions, business, taxation, and school records, army lists, ship manifests, immigration and naturalisation records, monographs of all kinds, and ephemera including old newspapers and personal correspondence. The study led to my first book, *An Ancient Lineage: European Roots of a Jewish Family* (Vallentine Mitchell, 2006), which received a number of favourable reviews, including one in the *AJR Journal* (December 2006).

The book showed how scores of prominent families in my wider family

circle intermarried over many centuries. These families were part of the backbone of Ashkenazi Jewry and their story could be taken as a microcosm of a wider history of the Jews in Europe. The biographical and genealogical material thus brought together led to studies presented in my latest book: *The Jewish Journey: A Passage through European History* (I. B. Tauris, 2016).

This is an interdisciplinary work that brings together European history with Jewish genealogy and the increasingly important application of DNA tests that throw fresh light on old and new problems in historical and genealogical research.

It was reviewed in the August 2016 issue of the *AJR Journal* by Walter

Rothschild.

While the review does not give readers an adequate picture of the book's scope, it has served the providential purpose of impelling me to respond and, in so doing, to clarify what the book is about and why it might appeal to a wider readership looking for some guidance in a search for their ancestry.

The reviewer comments on two passages from my book, relating to the ancient Chayes rabbinical lineage and to the subject of Davidic descent. My books and my 'Edward Gelles' web page in the Balliol College archive show these in a different light.

I have published articles on the Chayes family in British, American, Israeli and Austrian genealogical journals. On the subject of Davidic descent, my discussion in this and earlier books focuses on the 'historical impact of ancient myth', namely the importance that presumed Davidic descent played in medieval and early modern times in supporting the legitimacy of certain ruling families and in the accompanying issue of the 'divine right of kings'.

The reviewer seems to lack an understanding of what the study of genealogy is about and what contributions it makes to historical research. He expresses his dislike of the large number of genealogical charts included in my book, which is after all largely concerned with genealogy! And incidentally, most of my charts are original, in many cases incorporating data unearthed by me and often very revealing in connection with their historical background. He criticises the lack of biographical history of individuals

*continued on page 14* ➔

### ↩ My grandmother – the best cook in the world *continued from pg 5*

assistant cook and was allowed to beat the cake mixes and whip the week's accumulation on top of the gold-topped milk into cream – strenuous jobs before the advent of the food mixer. She went on cooking three-course meals for my parents, myself and, after I married, my husband and our four children, every Sunday until she was 90 and always sent us home with Monday's supper ready to reheat. Every Wednesday she and my mother came to visit us with cakes for our tea. She died when she was 91 having smoked 20 cigarettes a day for 20 years. When we advised her to give up she always said she was too old to die of cancer, but in this instance she was wrong.

I am a mother and grandmother

now and a fair cook myself, though not up to her standard. From time to time I feel the urge or am pushed by my children, her great-grandchildren, to make Krautstrudel or Kaiserschmarrn or the Nussroulade she always made for my birthday. My two daughters, one here and one in Israel, are both more than competent bakers of classic Viennese cakes.

As Claudia Roden writes in her *Book of Jewish Food*: 'Dishes are important because they are a link with the past, a celebration of roots, a symbol of continuity. Cooking ... is transmitted in every family like genes ... and ... makes it possible by examining family dishes to define the identity and geographical origin of a family line.'

### ↩ Reviews *continued from pg 9*

of Ferdinand Freiligrath. Surely there is no need to claim great literary merit for the diary?

Apart from the disjointed effect of the contextual sections, there is one major problem: the book apparently escaped the attention of a single copy editor or proof reader. The English is in parts inappropriate, in the wrong register or just incorrect: 'She once slips into revelry [reverie?] as her mind focuses on her music.' This is not petty quibbling: poor English undermines the reader's confidence in what is being related and is a distraction.

But the translations of the diary

into English are worse and very frequent. These mistakes mean that the reader who does not understand German is misled on many occasions. On page 16, 'Ich habe eine ganze Menge Lebensmittel in dieser Zeit von ihr bekommen' is rendered as '[I] have been able to get a fair quota of ration cards during this time.' But 'Lebensmittel' is 'food' not 'ration cards' and the editor explains elsewhere in detail the difficulties that those in hiding faced without ration cards. A baffling mistake.

