



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Our only Booker



Heat and Dust not only received the Booker Prize, it also won Ruth Prawer Jhabvala a BAFTA in 1984 for her screen adaptation.

Given our community's incredible literary heritage, AJR members might be surprised to learn that there has been only one Jewish refugee to have been awarded the leading literary award in the English speaking world, the Booker Prize.

In May 1927 the novelist and screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was born in Cologne to Jewish parents Marcus and Eleanora (Cohn) Prawer. Her father was a lawyer who moved to Germany from Poland to escape conscription and her mother's father was cantor of Cologne's largest synagogue. The family was among the last group of refugees to flee the Nazi regime in 1939, emigrating to Britain. Her elder brother, Siegbert Salomon Prawer (1925–2012), became Taylor Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Oxford.

Ruth is the only Jewish refugee writer to be awarded the Booker Prize during its 56 year history, for her novel *Heat and Dust*.

She also won two Academy Awards for Best Adapted Screenplay for *A Room with a View* (1986) and *Howards End* (1992) and in 1993 was nominated for a third for her adaptation *The Remains of the Day*. *Heat and Dust* was one of twelve novels and novellas she wrote over forty years between 1955 and 1995. She also wrote two short stories about refugees in London.

She was just one of many great Jewish refugee writers who came to Britain in the 1930s and 1940s. The best known were mainly from central Europe and included novelists, children's writers, screenwriters and playwrights such as Joy Adamson, née *Continued on page 2*

A MIXED FALL

As the world prepares to mark the second anniversary of the worst atrocities committed against Jewish people since the Holocaust, this month's opinion piece, written by a Holocaust survivor, (p5) will likely resonate with many of our readers.

Those preferring something more lighthearted will enjoy the amusing tales from a barber shop that was set up in one of the former internment camps on the Isle of Man (p14-15).

Closer to the AJR's home, many refugees and their descendants may find their taste buds tickled by the memories of Finchleystasse shared by Etan Smallman (p12-13).

We would be delighted to receive any memories and/or opinions that you personally wish to share.

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

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Our only Booker (cont.)

Friederike Viktoria Gessner, famous for *Born Free*; the Hungarian Lajos Biro, who wrote a number of famous screenplays for Alexander Korda in the 1930s and 1940s, the Nobel Prize winning author Elias Canetti, who came to London in January 1939; the Jewish-Austrian writer George Clare (née Klaar), whose parents were both killed at Auschwitz, best known for his memoir, *Last Waltz in Vienna* (1981); the prolific German-Jewish novelist Eva Figs; the poets, Erich Fried and Karen Gershon; née Kathe Loewenthal, who arrived in Harwich on the second *Kindertransport*; the Romanian literary journalist Miron Grindea, who founded and edited the journal, *Adam*; the German-born poet Michael Hamburger; the German-Jewish screenwriter, Lukas Heller, who became famous in Hollywood the much-loved children's writer Judith Kerr; the Jewish-Hungarian writer and journalist Arthur Koestler, best known for his extraordinary novel about the Soviet show trials, *Darkness at Noon* (1940) and books of non-fiction such as *The Yogi and the Commissar* (1942), *The Sleepwalkers* (1959) and *The Ghost in the Machine* (1967); the Yiddish poets, Itzik Manger and AN Stencl, both from Poland; the Hungarian-born writer and humourist, George Mikes; the screenwriter Emeric Pressburger, best-known for his longtime collaboration with Michael Powell; the critic and writer, George Steiner; the Czech-born playwright Tom Stoppard (born Tomás Straüssler); birds of passage who passed through Britain such as Nabokov, Stefan Zweig and the playwright Ernst Toller, two of whom committed suicide during the war, Toller in New York and Zweig in Brazil.

This is just a small selection of the most famous refugee writers. Their range is extraordinary, from *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* to screenplays like *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?*, *Hush Hush Sweet Charlotte*, *The Thief of Bagdad* and *The Red Shoes*; from the literary criticism of Gabriel Josipovici and George Steiner to humorous books like *How to*

be an Alien. Some like Steiner 'brought European ideas to Britain, while others, like Stoppard, could hardly have been more British. Some, like Ruth Praver Jhabvala, became famous for their English subjects such as EM Forster and British appeasers in the 1930s. Others still, such as Nabokov, made movement and being outsiders their central subjects.

In April 2004, Richard Grunberger wrote a wonderful article in this very journal titled *Where is the great refugee novel?* He began by pointing out that "One of the outstanding features of the publishing scene in recent years has been the success of immigrant novels. Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* – the one about Pakistanis and West Indians, the other about Bangladeshis – are obvious cases in point. Their subject matter – the culture clash of newcomers from the Third World with the host society – is found to interest a wide readership."

Grunberger contrasted the impact of these hugely successful novels with the failure of novels by refugees to achieve the same kind of bestseller status – or, indeed, the failure of refugee writers to win prestigious prizes like the Booker. "How to explain this dearth?" he asked and he came up with a fascinating theory to do with social class, of both the authors and characters in these novels. "Newcomers to an established society," he wrote, "tend to find themselves at the bottom of the heap – from which position the next generation may (or may not) emancipate themselves.

We 'continental Britons', however, tended to project a rather more middle – than working-class image (I have a hunch that this bourgeois label applied more to German than Austrian Jews). Accordingly, such novels as were written about the refugee experience came from the impeccably middle-class pens of Anita Brookner and Eva Figs. Their style is too well-mannered, not to say anodyne, to give readers the gutsy experience they expect from an immigrant novel. (I also exclude from consideration W. G. Sebald's epic *Austerlitz*, which focuses on the

trauma of a virtual toddler transplanted from Prague to Wales.)"

It's an interesting article. But it doesn't account for the extraordinary success of so many refugee screenwriters who found themselves perfectly at home with very English subjects, including, obviously Ruth Praver Jhabvala herself, as well as Stoppard and Pressburger. It also misses out the fascinating refugee literary critics, including Jhabvala's own brother, SS Praver, essayists like Koestler, and it doesn't address why so many great refugee writers who came to Britain then moved on.

Perhaps there's another clue in Grunberger's article. He refers to the great German writer, WG Sebald, who became one of the great writers about exile and the Holocaust. His masterpieces, *The Emigrants* and *Austerlitz*, were written just when the Holocaust had been discovered by a new generation of readers and filmgoers. Perhaps the biggest problem facing Jewish refugee writers was timing. Many were writing between the 1940s and 1970s when British readers and publishers were uninterested both in Jewish subjects and, specifically, in the Holocaust. Few, among them George Steiner, both in his criticism and in his fiction, were able to break the silence. Stefan Zweig was a bestselling author in German-speaking Europe but has only been rediscovered by British publishers in recent years.

This is a complicated story, one of triumph and achievement, another much darker and sadder, of talent that often went unrecognised in postwar Britain. Interestingly, the most unrecognised of all tended to come from east Europe, especially Yiddish poets, and tended to come here as adults. And the most successful tended to come to Britain as children, such as Judith Kerr, Tom Stoppard and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, who grew up speaking and writing fluent English and developed an ear for English culture.

David Herman



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THANK YOU BRITAIN @ 60

The AJR in partnership with The British Academy are running a special conference to mark the 60th anniversary of the Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship on Monday 10 November at The British Academy.

The Fellowship is one of the proudest accomplishments of the Jewish refugees from Nazism who came to Britain. Through the AJR, many hundreds of émigrés made donations that created an endowment that was given to the British Academy as an expression of gratitude of the refugees.

On 8 November 1965, Sir Hans Krebs, on behalf of the AJR, presented a cheque to Lord Lionel Robbins, President of the British Academy, for £96,000 (now some



£2,000,000). The ceremony was held in the appropriately grand Livery Hall of the Saddlers' Company in the City of London. The date of the ceremony was chosen specifically to commemorate the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The conference will start at 10am and be a full day event. Speakers, including Lord Danny Finkelstein and the AJR's Dr Tony Grenville, will focus on the legacy of the Fellowship and the contributions of the refugees in its establishment. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

If you are interested in attending please email Susan Harrod on susan@ajr.org.uk.

WINTON PREMIER

This month sees the world premiere in Brno, Czech Republic, of a new theatrical production, *Winton*.

Opening on 18 October 2025 at the Brno City Theatre as part of the Meeting Brno Festival, the play tells the true story of Sir Nicholas Winton, who in 1939 saved 669 predominantly Jewish children from occupied Czechoslovakia. Simultaneous translation into English will be provided via headphones, following the script of the play word for word.