There are too many mistakes to quote so one last one should make the point. Her nephew came and hauled

coal up for her from the cellar. She continues: 'Dafür stopfte ich ihnen die Strümpfe, eine Liebe ist der anderen Wert!' This means 'In return, I darned their socks for them – one good turn deserves another!' In the book, this is rendered as 'I found it necessary to stitch my stockings. Hard work can be another's blessing.'

Cäcilie Lewissohn deserved better. However, her diary in German, saved and lovingly transliterated and published here, is a precious record of one woman's last days before she was taken off to the camps and her life extinguished.

**Anna Nyburg**

## AJR unveils plaque in honour of Sir Rudolf Bing at Glyndebourne

As part of its 75th Anniversary celebrations, the AJR has unveiled a special commemorative plaque in honour of Sir Rudolf Bing at Glyndebourne opera house. Sir Rudolf was General Manager at Glyndebourne from 1936 to 1949.

Following the unveiling, AJR members from across the country enjoyed a performance of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and a dinner at one of Glyndebourne's famous restaurants.

Sir Rudolf, who was born in Vienna in 1902, studied music and art history at the University of Vienna before moving in 1927 to Berlin, where he served as general manager of opera houses, and later to Darmstadt.

In February 1934, at the request of fellow émigré Fritz Busch, Sir Rudolf negotiated the contracts for European singers to perform at Glyndebourne before arriving there himself in the summer of 1934. He fulfilled the same job a year later, when he also worked at the Festival as an assistant producer. In the following year, 1936, he took over as General Manager, a position he held until 1939, and took up again in 1945, until he left to become the General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1949.

Sir Rudolf became a British subject in 1946, a year before founding the Edinburgh International Festival. He was knighted in 1971 and died in New York in 1997 aged 95.



Glyndebourne Executive Chairman Gus Christie (left) with AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman (Glyndebourne Productions Ltd. Photo: Sam Stephenson)

AJR Trustee Frank Harding said: 'It gives us great pleasure to commemorate the life of Sir Rudolf Bing, someone whose accomplishments brought great joy and entertainment to generations of people from around the world. Through his pioneering work at Glyndebourne, and later at Edinburgh, he made an enormous contribution to British culture, on which he has left an indelible mark.'

Through our plaque scheme, we are honouring prominent Jewish émigrés from Nazism who made a significant contribution to their adopted homeland. The plaque honouring Sir Rudolf follows the dedications we have already mounted: to the biochemist and Nobel Prize-winner Sir Hans Krebs, to Sir Ludwig Guttman, who founded the Paralympics, and to the theologian, teacher and rabbi Dr Leo Baeck. We have also installed a plaque in memory of the Cosmo restaurant in Swiss Cottage, London, a famous meeting place for the refugees.

We believe that these commemorative plaques will help form a tangible link between the illustrious earlier residents and the local community as well as fascinating residents and visitors. In addition to being instructive and informative, they bring the past into the present and they perpetuate the memory of the person being honoured.'

Gus Christie, Executive Chairman of Glyndebourne, said: 'We are delighted to have a plaque honouring Rudi Bing, who, along with my grandparents, John Christie and Audrey Mildmay, the conductor Fritz Busch and director Carl Ebert, were the founding fathers of Glyndebourne Festival Opera and were responsible for setting the standards, to which we still aspire today. As my grandfather said: "[D]oing not the best we can do, but the best that can be done anywhere!"'

## Valediction Memorial 'To the parents who let their children go ...'

**'Goodbye, be good, look after your brother/sister,  
be polite to your English guardians – and write often ...'**

These are the last words the Kindertransport children would hear from their parents, most of whom perished in the Holocaust.

As a permanent reminder of the courage of the parents who let their children go, it is planned to erect a memorial in Prague's main railway station, Hlavjni Nadrazi, from which most of the 'Winton trains' departed.

The memorial, which will be mounted on a plinth, is to be made mainly in bronze and glass. Hands modelled in the glass have been cast using the hands of descendants of children put onto the train.

It is planned to have the memorial in place by March 2017 to mark the day the first train left Prague.

Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines MBE, 87, who arrived in the UK in August 1939, says: 'This means so much for our children and grandchildren. By involving the younger generations, we want to show the sacrifice our parents made so that their families would live.'