The Meeting Brno Festival is also contributing to the restoration of the 'Schindler Factory' in Brněnec/Brännlitz, where Oskar and Emilie Schindler saved 1,200 people from transportation to Nazi concentration camps. The factory is gradually being transformed into a museum presenting the full historical story.

The premiere event for *Winton* will bring together all generations of the so-called Winton children, along with children from other Kindertransports, while a special event the following day will look at Winton's legacy.

More info at: www.meetingbrno.cz/en/

LOVE FOR LILIAN

The AJR pays tribute to a very special member, Lilian Levy, who has helped to edit some one hundred issues of this Journal.

Working on an entirely voluntary basis, Lilian has worked alongside our editor, providing skills that have proved invaluable to the ongoing production of this much-loved monthly magazine.

Lillian, herself a survivor of Westerbork and Bergen Belsen, started her volunteering career at World Jewish Relief in 1994 after replying to an advert in the Belsize Square synagogue newspaper asking for someone with knowledge of German. Lillian managed the archive for over 20 years, helping thousands of families get some closure on their family stories.

In 2017 Lilian joined the editorial team of the AJR's monthly Journal. Lilian helped by proof-reading, coordinating the letters and events listings, and generally helping our Editor, Jo Briggs,



with whatever was required.

Speaking at a special farewell tea given in honour of Lilian and two much younger volunteers who are returning to Germany, Jo said: "I have so appreciated Lilian's wisdom and dedication, as well as her warm friendship and sharp wit. Her eagle eyes missed nothing, allowing me to focus on the bigger picture while being confident that all the finer details were being taken care of. Together with all of my colleagues at the AJR I wish her a long, happy and tech-free retirement."



EVERY ALTERNATE WEDNESDAY
11AM ON ZOOM

To receive a poetry booklet and refreshments in time for the next meeting, please let us know if you are coming.

Suggestions and original compositions are welcome

First session after the break: 22 Oct



julia@ajr.org.uk / naomi@ajr.org.uk

FIFTY YEARS AFTER 'I KNOW NOTHING'

David Herman reflects on the German-Jewish Refugee who became famous as a Spanish waiter half a century ago.

Andreas Siegfried Sachs (1930–2016), known professionally as Andrew Sachs, was a German-born actor who found his greatest fame as the comical Spanish waiter Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*, first shown fifty years ago.

Sachs was born on 7 April 1930 in Berlin, the son of Katharina (née Schrott-Fiecht), a librarian, and Hans Emil Sachs, an insurance broker. His father was Jewish, his mother Lutheran. He had an elder sister and brother and remembered '... it was a happy family. I had a home to go to, food in my stomach, love from my family, what more does a child want?'

His father fled to Britain in 1938 after he was briefly arrested by the Nazis. The family followed three months later, by ship from Hamburg, after Andrew had witnessed *Kristallnacht*. 'I saw the looting of the shops which was fairly alarming,' he said years later. He saw a man run out of his house, 'clutching a little suitcase.' 'There was a tree with a professional notice. He was a lawyer or dentist... I still remember this: he went to this metal plaque, and he tore it off the tree, and he crumpled it in his hand. This old paper, threw it down, got in the taxi. A moment later he came out again, picked the thing up and flattened it out. He put it face-up on the pavement, got in the taxi, and off he went with his little suitcase.'

The family settled in north-west London. For his first breakfast he had shredded wheat. 'I didn't realise they ate straw in England, then you put milk on it. This is for horses.'

His father was interned as an 'enemy alien' in 1940 and died of cancer early in 1944. Andrew lived in north-west London for the rest of his life. His sister emigrated to America, his brother to Canada.



Manuel's catchphrase took its origins from the *Fawlty Towers* episode 'Communications Problems', when Basil coerced him into his attempts to conceal a failed horse bet from Sybil

Andrew began in acting with repertory theatre and made his West End debut as Grobchick in the 1958 production of the Whitehall farce *Simple Spymen*. He made his screen debut in 1959 in the film *The Night We Dropped a Clanger*. He then appeared in numerous TV series throughout the 1960s, including in ITV productions such as *The Saint* (1962) and *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969).

But, of course, he is best known as Manuel, the luckless Spanish waiter in *Fawlty Towers* (1975 and 1979), a role for which he was nominated for a BAFTA award (the award went to co-star John Cleese). He claimed, in 1981, that Manuel was 'really a very small part. In fact there was only one episode of *Fawlty Towers* – the one with the hamster – in which I had anything much to do.'

Sachs narrated numerous TV and radio documentaries, several audio books and children's animation programmes. Roles for radio include G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown, 1984–1986, Dr. Watson in four series of original Sherlock Holmes stories for BBC Radio 4, Jeeves in *The Code of the Woosters*, Snowy in *The Adventures of Tintin*, and Tooley in Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*. In 1980 Sachs starred in the title role of a four-part BBC adaptation of H. G. Wells's *The History of Mr Polly*.

In 1988 Sachs returned to Berlin to make a three-part BBC documentary series, *Berliners*, following his early life in the

city, comparing it with the divided Berlin of 1988.

In 1994, Sachs appeared in the popular Thames Television comedy drama series *Minder*. In 1996, Sachs portrayed Albert Einstein in an episode of the American PBS series *NOVA* entitled 'Einstein Revealed'. Sachs appeared several times in *Doctor Who* productions and in almost thirty episodes of *Coronation Street*.

Sachs married the actress, writer and fashion designer Melody Lang in 1960. In 2012 he was diagnosed with vascular dementia, which eventually left him unable to speak and forced to use a wheelchair. He died on 23 November 2016, aged 86.

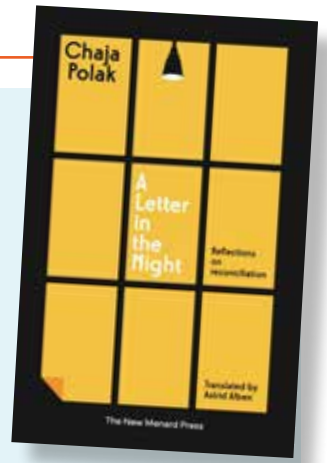
In 2001 Sachs was interviewed by Bea Lewkowicz and Anthony Grenville for *Émigré Voices: Conversations with Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria* (2022).

Asked whether being a refugee had influenced his choice of career, Sachs replied: 'Having to learn a new language and culture – a total switch. Then not being Jewish and not being not Jewish [...] made me feel that, some way, I'm on the fence. I'm neither one thing or another.' He described himself as, 'More English than anything else. Here, I do feel at home more than anywhere else. Residual gratitude for being here, that's always with me.'

OPINION

HISTORY DEMANDS EMPATHY

In the days after the Hamas attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023, Chaja Polak, one of the pre-eminent voices in Dutch literature, wrote down her thoughts about that tragic moment when, in her opinion, the world started to come apart at the seams. This personal essay became *A Letter in the Night: Reflections on reconciliation*.



Born in The Hague in 1941, Polak's early life was overshadowed by the Holocaust. Her mother survived Auschwitz, her father died in Dachau. She was hidden at five different addresses.

A Letter in the Night (now in its eleventh printing in the Netherlands and with an English version translated by Astrid Alben and recently published by the New Menard Press) argues that empathy in the face of others' suffering can, and must, replace the desire for revenge. This is chapter VII from her book.

I was separated from my parents when I was two and a half years old. On that day in April 1944, Dutch policemen who were collaborators, on the orders of the Sicherheitsdienst in The Hague, forced their way into the house where my parents and I were in hiding.

Due to a series of mistakes, I was not taken with my parents to Scheveningen prison, and from there to Westerbork, and from there to Auschwitz, as they were, but remained behind with my 'hiding family'. By the time the police-collaborators had realised their mistake and returned for me that evening, the Resistance had already moved me to another location.

I must have suppressed memories of the arrest. I do remember the following day. I was lying in an unfamiliar bed; two women were sitting at the foot of the bed looking at me. I didn't know who they were. The curtains had been pushed open, and it was broad daylight. And yet I was lying in bed. I must have come down with something.

My mother survived Auschwitz; my father did not. In June 1945, my mother

and I were reunited. And I turned into a child who hung on to her skirts, a child who didn't want to play outside, a child who was sick a lot, a child who didn't want to eat, a child paralysed by fear when her mother went out for the evening, certain that her mother would never return.