Lady Grenfell-Baines is working with fellow *Kinder* Zuzana Maresova and Tomas Kraus, Chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities, to raise the £100,000 needed to build and maintain the bronze and glass memorial.



Artist's impression of memorial by Stuart Mason



### GLASGOW CF Setting Aside City Rivalry

There was a large turnout when we set aside the traditional city rivalry between Southsiders and West End residents to meet up at the beautiful Botanic Gardens. Friends old and new enjoyed afternoon tea at the Tearoom. It was just as well we had a room to ourselves as the chat and discussion reached a rather high volume! We were delighted to welcome a new member, Ann. Thanks to Agnes for organising another most enjoyable meeting.

*Anthea Berg*

### EALING Underground Tour of London

Nick Dobson's fascinating talk centred on stations: their origins and amazing statues and monuments such as Cleopatra's Needle and the Kindertransport Memorial, situated just outside stations.

*Leslie Sommer*

### LEEDS CF Life on the Bench

Members enjoyed glorious sunshine in the beautiful gardens at Pippa and Norman Landey's home whilst listening to Judge Geoffrey Kamil's talk on 'A Varied Life on the Bench', after which everyone tucked into Pippa's amazing baking.

*Wendy Bott*

### NORFOLK 'The Music Survives'

Peter Beschorner said his father Hans was brought up by a German couple and was a gifted classical pianist, but was taken to Dachau. After leaving Germany for England, Hans was taken in by the Quakers, opened his own school in Wiltshire, and fell victim to post-traumatic stress induced by his Dachau experience. He eventually recovered but had many ups and downs.

*Frank Bright*

### GLASGOW BOOK CLUB 'The Best Book We Have Ever Read'

'The best book we have ever read at Book Club!', said members of Geraldine Brooks's *People of the Book*. Largely a work of fiction but based on the wonderful old *Sarajevo Haggadah*, the likeable characters – and some perhaps

less so – took us through many time periods and traditions between 1480 and 2003. Our next book: *Letters from Skye* by Jessica Brockmole.

*Anthea Berg*

### ILFORD 'My Knee Problem and the NHS'

Due to a technical problem, we were unable to see *The Sturgeon Queen* DVD so the history of smoked salmon will have to wait another day. Our members, ever resourceful, gave us a few amusing anecdotes but 95-year-old Edith Poulsen stole the show with a superb poem on her knee problem and the NHS.

*Meta RoseNeil*

### 'JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR' An Energetic and Athletic Performance

Taking place at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, this was such an energetic and athletic performance, with some really terrific voices singing the catchy familiar songs in Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's powerful rock musical. Anoushka Lucas as Mary Magdalene and Tyrone Huntley as Judas were particularly compelling. We had really good seats and the time flew by as the action drew towards a very dramatic if lurid ending.

*Janet Weston*

### ESSEX (WESTCLIFF) Intimate Meeting

With our speaker Godfrey Gold indisposed, we had an intimate meeting: Esther talked about her holiday in Israel; Otto described a visit to Southend by Disraeli; Miriam told a joke; Valerie spoke about her husband David, who was freed from Theresienstadt with my father Fiszal and Miriam's first husband Emil by the Russians on VE Day; and I spoke about my newly born grandson Finley.

*Larry Lisner*

### EDINBURGH A Wonderful Day Out

First and Second Generation members enjoyed a superb lunch at the Royal Overseas League with its fine views of the Castle, as well as excellent company, followed by a wonderful Mendelssohn and Webern concert performed by the Solem Quartet.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### CAMBRIDGE JP Justice of the Peace Not Jewish Princess

Susan Shaw JP took us behind the scenes to talk about JPs who work on a voluntary basis – overall, the most important characteristic they need

may be empathy with people – and entertained us with amusing anecdotes. Carol Hart, AJR's Head of Volunteer and Community Services, spoke about the AJR's forthcoming 75th Anniversary Conference at JW3 and about free help with computers via SPF.

*Eva Stellman*

### CHESHIRE CF Fly on the Wall

Ernie and Vivienne Hunter were our delightful hosts. We enjoyed a delicious lunch and discussed where we would put ourselves if we were a 'fly on the wall' for one day. There were some very interesting ideas and the time flew by as always!

*Wendy Bott*

### GLASGOW Career of a TV Props Buyer

Mike Ireland gave a fascinating talk on his career as a props buyer for the BBC and other TV companies. Mike had been involved in well-known series such as *Taggart*, *The Lost Tribe* and *Still Game*. He entertained the enthralled group with tales of life on set interspersed with well-chosen anecdotes.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### BRIGHTON Sir Isaac Shoenberg, Engineer and Inventor

Lesley Urbach's talk was about Sir Isaac Shoenberg, who came to the UK from Russia to further his studies. During the war he developed radar and he also worked for the BBC on the development of television. Lesley also showed a film about 'MP for refugees' Eleanor Rathbone.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH Fighting Antisemitism

Our August speaker, Danny Stone, Director of the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism Foundation, told us they provided secretarial support to the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, chaired by John Mann MP since 2005. These voluntary groups, who do not receive any parliamentary funding, meet to discuss and act on issues of concern.

*David Lang*

### DIDSBURY CF A Most Prized or Sentimental Possession

Members spoke about their most prized or sentimental possessions. These ranged from a tablecloth, drawing, ring, Bakelite doll and brass candlesticks to a watch chain.

*Wendy Bott*

## CONTACTS

**Susan Harrod**  
Lead Outreach & Events  
Co-ordinator  
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

**Wendy Bott**  
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07908 156 365 wendy@ajr.org.uk

**Agnes Isaacs**  
Northern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07908 156 361 agnes@ajr.org.uk

**Kathryn Prevezer**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07966 969 951 kathryn@ajr.org.uk

**Esther Rinkoff**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07966 631 778 esther@ajr.org.uk

**Eva Stellman**  
Southern Outreach Co-ordinator  
07904 489 515 eva@ajr.org.uk

**KT-AJR (Kindertransport)**  
Susan Harrod  
020 8385 3070 susan@ajr.org.uk

**Child Survivors' Association-AJR**  
Henri Obstfeld  
020 8954 5298 h.obstfeld@talk21.com

## OCTOBER GROUP EVENTS

Edinburgh	6 Oct	Social
Leeds CF	6 Oct	Social Get-together
Pinner	6 Oct	Sue Kurlander, Head of Social Services, AJR
Book Club	19 Oct	Social
Didsbury	19 Oct	Social Get-together
Radlett	19 Oct	Nick Dobson: 'An Underground Guide to Literary London'
Glasgow Book Club	20 Oct	Social
Leeds CF	20 Oct	'Chocolatier' Bob Winterflood
Welwyn GC	20 Oct	Social Get-together
Hull	23 Oct	Social
Glasgow CF	26 Oct	Musical Afternoon
Nottingham	26 Oct	Social Get-together and Lunch
Wembley	26 Oct	Henry Cohn: 'The Jews of Jamaica'
Cambridge	27 Oct	Harvey Bratt, UJIA
North London	27 Oct	Dr Susan Cohen: 'The Life of Eleanor Rathbone'
Bristol/Bath	31 Oct	tba
North West London	31 Oct	Social Get-together
York/Harrogate	31 Oct	Social
Ealing	1 Nov	tba
Ilford	2 Nov	Lesley Urbach: 'Sir Isaac Shoenberg'
Pinner	3 Nov	Geoff Bowden: 'Murder Most Profitable – the Life and Career of Agatha Christie'

### EDGWARE 'Born Survivors'

Members were mesmerised as Eva Clarke told the story of her birth: she was born in Mauthausen death camp, three days before liberation. Yet she tells the story of her remarkable mother, Anka Bergman, as one of hope, courage and survival amid the Holocaust. Her story, along with those of two other survivors, is movingly told in Wendy Holden's book 'Born Survivors'.

*Eva Stellman*

### BIRMINGHAM A Special Garden Party

Sir Bernard Zissman, our guest at his first bench unveiling in the gardens of Andrew Cohen House, told us of other distinguished benches, including ones marking the Magna Carta and the Queen's Jubilee. Our bench was given by Birmingham AJR members in memory of all the members and their families past and present who had suffered Nazi persecution. A truly special garden party.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### NORTH WEST LONDON Tackling Challenges in Israel

Ben Dov Salasnik of the UJIA told us about the constantly changing challenges, internal and external, facing Israeli society. The UJIA tackles poverty and the causes of poverty in Israel on the basis that it is better to give a man

a fishing rod, which will last a lifetime, than a fish, which will last a day.