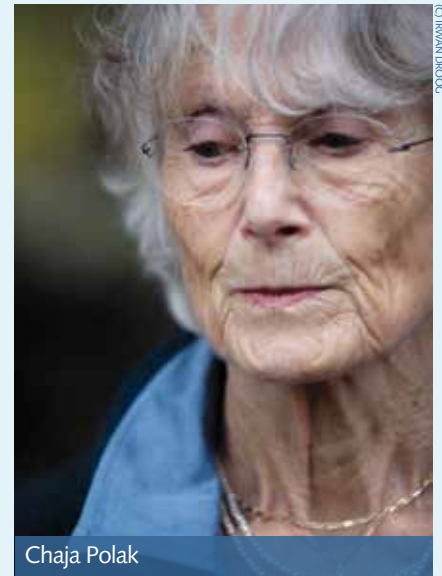
Jews, especially Jews, should feel empathy for the suffering of the civilian population in Gaza. After all, they know what it means to have no parents, like far too many children of the Holocaust. Jews in particular should reject violence and look for any other means to bring security and peace. Because they do not want others to suffer as they and their families suffered. And often still suffer. Because they know what suffering is.

This is also why my wish is so self-evident: no child should have to endure these fears, barefoot and alone at the windows at night. Not anywhere. And I know at the same time that there are countless children in Gaza right now, every day, who have to grow up without fathers, without mothers, forever separated from them.

And there are Israeli children, forever separated from their mothers and fathers, or from one of them. That is the reason why I am against this war.

Besides, I cannot believe in violence as a solution to this maddening conflict. Should Hamas be eliminated by the Israeli army, a new, even more extremist terror group will emerge. As it did in the wake of the US interventions after 9/11. The continued bombing by the Israeli government and Hamas will further split the world into For and Against. Into Black and White.

Into a world of hatred, revenge and



Chaja Polak

resentment. Into a world of antisemitism and Islamophobia. The way out of this nightmarish conflict will disappear even further out of sight. So too will the vision of a Palestinian state coexisting peacefully and in mutual respect with Israel.

And what of Israel's right to defend itself? Of course, but not in this way. As journalist and author Hella Rottenberg and I argued in an opinion piece in the newspaper *De Volkskrant* on 8 November 2023, the conflict should have been referred to the diplomatic arena from the start. At best, the hostages would have been released and tens of thousands of civilian casualties would have been avoided.

People do not learn from history. People do not become better people, more responsible people, nor more benign when they have been hated and persecuted, nor when their loved ones have been murdered. Even though there will always be exceptions. Maybe people do learn from history and it is bad people who have the most power?

Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

A PIONEERING SCULPTOR

Subscribers to the *AJR Journal*, who will have read Amy Williams' fascinating piece (September) about her visit to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire, may be interested to know the provenance of the Jewish memorial pictured alongside her article.

Made from Chinese granite and offering changing perspectives when viewed from different angles, this elegant project was designed and created by the late Harry Seager, a highly original and pioneering sculptor in a variety of media.

Together with his wife Marie, Harry was a staunch member of Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, which is proud to display in its foyer his "Tree of Remembrance," whose inscribed golden leaves commemorate congregants' family members and which also displays a plaque in memory of victims of the Holocaust.

Barbara Dean, Birmingham

MORE REMARKABLE EDUCATORS

In the excellent article *Back to School* by David Herman about the teachers who contributed to general and Jewish education in Britain. (September), I feel that an important omission may have been made.

My sister (aged 10) and I (aged 12) arrived with our mother in England in 1942, having escaped from France via Spain and Portugal, not knowing a word of English, nor another child. My father, who was in the Pioneer Corps, managed to enroll us in the Avigdor High School, the Hasmonian, which had been evacuated to Shefford, Bedfordshire. There we learned the language and were educated in our Jewish tradition and culture under the sympathetic staff led by the principal, Dr Judith Grunfeld née Rosenbaum, a pioneer of the revolutionary Beis Yaakov educational movement. She taught teachers in Poland, and when she was in England, was appointed head of the Avigdor High School.

Born in Budapest in 1902, she was raised in Frankfurt am Main, where she attended school and university. In 1924, she went to

Krakow in Poland to join Sarah Shenire's fledgling school, which encouraged Jewish girls to gain an intensive Jewish education and appreciate their culture and religion. She was involved in training teachers at the Beis Yaakov seminary and in raising funds. She married Dayan Isidor Grunfeld, who was a judge in the London Beth Din.

In 1980 she published *Shefford: the story of the Jewish school community in evacuation 1939 to 1945*.

Note from editor: The book, which recounts how the local gentile community eventually overcame their initial surprise and resentment to welcome the Jewish children and teachers, fostering a memorable and inspiring six years, is available online.

She is remembered by her affectionate nickname, 'the Queen', and was an impressive, cultured, intelligent lady who influenced many, many of her pupils with her teaching and by her personal example, including myself, who later took up the teaching profession.

Dr Judith Grunfeld died on 14 May 1998 in London.

Ira Brysh, Edgware

As a former pupil of St Christopher School (Chris), Letchworth, I sent a copy of your article *Back to School* to the Membership Secretary of the St Christopher Club. He replied:

"Five of Trudi Goldschmit's pupils came to Chris for a month in Autumn 1936 to brush up their English. Lyn Harris helped to get her Berlin school registered as a Cambridge exams centre, so her students could take English exams, which would then be 'portable' if or when they had to leave Germany. Trudi's own children came to Chris for a short while in 1939 while she set up her own establishment in Folkestone.

Paul Hamburger (Hamlyn) was another Jewish refugee who came to Chris, along with Peter Gaydushek, Hans Freudenthal, and Wolfgang Colden. There were three Kirchheimer brothers who came to Chris

in their late thirties for a short while before moving on to the USA. Other short-term Jewish refugee pupils include Peter and Marianne Kaskell and two Somers brothers, who all went on to the USA. Christoph Sulzbach, grandson of August Strindberg, had to leave Germany because his father was Jewish – he was at Chris for a year in 1935, en route for somewhere else. Chris had quite a number of such folk.

I will add the AJR Journal article to the St Chris archive, which includes a number of books about the war years and just after, such as Roger Atkinson's Blackout, Austerity and Pride."

Peter J Natt, Stevenage

Your article brought to mind life during the war at Fortis Green School. A progressive school in Northwest London, it had been evacuated to a large house in Aspley Guise in Buckinghamshire said to be designed by Christopher Wren.

The head teacher was a formidable, very left-wing Beatrix Tudor-Hart. She took under her wing a considerable number of Jewish refugees as teachers or "matrons", including my mother, as well as a significant number of Jewish pupils including me from the age of two till I was six. She thus provided some financial security and safety from the Blitz to refugees whose professional qualifications would not have been recognised at that time and to children, a number of whom had their mothers there too.

I still have strong memories of that time and wonder what happened to the other children who were there at that formative time.

Steven Dorner

THANK YOU ALLISON

In reference to Nick Bernstein's letter *Honouring our Friends* (September) regarding the different attitudes of non – Jewish friends in these times, I am very happy to report that I have experienced only complete support and understanding at best from my wide circle of non-Jewish friends or tacit avoidance of the subject at worst.

Dear Members of the AJR

PLEASE CAN YOU HELP US WITH OUR SCHOOL PROJECT ON THE KINDERTRANSPORT?

Our class is working on a project that aims to raise awareness of the Kindertransport in our school, our community and amongst other young people around the UK. We were shocked when we found out how little people knew about the

Kindertransport and we are determined to change that.

We think that it is really important for all pupils our age to know what happened to those who came to Britain on the Kindertransport. There aren't any textbooks that we can find that teaches us about it in much detail.

So, over the next few weeks we would like to find out more about the experiences of those children who came

to Britain on the Kindertransport. We wondered if we might be able to write to you with a few questions about your experiences or those of your parents or family members who arrived in 1938-39. Please do contact our teacher, **Mr Lawrence** (a.lawrence@hamptonschool.org.uk) if you might be able to help us with our project. We would be really grateful.

Yours sincerely
Class 3E, Hampton School, Middlesex

However, what I really wish to say is that Allison Pearson, columnist at *The Daily Telegraph*, must be included on the list of non Jewish supporters.

Ms Pearson writes constantly and fearlessly in support of Israel, has visited Israel recently and with great sensitivity interviewed an Israeli doctor preparing the bodies of the victims of the October 7th atrocities.

She is also a founder member of the British Friends of Israel, gathering support from all levels of British society who held a March in London last month.