*David Lang*

### NORTH LONDON Celebrating Another Year of Friendship

At our 15th Annual Lunch, we had a good attendance, delicious food and a beautiful operatic performance by Kathleen Linton Ford. Group numbers are still going strong and we were happy to celebrate another year of friendship together.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### WEMBLEY The City of London

City of London guide Elaine Wein showed us fabulous photos and told us fascinating facts about the square mile of the City of London. We heard about dragons, livery companies, Postman's Park, the Guildhall and the very modern Walkie Talkie skyscraper. A treat!

*Kathryn Prevezer*

### PRESTWICH CF Sentimental Possessions

There was much discussion about sentimental possessions. Helen brought along a beautiful *siddur* which had belonged to her grandmother.

*Wendy Bott*

### ROUNDTABLE: MAKING A DIFFERENCE CRITICAL RESPONSES TO THE REFUGEE CRISES THEN AND NOW

*Part of the Wiener Library's 'Refugees Then and Now' series, in conjunction with the Remembering Eleanor Rathbone group and B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck, London*

**Wednesday 2 November 2016,  
6-8 pm**

**at the Wiener Library,  
29 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DF**

**Speakers:**

**Rabbi James Baaden**

*on Bertha Bracey, a Quaker who assisted hundreds of mainly Jewish refugees to come to Britain from Germany and Austria in the 1930s*

**Dr Susan Cohen**

*on Eleanor Rathbone, the 'MP for Refugees'*

**Daniel Trilling,**

*a journalist, writer and campaigner on the current refugee crisis*

For further information visit  
[www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/Whats-on](http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/Whats-on)  
or call 020 7636 7247

## History, Genealogy, and Genetics of European Jews

*continued from p.10*

and families, much of which is found in *An Ancient Lineage*, a book to which I frequently refer in my later work.

He seems to be particularly upset about the subject of endogamy to the extent of playing word games with it. It is widely known that Ashkenazi Jews tend to be more inbred than the generality of their non-Jewish neighbours. It was thought that the causes might have included demographic changes connected with wars, pestilence, persecutions, confinement in ghettos, and so on. Genetic studies confirm the relatively inbred nature of Ashkenazi Jews and attribute this to a 'genetic bottleneck' many hundreds of years ago as a result of which the majority of present-day Jews are descended from a very small number of medieval forebears.

The reviewer calls my book 'depressing' and 'sad' and questions the value of this interdisciplinary work because it does not deal with 'destination and destiny'. For me, my book is a heart-warming celebration of the Jewish contribution to our European civilisation. Periods of great tragedy alternated with periods of great achievement and a Jewish remnant survived the darkest times in European history with its priceless heritage.

The Epilogue of my book has the subheading 'Who am I and where did I come from?' My book is very much concerned with what we as individuals and as a society can learn from the past. History and genetic admixture (about which the reviewer is silent) also give us pointers to the future. For European Jewry this may involve more emigration in the short term and a continued process of genetic admixture.

As for the reviewer's concern with destiny, this is a matter that concerns all thinking human beings but it is outside the remit of my book. Eschatology seems to be much closer to the reviewer's interests than genetic genealogy and anthropology.

*Edward Gelles was born in Vienna and came to England with his parents in 1938. He won a Brackenbury Scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, where he obtained his degrees of M.A. and D.Phil. He was a Research Fellow, Research Associate and Lecturer in Physical Chemistry at several universities. Over the past 20 years he has studied Jewish history and genealogy and published six books and over 40 articles in specialist magazines.*

## FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Death

**Flatter, Herta** My cherished Vienna-born wife 'Hertl', after 72 years in our happy and fulfilling marriage, passed away peacefully in hospital on 6/09/16, shortly after her 97th birthday. Sorely missed by her 'Haasi' and by our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who all adored their 'Omi'.



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

Contact Alf Buechler at  
alf@buechler.org  
or tel 020 8554 5635

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

### Jonathan Fishburn

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

He is a member of the Antiquarian  
Booksellers Association.

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

## Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD



Eric Levene

020 8364 3554 / 07855387574

eilevine@blueyonder.co.uk

I also purchase ephemera

LEO BAECK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## CLARA NEHAB HOUSE RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME

Small caring residential home  
with large attractive gardens  
close to local shops and public transport  
25 single rooms with full en suite facilities.  
24 hour Permanent and Respite Care  
Entertainment & Activities provided.  
Ground Floor Lounge and Dining Room  
Lift access to all floors.