Thank you, Allison, we are grateful to you.

Finally, please do not abolish the letter's pages. As we know, freedom of speech and expression is of the utmost importance.
Sharon Kronheim-George, Wolverhampton

HAMBURG HISTORY PROJECT

Over the late spring and summer, I have had the great privilege of participating in a marvellous Jewish family history project being carried out by the Institute for the History of German Jews (IGdJ) in Hamburg, where I was born and where my family lived prior to 1939. The Institute is part of the City of Hamburg's Culture and Media Department.

The project is called *Family Photos, Family History: Visualising the Past – Creating the Future* and will consist of an on-line archive, available for future research, of family photos and written and spoken material relating to the lives of Hamburg Jewish families before, during and after the Nazi era. I was invited to participate on behalf of both my maternal and paternal families, along with sixteen other Hamburg Jewish families. I was able to provide family photos, some dating back to

the first few years of the twentieth century as well as written commentary on the photos and their historical significance. Some of the photos were very poignant, like that of my maternal grandmother – later to be murdered by the Nazis in 1942 – as a young woman in about 1900. Other photos were amazing juxtapositions, like my father in German army uniform during the First World War and my brother in British army uniform during WW2.

The on-line archive will be accessible quite soon but a catalogue is already on line on the IGdJ website and can be accessed at <https://www.igd-jh.de/en/publikationen/weitere-publikationen/familienfotos-familiengeschichten>.

The catalogue includes QR codes in each family section which will eventually give access to additional material relating to the project.

To me, it is wonderful how the world has changed in my life time in that the Senate of Germany's second city are making historical material on their former Jewish citizens available to the wider world.
Susie Barnett BEM,

EXILE LETTERS

We at the Institute for Comparative Urban History (ISTG) at the University in Münster would like to draw AJR members' attention to our online project *Exile Letters* (www.exileletters.de).

Within this framework, the ISTG edits and publishes letters of Jewish families who were separated by flight and emigration against the background of National Socialist persecution.

The project is the natural extension of our

"Friedeman-Waldeck" collection, published in December 2024. This collection contains the correspondence of the Waldeck family from Münster, together with the letters of their son-in-law Simon Friedeman.

Simon Friedeman was born in Hachenburg and worked as a cantor and teacher in Bielefeld before he was forced to emigrate in 1939 as a result of the November pogroms. From his exile in England between 1939 and 1942, he wrote letters to his wife Gerda, who had fled to the United States of America via the Netherlands. In these letters he also recounts his life in the Bachad-run Hachsharah kibbutz Lodge Farm in Hardmead, Buckinghamshire.

The edition also includes the surviving letters from Gerda's parents, the Münster merchants Henny and Carl Waldeck (both were murdered in 1944) to their children who had emigrated to Palestine, Argentina and the USA. The publication of further letter collections is in preparation.
Dr. Angelika Lampen, Rita Schlautmann-Overmeyer & Simon Dreher, ISTG, Münster

EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

Many AJR members will have known Otto Deutsch, who contributed so much to Holocaust education. He was the inspiration behind my book *Jewish Nonagenarians: Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives*, which offers a powerful series of interviews with twelve remarkable Jewish individuals. On Wednesday 22 October I will be giving an illustrated talk about these extraordinary lives at London's JW3 and would be delighted to meet any fellow AJR members there.

Laurence Collins, Author of *Jewish Nonagenarians: Ordinary people, Extraordinary lives*

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

In a powerful Black-on-Black dialogue, James Kerry Marshall: The Histories at the Royal Academy of Arts is a major solo exhibition of the artist's work celebrating his 70th birthday.

Included are challenging paintings garnered from private and museum collections all over North America and Europe. Marshall addresses the paucity of images of daily life by Black artists before him by featuring, in large scale paintings, Black families engaged in the activities of average family life: picnics, dancing, embracing lovers, and children playing or visiting museums, their body language announcing youthful amazement, while adults make a special occasion of a day in a hair salon. It offers a powerful statement as a mirror image of white American life.

But perhaps the pivotal thread to it all comes towards the end of the show, with *Wake*, a sculpture of a black ship on a black sea, representing the ships that brought enslaved Africans to America, surrounded by a proliferation of medallions to which Marshall constantly adds each time the exhibit is shown. It is intended to convey the increasing power of Black cultural expression and development, but despite – or perhaps because of – the accumulation of profit which represents emancipation, the sculpture has a tragic aspect, reflecting yet another type of enslavement: the accumulation of wealth and grandiosity.

The exhibition focuses on 11 groups of works made between 1980 and the present day. The highlight in the opening room is *The Academy*, 2012 featuring the male model in a life class raising his fist in the classic Black Power salute pose. The second room examines Marshall's earliest mature works from the 1980s, including *A Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self*, 1980 and *Invisible Man*, 1986. The question here is both the presentation and exclusion of Black figures in art history. *If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day*, 1988 shows a cartoonish character juggling balls while dancing between three hoops. It is an example of humour amid serious questions, to which, of course, there is no answer.

Marshall's paintings are graphic, full of towering imagery. But the first thing I noticed was the deliberate lack of variation in skin tone; there are no gradations of Black skin; we only see featureless, monochromatic faces relieved by white, staring eyes. Everywhere else there is colour, in clothes, in background; but the question of invisibility always arises. We are asked to feel this invisibility, by showing Black figures dressed in white, as though to suggest their otherness, their invisibility made visible. In *Portrait of the Artist and a Vacuum*, a vacuum cleaner



De Style, 1993, by Kerry James Marshall

is positioned against a small photo of a black face with gaping white teeth and blurred eyes, a shocking image suggesting how the Black man's identity has been literally hoovered up.

What the artist's subjects lack in facial distinction, they make up for in body language. They are so full of energy and individuality you could almost jump into the painting with them.

Kerry James Marshall was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1955 and began depicting the history of the Black people and the art of Africa and its diasporas, from the slave transportations to America, to the slave rebellions, to the civil rights and Black Power movements, the social background to his childhood.

Western art history equally engages him. He has said: "I've always wanted to be a history painter on a grand scale, like Giotto and Géricault". In his large scale themes, Marshall's work betrays the influence of other major French artists, such as Edouard Manet, Gustave Caillebotte and Georges Seurat.

The exhibition also offers some rather dubious aspects of African history relating to the transatlantic slave trade, such as the role in enslavement played by African slave traders themselves. One example is *Abduction of Olaudah and His Sister*, 2023 featuring the 11 year old slave and later abolitionist and writer Olaudah Equiano being kidnapped from his village with his sister. It was a sad but regular feature of their lives, and something the children always had to be on the lookout for. Marshall was elected as an Honorary Royal Academician in 2022.

Kerry James Marshall:
The Histories continues at the RA until 18 January 2026

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**CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

SPOTLIGHTING

LEA BONDI JARAY

The Ben Uri Research Unit is recording the émigré contribution to British visual arts and culture since 1900. It has already published some 3,300 profiles, with hundreds more under research. Here we share their profile of the successful art dealer and gallerist Lea Bondi Jaray.

Born Leah Bondi into a Jewish family in Mainz, Germany in 1880, Leah's parents, Marcus Bondi (1831–1926) and Bertha née Hirsch (1842–1912) had 16 children. She later moved to Vienna and in 1919 began working for Galerie Würthle. Following the retirement of the owners in 1926, she became its sole proprietor. The gallery was a champion of expressionism, exhibiting work by Oskar Kokoschka, Emil Nolde, and Egon Schiele, among others, thanks partly to a partnership, initiated by Jaray, with Alfred Flechtheim's renowned gallery in Berlin. Jaray was a board member of the Society for the Advancement of Modern Art in Vienna, as well as personally collecting the work of the Society's artists. She married the Hungarian sculptor Alexander Sándor Jáy (1870–1943) around 1936. Following the Anschluss in 1938, Jaray's gallery was Aryanised. She was forced to give it up to Nazi art dealer, Friedrich Welz, along with a valuable painting from her personal collection, Schiele's *Portrait of Wally Neuzil* (1912).

In 1939, Jaray and her family fled Vienna for London, England, Jaray bringing only what she could carry, including several sheets of drawings by Schiele. She was exempt from the government's policy of mass internment of so-called enemy aliens, initiated in late spring 1940. In 1943, she co-founded the St. George's Gallery in London's Mayfair with fellow Austrian-Jewish émigré Otto Brill. The gallery showed work by a range of modern artists, including Oskar Kokoschka (another Austrian

émigré), Ceri Richards, Massimo Campigli, Lucian Freud, Alberto Giacometti and André Masson. It also became one of the first London venues to stage an exhibition of expressionist art. The gallery provided wartime employment for two émigrés, German-born Erica Brausen (later of the Hanover Gallery) and Austrian-born Harry Fischer (later of Marlborough Fine Art). Jaray settled with her husband at Lambolle Road, Belsize Park, and subsequently at 13 Thurlow Road, Hampstead. She became a naturalised British citizen on 9 April 1948.

In spite of embarking on a new life in England, Jaray never forgot the injustice of losing her painting. For three decades, until her death in 1969, she attempted to recover it, soliciting help from Dr. Rudolf Leopold, a Schiele expert and art collector who frequented her gallery in London. It subsequently transpired that Leopold had found her painting at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, among the works of the Austrian National Gallery, and in the 1960s, had traded another Schiele painting for *Portrait of Wally Neuzil*; however, instead of returning it to Jaray, he had kept the stolen artwork for himself.

Lea Bondi Jaray died in London, England in 1969. Posthumously, the restitution claim for her artwork continued. The works from Leopold's collection were transferred to the Leopold Museum Private Foundation in 1994 and formed the basis for the Leopold Museum, which opened its doors to the public in 2001. Following the decision in 1997 to lend the work to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York for their exhibition of Schiele's works, Jaray's heirs embarked on a lengthy lawsuit against the museum to attempt the return of the painting. In July 2010, the Leopold Museum agreed to pay



\$19 million to Jaray's heirs under an agreement that would address all outstanding claims on the painting. The history of the painting and the legal efforts by the Bondi heirs to recover it were the subject of a 2012 documentary, *Portrait of Wally*, by filmmaker Andrew Shea.

In 2019, Jaray was included in an exhibition *Brave New Visions: The Émigrés Who Transformed the British Art World* at Sotheby's, London. The exhibition explored, among other themes, how in 1947, Jaray's European background helped her secure the support of the British Council to curate exhibitions featuring emerging British and French artists. Furthermore, by 1950, leveraging her strong ties with Austrian cultural officials, she had organised an exhibition at St. George's that showcased modern Austrian painters. This event was a joint effort with the Albertina Museum in Vienna, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, and a commercial gallery in Austria. In summer 2024, the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum featured Jaray in its exhibition *Cosmopolis: Refugee Art Dealers in Twentieth-Century London*. Lea Jaray's great-niece is the painter and printmaker Tess Jaray RA (b. 1937).

A RETURN

AJR member Judith Gordon reflects on

The last thing I expected to find in my inbox on a cold January morning was an invitation from Susanne Traunek of the Jewish Welcome Service in Vienna inviting me to spend a week there as their guest. I accepted without hesitation. My son Daniel and granddaughters Sofia and Giselle, who all hold Austrian citizenship, joined me at their own expense. I felt they would benefit from the experience and learn more about their family history.

FAMILY ROOTS IN VIENNA

Both my parents were born and raised in Vienna, in 1917/18 respectively. My mother lived in Neubau, the 7th district, and my father in Leopoldstadt, the 2nd district. They met through Hakoah, the Jewish sports club in Vienna. Sadly, they lost touch in the late 1930s as life became increasingly difficult for Jews in Austria.

Unbeknownst to each other, they both fled to England in March 1939. They reconnected a year later and were married in December 1940, during my father's 48-hour leave from service in the Pioneer Corps. The rest, as they say, is history.

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE

I first visited Vienna in 1992, and again in 2010 with my children and my brother's family. During that the second visit, we laid Stones of Remembrance (Steine der Erinnerung)



Judith's first stop was to visit Steine der Erinnerung that have been laid for her family members

outside my mother's former apartment at 21 Neubaugasse. The stones honour my grandmother, aunt, and uncle, all murdered by the Nazis. Every time any of us return, we clean the stones, and this visit was no exception. It was the first place we went upon arrival.

Day 1: A Warm Welcome

We were part of a group of forty 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generation survivors from Argentina, Australia, England, Israel, and the USA. We stayed at the elegant Hotel Stefanie – Vienna's oldest hotel – just around the corner from where my father's family had lived in Leopoldstadt.

That evening, we were welcomed at dinner by Susanne Traunek, Secretary General of the Jewish Welcome Service, who had organized the entire programme. Naturally, schnitzel and strudel were on the menu!

Day 2: A Birthday Like No Other

The second day was my birthday, and at first glance, our packed itinerary left little room for personal celebration. But the day turned out to be unforgettable in every possible way.

We began with a coach trip to the Imperial Palace (Hofburg), where we were received in what had once been Empress Sisi's bedroom. The grandeur was awe-inspiring. There, we were welcomed by the Federal President of Austria, Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen. He spoke movingly about Austria's need to reckon with its darkest chapter and emphasised that we, as descendants of Austrian Jews, still "belong to Austria." His warmth and sincerity were deeply touching.

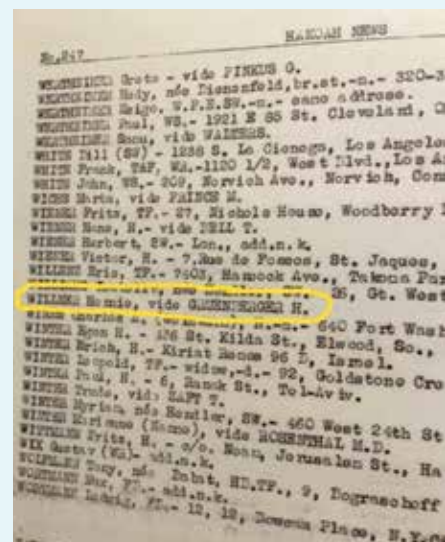


Judith meeting the President of Austria Alexander Van der Bellen

We enjoyed a beautiful reception with drinks and pastries and had the rare opportunity to speak with the President in an informal, heartfelt setting.

JEWISH MUSEUM & A SWEET SURPRISE

Next, we visited the Jewish Museum in Vienna, where the curator explained how Austria's perspective had shifted, particularly after the Kurt Waldheim affair, toward a more honest acknowledgment of its complicity (Mitschuld) in the Holocaust. One display about Hakoah caught my attention: it listed my father's sister, Henny Willner, as part of Austria's delegation to the 1935 Maccabi Games in Tel Aviv. It was a powerful connection to the past.



Judith's aunt Henny was part of the Austrian delegation for the 1935 Hakoah games in Tel Aviv

With a brief window of free time, our family ducked into Demel, a classic Viennese coffeehouse, for more *Kaffee und Kuchen*.

Later, we were received at Vienna City Hall by Veronica Kaup-Hasler, the City Councillor for Culture & Science. To my surprise, she began her remarks by wishing me a happy birthday and announcing my age to the room, then presented me with a box of chocolates! After even more tea and cake, we returned to the hotel where I found a huge bouquet of flowers from the Jewish Welcome Service, and Champagne and cake

TO VIENNA

a journey of memory and connection.

from Hotel Stefanie. I was overwhelmed.

We ended the day with dinner at Café Prückel, our favourite Viennese restaurant. It was a birthday I will never forget.

Day 3: Bearing Witness

Our third day began with a solemn visit to the Aspeng Railway Station Memorial, guided by Millie Segal. From this station, between 1939 and 1942, a total of 47,035 Austrian Jews were deported to ghettos, extermination camps, and killing sites in Nazi-occupied Poland. Fewer than 1,000 survived.



The Aspeng Railway Station Memorial marks the place from which a total of 47,035 Austrian Jews were deported

My uncle Joseph Gelber was deported to Nisko and murdered in October 1939. My grandmother Bashe and aunt Chane were deported to Opatów in December 1941. My father's brother Schabse was also sent to Nisko. All were murdered.

The station itself was demolished in 1977. In its place now stands a stark, symbolic memorial: two concrete tracks leading to a sombre black box that represents death and oblivion.

We then visited the Wall of Names in Ostarrichi Park, inaugurated in 2021. It honours the 65,000 Austrian Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Although I have visited before, the emotional weight never diminishes.



The names of several of Judith's relatives from the Gelber family are inscribed in the Wall of Names

That evening, we dined quietly at Café Engländer with a friend – a welcome moment of warmth after a day of deep sorrow.