For further information please contact:  
The Manager, Clara Nehab House,  
13-19 Leaside Crescent, London NW11 0DA  
Telephone: 020 8455 2286

## CLASSIFIED

**Joseph Pereira** (ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years) is now available for DIY repairs and general maintenance.

No job too small,  
very reasonable rates.

Please telephone  
**07966 887 485**

## SPRING GROVE

*London's Most Luxurious*



### RETIREMENT HOME

214 Finchley Road  
London NW3

- Entertainment
- Activities
- Stress Free Living
- 24 Hour Staffing Excellent Cuisine
- Full En-Suite Facilities

Call for more information or a personal tour

**020 8446 2117**

or **020 7794 4455**

enquiries@springdene-care-homes.co.uk

## SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household  
electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518

Mobile: 0795 614 8566

## PillarCare

*Quality support and care at home*

- Hourly Care from 4 hours – 24 hours
- Live-In/Night Duty/Sleepover Care
- Convalescent and Personal Health Care
- Compassionate and Affordable Service
- Professional, Qualified, Kind Care Staff
- Registered with the CQC and UKHCA

Call us on Freephone 0800 028 4645

PILLARCARE

THE BUSINESS CENTRE · 36 GLOUCESTER AVENUE · LONDON NW1 7BB

PHONE: 020 7482 2188 · FAX: 020 7900 2308

[www.pillarcare.co.uk](http://www.pillarcare.co.uk)



**JACKMAN** ■  
**SILVERMAN**

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

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

## PROFILE by Ronald Channing Sir Claus Moser

An anonymous Georgian house in Great Russell Street is home to the British Museum Development Trust. While busy and purposeful, an unpretentious sitting room off the office of its chairman presents an oasis of calm, the perfect venue in which to meet the urbane aesthete and distinguished academic, former civil servant and merchant banker, Sir Claus Moser.

With little prompting, he recalls his happy, carefree and affluent boyhood in Berlin, particularly excelling at music and sport. At one and the same time his family were very German and yet intensely Jewish; his father, a banker, had served in the Kaiser's army in World War I. Members of the Reform synagogue, the family were ministered to by the great Rabbi Leo Baeck, Sir Claus' father wearing his top hat on their high holy day visits.

### Humiliation at school

A sharp reminder of the changed status of the Jews came in 1934. On entering the classroom his teacher performed the Heil Hitler ritual, to which the whole class responded with the exception of the two Jewish boys who, should they have been so minded, were forbidden from following suite. Humiliation was a regular daily occurrence all round them in the streets. Quite often he saw Hitler passing in his car. Though as proud Germans many middle and upper class Jews believed that Hitler was a passing phenomenon, increasingly aware of virulent antisemitism, his father had decided to emigrate well before Hitler came to power, which they eventually did in 1936.

After attending English public school, soon after his 17th birthday in 1940



he was interned behind barbed wire together with his father and brother and thousands of other refugees. Fortunately, after just three months he was released to become immersed in the exciting intellectual atmosphere of the London School of Economics, completing his degree in 1943 as the outstanding student of his year.

### RAF volunteer

Claus immediately volunteered for the RAF as the most immediate way to pursue his personal vendetta against Hitler. The recruiting sergeant, taking note of Claus's enthusiasm to engage the enemy and excellent academic qualifications, promptly signed him on as a flight mechanic – cleaning out aeroplanes. Though later promoted to instrument repairer, he was clearly cut out for other professions, yet as virtually the only university-educated man in his unit, the experience of meeting people from all walks of life was to prove invaluable.

After demobilisation he returned to the LSE as a member of staff, was made Professor of Social Statistics and advised the Robbins Committee on Higher Education. In 1967 he was appointed Director of the government's Central Statistical Office, serving three Prime Ministers until 1978 when he joined NM Rothschild as Vice-Chairman. From 1984 to 1993 he was Warden of Wadham College, Oxford, and from 1991 Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Oxford. He is Chancellor of both Keele University and the Open University of Israel.

### Talented musician

Music is an essential element in Sir Claus' life. He remains a talented classical pianist, having studied under Louis Kentner, and became actively associated with the Royal Academy of Music, the BBC, the Royal

To mark the death of Lord Moser, who passed away in September 2015 aged 92, we are re-publishing, in place of an obituary, an article which appeared in the *AJR Journal* in January 2001 (Ed.).