Day 4: Tracing Footsteps

On Thursday, after my family returned to England, the rest of the group visited the Wien Museum, home to many fascinating exhibits about Vienna's cultural and social history. We then took a walking tour of Jewish Vienna, mostly focused on Leopoldstadt.

Walter, our guide, pointed out the building where my father had lived. We stood on Kleine Spargasse, outside what is now a school. It was from this very square that so many Viennese Jews were rounded up before being sent to Aspeng for deportation.

Day 5: Memory and Legacy

Our final day began with a visit to the Jewish cemetery, where I located my grandfather Pinkas Gelber's grave. He died in 1927, and though the lettering was

faint, his name was still visible – thanks to advance information I had received from the Jewish Archive.

That afternoon, I met with Dahlia Hindler, who took me to a park named after her late mother, Dr. Elisabeth Ben-David Hindler. Elisabeth had organized our 2010 Stones of Remembrance ceremony at Neubaugasse 21. Her work helped bring visibility to the lives of murdered Jewish residents through memorial plaques set into the city's pavements – plaques that now shape Vienna's urban memory.

SHABBAT AND FAREWELL

Our final event was a Shabbat service at the magnificent Stadttempel, followed by a community dinner. As dusk fell, we noticed illuminated symbols marking the former locations of synagogues destroyed by the Nazis – solemn reminders of what was lost. The Stadttempel itself survived only because it was hidden within a residential block.

A SHARED HISTORY

This journey would not have been as meaningful without the meticulous planning and compassion of Susanne Traunek and the team at the Jewish Welcome Service. I am deeply grateful for their generosity, thoughtfulness, and commitment.

We met people from all over the world – Argentina, Australia, Israel, the US, and beyond – all of whom were united by a shared history, by remembrance, and by the enduring bond of family and memory.



The group came from all over the world

Memories of

Etan Smallman recently dived deep into the area around Finchley

IMAGE © ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH REFUGEES



Burlington advert from *AJR Information*



Cafe Balsam interior

PHOTO © JULIA VOGL



Etan delivering his Finchleystrasse talk at JW3

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly the day that 'Finchleystrasse' died. But it was probably in March 1998, when the Cosmo restaurant – the mothership of Jewish refugee Finchley Road – closed after 60 years of serving its exile customers lashings of black coffee and *apfelstrudel* with a side order of wit and melancholy. When poet Dannie Abse saw the handwritten note in the window, "The end of an era", he said: "I felt I should be wearing a black tie."

Almost 30 years on, for one night only this summer, Finchleystrasse was reborn – on Finchley Road itself.

I was thrilled to be invited by JW3 to give a talk about the area's history – two streets from where my mother, Susan, was born in 1952 to Suesskind and Ilse Balsam, two refugees from Berlin, and just yards from where their 1940s restaurant once stood. The event marked the first anniversary of Leon Fenster's epic nine-storey mural of Jewish London life on the side of the cultural centre, which features several Finchleystrasse staples, including the Cosmo, an enormous Sigmund Freud and the sign for my family's business, *Cafe Balsam* (*Three course menu: 1'6*).

The lecture was anticipated to be of only modest interest, to take place in a small room upstairs. But such was the demand that I was promoted to the main hall, joined by an audience of 250, with some Zooming in from across the world.

By 1940, there were about 14,000 mostly Jewish refugees around Finchley Road, leading bus conductors to call out "Finchleystrasse – passports please!" (and many reported variations thereof) as they drew up to Swiss Cottage or West Hampstead. It encompassed the cafes, restaurants, bookshops, cabarets and social clubs the newcomers rebuilt, resurrecting a vanished world in NW3. It was also the street that saved my family – where my grandparents found sanctuary, and each other.

As a freelance journalist, I have written about various aspects of this for the *FT Weekend* magazine, *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish News* and am researching a book about the area. My presentation at JW3 stood on the shoulders of many people who have documented the history in *this* journal, notably Anthony Grenville and Bea Lewkowicz. It also relied heavily on adverts posted in this august publication over the decades. In *AJR Information*, as it was, my grandparents advertised their restaurants, first the Burlington at 169a Finchley Road, before they turned it into Cafe Balsam (the first London home of the Blue Danube Club). They continued taking out ads after they relocated to Mayfair in the 1950s to open Balsam's Restaurant ("Fully licensed and open till 2.30am; Dinner and dance; The beautiful Alma Cogan entertains"). Meanwhile Doris Balacs launched the more enduring Dorice ("Continental cuisine; Parties catered for") in their place.

I would only discover the AJR's famous

Finchleystrasse map years after its creation. I had no idea that the map (which was produced from *AJR Information* adverts for a Jewish Museum exhibition in 2002 and still hangs in the AJR's offices) featured my grandfather's name printed in the bottom left-hand corner.

What was most special about my night at JW3 was the people who made contact with me before, during and after. A 96-year-old sent me a poem she had written about Freud, the Cosmo and her childhood home in Nutley Terrace. A JW3 trustee put me in touch with her nephew, Nicholas Rose, who has been researching his own grandparents' Finchleystrasse institution, Ackerman's Chocolate (which opened on Goldhurst Terrace in 1956). We met for coffee in Finchley (not the strasse), after which he went to visit his mother, Lilian, who turned 100 this year.

Of the handful of photos I have of Cafe Balsam, there is one of my grandfather standing proudly outside alongside signs boasting of its "Special Vegetarian Menu" – surely unusual in the extreme in the mid-20th century – its "Excellent Salads" ("Did Balsam's salads have balsamic vinegar?", asked an 11-year-old watching my talk online) and "The Famous Balsam Ice Cream".

My grandfather was a renowned self-publicist – as you might have guessed from his expansive updates to the AJR – so I was sceptical about how celebrated his frozen desserts ever were. But when

Finchleystasse

Road and found many other people sharing his nostalgia.

PHOTO © JUSTIN PIPERGER



Finchleystasse map created by Dr Anthony Grenville for the AJR



Sueskind (Sig) Balsam and staff outside Cafe Balsam



Leon Fenster's JW3 mural

Nicholas mentioned just the name Cafe Balsam to his mother, she replied with two comments. One was "Amadeus Quartet" – who were regular customers. The second was: "Ice cream on the Finchley Road." I have to hand it to my grandad: his ice cream qualifies as famous if a centenarian is able to recall it three quarters of a century after it melted away.

For the Q&A section, a sea of hands went up. Some just wanted to share that the story chimed with their own "nostalgia and homesickness" in other diaspora communities – one compared it to her experiences in Peru.

But Tony Coren had a more personal connection. He brandished documents showing that his grandparents, Barnett and Deborah Collins, were the first owners of the Cosmo, registering it as a limited company in 1939. Young Barnett (originally Cohen) had emigrated here from his Polish hometown of Płońsk – and went on to own two large cinemas in the East End, both bombed during the war. I had spoken to Tony five years earlier, but he finally had the proof, from a periodical of the National Dairymen's Association. The Cosmo's early days were as a trendy milk bar, registered only four years after Britain's first – serving malted milks, yeast milks and milk cocktails – had opened on Fleet Street. Tony was told it was his mother Muriel, aged about 16, who came up with the name to reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the local area.

Other audience members shared memories of eating "wonderful goose" every Christmas at the Cosmo, after-school trips to Louis Patisserie, "very gratefully receiving" Ackerman's chocolates and the overpowering smell of roasting coffee beans drifting from Beverley's at No. 189.

One shared that: "On that whole stretch between John Barnes and Woolworth's, the language was German. If you didn't speak German, you were a foreigner." The same woman confirmed what could well have been apocryphal – that she heard bus conductors announcing "Finchleystasse" in the late 1950s. Another recalled daily visits to the Dorice with her father: "Every day he'd complain it was cold, but they always went back there. They all used to complain, but they still turned up every lunchtime!"

There was also the son of the man who ran the Candle Light Bar on Broadhurst Gardens and the daughter of an antique restorer from Vienna who was promptly told by a woman at the other end of her row that she had studied at a writing class with him. And one attendee made me aware of the wonderful open-air exhibition about refugee artists printed on hoardings and currently on show at the back of the O2 Centre, on Finchley Road.

I also received many emails after the event, not all happy ones. A woman shared her father's memory of being taunted in Golders Green with shouts of "Goldberg Green". A man wrote about

his uncle, who "would never to his dying day patronise the famous Spaniards Inn on the way to Kenwood, even though he lived round the corner. This was because during the war there had been a sign displayed which read 'No German is to be spoken here'."

The last German-speaking voices chatting animatedly on the Finchleystasse may have faded long ago. But, as the audience could attest, its legacy roars on. The Laterndl theatre (at No. 153) brought a new kind of cutting-edge satire to our shores that one researcher told me foreshadowed Monty Python. Richard Mattes & Co (No. 122A) introduced continental sausages to post-war palates hungering for new flavours – the Mattessons brand is still on supermarket shelves. And the denizens of the Dorice, Cosmo and Co managed to conjure a lost continent back to life over a plate of breaded mushrooms.

I am keen to hear from anyone with memories of Finchleystasse, particularly any first-generation refugees. I largely have the Cosmo covered, but would love memories and photos of less well-known institutions around Swiss Cottage, such as Ackerman's, Mattessons, John Barnes, the Burlington, Cafe Balsam, Dorice, Libris books, the Laterndl theatre, the Blue Danube club and the various shops, opticians, chiropodists, dentists, tailors etc. Please email me at: finchleystasse@gmail.com.

The King and I (aka 'Gosh, Shave the Chin')

During WW2 approximately 27,000 Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe were interned as 'enemy aliens' by the British government. Between 1940-41 some 800 of these were housed at the Isle of Man's Peveril Camp, perhaps more notorious for the 'high risk' fascist British supporters of Mosley that were later imprisoned there. Rudolf Kauders, who was born in 1920 in Vienna and arrived in the UK in 1939, was one of the camp's original Jewish internees. We are grateful to his daughter Lilian for sharing her father's entertaining account of his time there, translated by Dr Karin Millett.

Everybody in the internment camp was not just permitted but actively encouraged to take up some kind of work, both to avoid extreme boredom and to meet the needs of the other inhabitants of the camp. Many of the 'positions' were already filled, e.g. kitchen helpers, food servers, table clearers, dishwashers, cleaners, street sweepers, distributors of the post and, during colder times of the year, the fire stoker. That was my job, and I had to make sure that the

fireplace in every room was supplied with enough heating material, which was mostly coal, though for starting the fires we used paper and sawdust.

I had already been the Chief Stoker for several months and was very reliable in carrying out my duties. A sense of accomplishment kept me going, brought about by the joy of seeing the blazing fire, the satisfaction of those who enjoyed the warmth and comfort of their rooms and the pride I felt in the ingenious system I had devised to ensure that the fires were one hundred percent guaranteed not to go out. To help me with this scheme, I hired my best friend, Fritz, as assistant stoker. His job was to go around to all of the rooms to monitor how the fires were doing. The moment he came across a fire that was only barely glowing he came to me and reported "Fire out." I then grabbed my coal-filled bucket and ran to the fire in question to fan it back to life and load on more coal. This work kept me pretty well on the hop, so I appointed Fritz to the role of Deputy Chief Stoker who made my own life a little easier by doing the running around.

As my interest in fire stoking was waning, my thoughts turned to other jobs we could do. So I asked Fritz "What can you do?". "Nothing," he said with a heart-warming degree of honesty. I suddenly had an idea. "Do you think you would be able to cut hair?". "I can learn, and I already know how to give a wet shave. That's something I do

for my own beard every day. I know how to work up a shaving lather, too. To ensure a close shave, I first sharpen the razor on a hard and then on a soft stone. Would you like me to give you a shave?" he said. "There's a lot more at stake here! We are going to give up the stoking business and open a barber shop," I replied. "And what would you be doing?" he asked. "I can draw, write poetry and play the fiddle, but I don't have a fiddle," I said. "Then you could be responsible for the advertising, making posters with promotional messages and the like." "Excellent. You really are brilliant", I praised him. "But we don't have a suitable place to do this, no barber shop," he said, disappointed. "Wait, I've got it. We can use the empty refreshment stand. It'll be big enough to get started."

I fetched a few saucepans and a basin from the kitchen as essential equipment for the barbering business. The camp administrator readily granted us official permission for our venture, and I was handed the key for the refreshment stand near the seafront promenade.

Fritz was busily engaged in whipping up the shaving lather with his shaving brush. The door stood wide open in invitation to customers. As soon as the curious camp inhabitants had gathered to see what was going on, I unveiled my poster on the side wall which showed a caricature of the British King with visible stubble on his chin and written underneath, in large, glowing letters

PIC © RUDOLF KAUDERS



'Actually, I am a butcher by profession'.

PIC © RUDOLF KAUDERS



Internees waving good-bye to those being released to join the Pioneer Corps.

PIC © RUDOLF KAUDERS



Killing (bad) time

'Gosh, Shave the Chin!', a play on the British national anthem 'God Save the King'.

The rest of the text read, 'If results not good, please seal your lips. If satisfied, we welcome your tips. And for those beyond the fence: shave and haircut seven pence.' Some of those gathered around started to laugh out loud. Even on the other side of the double barbed wire fence people stopped and smiled.

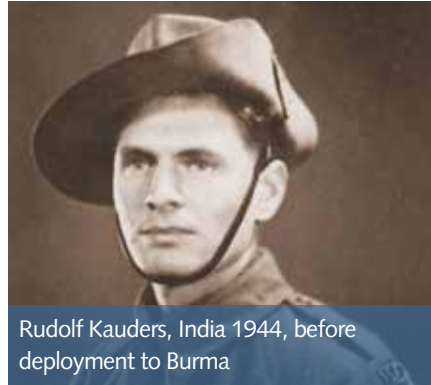
The next day three high-ranking officers came and stared at the poster with serious and concerned looks on their faces. Fritz slowed down the frothing of the lather and looked very worried when he saw the angry expression on the Colonel's face. His face had become quite red.

I rushed over. "Are you responsible for this rubbish? What were you thinking?" he demanded. "I was thinking of good advertising for our barber shop." "That is insulting to His Majesty!" "That was not my intention. The King also shaves, and before he shaves he has stubble on his chin, so...". "That slogan is making fun of the King. It will have to go!". I hurried over to my work of art and quickly took it down before the Colonel had a chance to do it for me.

The three officers departed without any further exchange of words. I stood there with the rolled-up poster in my hand and watched despondently as they walked away. Then, to my surprise, the Major looked back, smiled briefly and gave me a one-eyed wink. My artistic reputation had been saved.

The tin that served as our cash register was filled every day with small coins, mostly just pennies and farthings, the latter being worth a quarter of one penny. In fact, this meant we were doing quite well, since people working in the camp did not earn a lot of money. Some internees received donations from English friends. Some were married or engaged. Because female refugees in Category C (no security risk) were not interned, they were largely employed in the defence industry and were able to provide some financial support for their loved ones.

PHOTO © LILIAN KAUDERS



Rudolf Kauders, India 1944, before deployment to Burma

It wasn't long before Fritz had to switch over to laundry soap, which was not so good for shaving because it did not foam up well. We soon hit upon the idea of asking the soldier on guard, who was always friendly and greeted us with "Bloody Gerry", to bring us shaving soap from outside and – last but not least – sticking plaster and styptic pencils to stem the flow of blood from shaving nicks. In return, we gave him generous 'pocket money' and promised him free shaves.

Most of the customers wanted a haircut. As my time was no longer fully taken up with advertising, I helped out as the holder of the pot. We had a selection of cooking pots to choose from. Fritz would pick out the appropriate size, gently place it on the head of the customer, seeking out the right angle, and I would hold the pot firmly in place while Fritz clipped the hair of the customer up to the rim of the pot. Then I would remove the cooking utensil and the haircut was completed according to the wishes of the customer, e.g. short, medium length or long.

Most of the customers had long, thick hair. Old men were in the minority in the camp. One day I suddenly thought it seemed such a shame to throw away all that hair. Fritz agreed. So we introduced a policy of obligatory hair washing before the cutting. The resulting wet hair clippings we left to dry in a corner and then stuffed into pillow covers, which we then rented out as luxury items for a small fee to those who could afford them.

One day a stocky man came into the 'barber shop', looked around and smiled. I asked him what he wanted. "May I take over?" he said, easing me gently but firmly aside. He then took the shears out of Fritz's hand and, in no time at all, the customer had a superb haircut. The new guy told us that he had trained as a barber in Vienna before he became unemployed, after which he devoted his time to athletic training. In the meantime he had lost a

PHOTO © LILIAN KAUDERS



Rudolf Kauders, aged 84 in Vienna

lot of the muscle he had developed and replaced it with fat, as he said himself. Berti was ready and willing to 'help out' in the barber shop. We immediately agreed that he should become a joint partner and that we would share the takings, with Berti getting 50% and Fritz and I each getting 25%. We raised the prices by 100% and put up a notice saying: 'Former master from Ottakring (Vienna) taking over operations with immediate effect.' I omitted any mention of the purely incidental and trivial fact that Berti was not a 'master barber' but that his 'master' title came from winning a card game known as '66' in a pub in the 16th district of Vienna.