Opera House – serving as Chairman for 13 years, Glyndbourne Opera, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, London's South Bank, the London Symphony Orchestra, Music at Oxford and the Oxford Playhouse – being Chairman of both – and the Jerusalem Music Centre.

Claus's presidential address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1990 led to widespread public discussion on Britain's educational problems and the establishment of a National Education Commission on which he served. Sir Claus continues with his work on educational research and policy, notably on post-school education and was appointed Chairman of the Basic Skills Agency in 1997.

### Jewish causes

When discussing the celebration of this year's 60th Anniversary of the AJR, of which he is a member, his involvement and enthusiasm were much in evidence. Sir Claus sees no contradiction in his proud and public support for Jewish and Israeli causes among the many to which he gives generously of his time and expertise. Nevertheless, he is struck by the differences between refugee attitudes. Some happily became anglicised and chose to bury their Jewish origins, while at the other extreme were those who never managed to reconcile themselves to their adopted country. Sir Claus sees himself as being somewhere in the middle, "settled very happily in England, yet conscious of my roots in Berlin". A man forever connected to his Jewish boyhood in Germany.

## OBITUARY

### Henry Grant, born Vienna 3 August 1924, died London 3 July 2016

Henry Grant was born in Vienna in 1924 but left Austria en route for England in 1939. He was aged 15 and came with a group organised by Youth Aliyah. Their aim was to reach Palestine and, to that end, Henry studied Hebrew. They waited for the necessary permits, which sadly never arrived. Initially the group was accommodated at Great Engham Farm in Kent, then transferred to Bydown House in north Devon. Henry was hired out for agricultural work, which he felt had no future. He decided to leave and in 1941 went to Birmingham, where he found work as a building labourer.

While Henry was on holiday at a Young Austria camp in the Peak District, he met the love of his life, fellow Viennese Trude Frischmann. Romance blossomed and they tied the knot in 1945. The young couple came to London and thereafter Henry worked for many years in the field of accountancy in the fashion trade and as manager of a leather and travel goods company.

Following retirement (together with work for the AJR), Henry volunteered to take on an arduous task – that of Joint Honorary Treasurer of the Association of Jewish Friendship Clubs (AJFC) – and I came to know him whilst working as an AJFC administrator. To say he was exacting in his role would be putting it mildly – woe betide anyone who made the slightest error in calculation, down to the last penny or two! He would be onto them like a ton of bricks. Henry had a brilliant brain where figures were concerned, never having the slightest need for a calculator. Ever conscious of the need to be exact when presenting the Association's accounts at annual general meetings, he was always ready to answer complicated questions on any financial matter and scrupulous in submitting annual statements to the Charity Commission.



With great-grandchildren Lucas and Chloe

Recalling 7 July 2005, when there were explosions throughout the London Transport network resulting in total lockdown, I phoned Henry to say I wouldn't be in the office that day. He asked in a somewhat surprised tone 'Why not?' Ever a stickler for duty.

Henry held his position with the AJFC for some ten years, until finally the charity was wound up.

AJR member Rev Gershon Gladiusz recalled: 'Henry was an ardent lover of the Jewish people and of Israel. He will be sadly missed by friends and colleagues alike.'

Henry is survived by his daughter Marion, son Peter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His wife Trude predeceased him. Little is known of the fate of his parents and family except that they were deported to death camps in Poland.

Irene Gladiusz



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### Security and naivety

It happened to be in France at the time of several vicious terrorist attacks there. The poor French public is subjected time and again to these horrendous attacks and is left bothered and bewildered by it all, as well as being angry with its government for not doing enough to ensure its safety.

The trouble with France – the country of liberty, equality and fraternity – is that it has allowed itself to be lulled into a sense of false security by those very values. Everyone tries to be very tolerant and enjoy the good things of life (and France has plenty of those) and this has enabled cohorts of angry or possibly disturbed young men to be persuaded by leaders and preachers with evil intent to perpetrate acts of mass or individual murder on an unprecedented scale.

I have heard well-meaning French intellectuals speak out in favour of the assumption of a position of cultural superiority. It seems somewhat naive on their part to contend that culture, music and greater acceptance of 'the other' will defeat all the hatred and radicalism that is awash in the immigrant communities which inhabit the high-rise suburbs of the big cities, where poverty, crime and murder are everyday occurrences.

Other than that, it's no secret that France

is host to a large Muslim population, much of it from what were once French colonies and most of whose members are well integrated into French culture and language. So there shouldn't be any sense of disgruntlement there, nor should one expect young men (and it always seems to be young men) to be so full of hatred and venom that they are prepared to plough a heavy truck through a throng of innocent people enjoying a day of national rejoicing or take a knife to the throat of an elderly priest as he conducts a church service.

One can only shake one's head in dismay and wonder what's going through the minds of those young men. On the other hand, there are a great many things that governments can do to stymie or preempt those dastardly deeds and, unfortunately, the necessary actions do not seem to have been taken by the French authorities. After all, as an editorial in *Le Figaro* pointed out, the attacks that recently took place in Paris, with dozens of casualties, should have triggered a far-reaching heightening of security.

In this respect, Israel has much to teach other countries. After suffering for many years from terrorist attacks of every possible variety, the last few years have seen a drastic reduction in such attacks, so that even though some individuals still feel impelled to perpetrate

assaults, these are usually restricted to small-scale knifings and the occasional attempt to ram vehicles into bus stops or run down pedestrians. Obviously, every country and society has to tailor its counter-terrorist activity to meet its own needs and one cannot expect everyone to put into place the same kind of extensive surveillance and security checks that Israel does – but the fact of the matter is that these methods work.

No one wants to live in an Orwellian dystopia – and Israel is not quite at that stage – but surveillance is part of the modern world and the methods available in this day and age can contribute to preventing terrorist attacks. When all is said and done, it's still preferable to have a higher degree of security than to put innocent lives at risk. Surveillance makes it possible to identify and track down potential terrorists and, in my opinion, the price of less personal privacy is worth paying.

There are indications that things are moving in France. As we left Toulouse airport a unit of ten heavily armed soldiers patrolled the area. And a friend in the south told me that the small holiday town where he lives on the Riviera was being inundated by armed soldiers and policemen, with sharpshooters posted on the roofs of buildings. This was happening just prior to 15 August, a national holiday when crowds tend to fill the beaches, promenades and open spaces.

In the final event, however, in France as in Israel, Germany and anywhere else, it's all a question of being lucky enough not to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *cont. from p.7*

ladies' gallery: there's no sitting together as in a church. Hungarian Jews are not so religious but they keep up the tradition.

Clare Parker, London NW11

#### 'NOT THE VIEW OF ALL JEWISH PEOPLE'

Sir – If this is what happens when Dorothea Shefer-Vanson expresses her opinions, let's go back to her bland descriptions of life in Israel! What one Palestinian says is not the view of all Palestinians; what the Pope says is not the view of all Christians; and, fortunately, what Dorothea Shefer-

Vanson says in her September 'Letter from Israel' – comparing the Palestinians with Goebbels!? – is not the view of all Jewish people.

Judy Sherwood, Matlock, Derbyshire

#### ANITA BROOKNER CULT

Sir – Do we appreciate enough Jewish talent when it is served up as background information of secondary importance?

Anita Brookner, who died in March, left an extraordinary *oeuvre* behind – a world-class art historian and one of the great novelists of our time.

Her parents, on both sides, were Polish

Jews and she grew up in a large household in Herne Hill, filled with Polish refugees, aunts, uncles and cousins, who, she felt, needed her protection.

Her Jewishness manifests itself in a steely kind of detachment. She was well integrated into society yet she also stood outside it. This helped her to see it all the more clearly. Women's position in society was one of her recurring themes.

Her recent death marks the beginning of an Anita Brookner cult. No prophetic talent is needed to foretell that it will grow.

Nicholas Pal, London NW6

Published by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), a company limited by guarantee.

Registered office: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, Finchley, London N3 1HF

Registered in England and Wales with charity number: 1149882 and company number: 8220991

Telephone 020 8385 3070 e-mail [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)

For the latest AJR news, including details of forthcoming events and information about our services, visit [www.ajr.org.uk](http://www.ajr.org.uk)

Printed by FBprinters LLP, 26 St Albans Lane, London NW11 7QB Tel: 020 8458 3220 Email: [info@fbprinters.com](mailto:info@fbprinters.com)