The influx of customers was soon enormous. Even some of the people who had recently had the dubious benefit of having had their hair cut by Fritz and me came. We installed a waiting bench in front of the 'salon' to accommodate the crowd. After a few days, I felt my presence was superfluous and Fritz felt the same. We handed over the business, together with the clientele and inventory without compensation. We took the cooking pots with us, as the professional barber had no need for them. My illustrated advertising posters remained hanging on the inner and outer walls to 'hide the bare walls', as the new owner described it.

This is one of numerous anecdotal stories Rudolf published about his internment.

His book *Donauwalzer am Irawadi*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Wien 2023, covers many more stories and cartoons about his exile, including his fighting in Burma. Unfortunately only a few stories are available in English.

Rudolf Kauders, who passed away in 2018, also produced over 200 cartoons during exile. In 2006 he added RUDI to his original signature on many of his cartoons. All the cartoons are part of his estate at Wien Bibliothek, Vienna.

REVIEWS

THE DEAD YEARS – HOLOCAUST MEMOIRS

By Joseph Schupack
Amsterdam Publishers

Brave and resourceful young Joseph Schupack survived the war including the inhumanity and brutality of several concentration camps with an unbreakable spirit, supreme physical toughness and keeping his head down. But afterwards he wanted to create a monument to the dead to whom he owed so much especially his clique of friends, the Hevra.

His horrific ordeal took him through Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz Dora-Nordhausen and Bergen-Belsen. But once he had physically recovered he built a new life, married a friend's sister the year after liberation and went on to have two sons and grandchildren. In the preface he explains that although he often told his children about events in his life, he had never before been able to record it chronologically. The book derives its title from the blighted years from the Nazi invasion when he was 17 to regaining freedom in 1945.

Joseph who died in 1989 records his life in Radzyn-Podlaski, a typical Polish shtetl and county-seat with 5,000 Jews and about twice as many Poles. Here he grew up surrounded by a loving family and life centred round his parent's' home, the Hebrew School and a Zionist youth organisation. Then, more than three million Jews lived in Poland, families led their own lives and from a young age children learned to live with rife antisemitism. Tragically, only a tiny percent of its Jews were to survive the war. The story describes Joseph's pre-war days and the descent into chaos following the Russian invasion in September 1939 and their retreat once the Nazis gained ground. Persecution increased and the Judenrat – Jewish council – was set up by the Gestapo to administer German orders. Each day became more difficult than the last and Joseph fled eastwards to Brest-Litovsk.

But soon he was forced to return and his story chronicles his life where he grew up with his close-knit Hevra and his

underground work after he lost his entire family. This included his father, mother, sisters, brother, other relatives, friends and acquaintances as well as his beloved elderly grandmother Bobeshi Basia-Gella.

In a brilliant introduction Joseph explains: "The events of childhood are decisive. Pleasant memories keep us happy for a lifetime, whereas bad ones can never be forgotten." He endured some terrible times during his incarceration but against all odds soldiered on. Despite being a fairly short book one gets the feeling of having travelled a long way studying this poignant and moving but easy to read memoir which is gripping to the end.

As he says: "The fact our enemies and those who feel their own guilt or that of their fathers dare to deny Auschwitz or compare the Holocaust to some small war, obliges those who survived the slaughter to describe the truth in as great a detail as possible". His story puts a different perspective of staying alive from most Holocaust survivor stories and with its extensive detail serves as a witness statement including names of people and places. When liberation came after years of pain, suffering, fear and hunger he felt great consolation to know that he and his friends had used all their available means in the underground movement resisting Nazi murderers. The book ends with family pictures showing that even amongst so much darkness and evil there was indeed good which survived.

Janet Weston



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A MIXED BOOK EVENT

Described by its publishers, Legend Press, as 'a hilarious yet moving story of family and faith, best served hot (or cold) with a dollop of sour cream', *Mixed* is author Tamar Hodes' third novel. It deals wittily and insightfully with the way families are affected when members take different Jewish or non-Jewish routes.

Ruth and Miriam Green are sisters who are both proud of their Jewish heritage but in different ways. Ruth lives in north London, has a Jewish husband, Simon, and their children attend Jewish schools. Miriam lives in the Midlands, has a non-Jewish husband, Chris, and their children attend a comprehensive school where they are the only Jewish pupils. Miriam's best friend Mehreen is Muslim so there is a deep interfaith friendship there.

The friction between Ruth and Miriam causes their long-suffering parents, Harold and Evelyn, much pain. The enmity escalates to the point where the family is nearly torn apart. Will it survive? Will the sisters put aside their differences for the sake of family unity or will the rift widen?

The novel is not just doom or gloom, though. There is music, humour, food and joy. The author's hope is that the novel reflects the whole experience of being Jewish. *Mixed* has just been longlisted for the Comedy Women in Print award founded by Helen Lederer.

Tamar Hodes was born to South African parents in Israel, lived on the island of Hydra as a child (explored in her second novel *The Water and the Wine*) and grew up in north London. She now lives in Hampshire. It has been her privilege to know many Jewish people in her life and to discover their varying beliefs and stances.

On Tuesday 21 October at 4pm over Zoom Tamar will be sharing and discussing extracts from *Mixed* with AJR members.

**Please join us via <https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83487087088>
Meeting ID: 8348 7087 088**




Mitzvah Day 2025

Help AJR make a difference!

In partnership with The Separated Child Foundation we aim to provide washbags for unaccompanied child migrants. We will be collecting essential items to make these comfort packs.

Get involved!

Donate essential items via
Amazon: Click [Mitzvah Day Wishlist](#)
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More Information:
michalmocton@ajr.org.uk
07966886535




PRIVATE TOUR OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025



Followed by a light lunch and a talk by a Government official

 karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

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ANNUAL KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE AT BELSIZE SQUARE

TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER AT 2PM



Our speakers will be:

- **Hedi Argent** – AJR member, recalling her memories of Kristallnacht
- **ORT** – talking about their work in training and helping refugees post WW2
- **Monica Lowenberg** – daughter of Ernest Lowenberg, who benefitted from the work of ORT

Service will be conducted by Rabbi Gabriel Botnick and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg.

Please join us for a reception
following the service.

 susan@ajr.org.uk

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OBITUARIES

Dr John Henry GOLDSMITH

Born: 1 May 1924, Oberkassel
Died: 17 July 2025, Liverpool



John's father was a grain importer and his mother was a dental surgeon. After his parents divorced his mother married a fellow dentist who was murdered in 1933 by a rival dentist, a member of the Nazi Party..

John and his mother fled to Amsterdam to live with an uncle. In 1938 his mother was accepted as a refugee dentist in the UK, settling in Cambridge where Goldsmith attended the Methodist Leys School.

On John's 16th birthday he was interned on the Isle of Man and then sent to Canada for nine months. On return, he completed his School Certificate at The Leys, by then evacuated to Pitlochry, and was accepted at Guy's Hospital in London to study medicine. This stood him in good stead when he volunteered for the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted to Egypt.

After discharge, he took up a post at Great Ormond Street Hospital where he specialised in Nephrology (diseases of the kidneys). In 1961 he was appointed Consultant to the Artificial Kidney Unit at Sefton General Hospital in Liverpool, which later merged with the New Royal Hospital. In the 1980s, he was appointed General Manager until his retirement in 1989, when he was proudly installed as a Life Member of the Liverpool Medical Institution.

John loved Liverpool and spent much of his life there, becoming an active voice in local Holocaust education. He was also a stalwart member of the AJR and we were delighted to provide him with a computer and a volunteer. He was a keen musician and for many years, a member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir. He also maintained a large garden. In later life he loved cooking, often entertaining friends.

John married and divorced twice but remained on excellent terms with his former wives, his three children, two stepchildren and their offspring. During much of his retirement he enjoyed the companionship of Christine who survives him. On a walk in the park aged 100, he was overheard saying, "I can usually walk for a mile, but I can do two if it's a good conversation."

Gisela FELDMAN BEM

Born: 18 September 1923, Berlin
Died: 30 June 2025, Manchester



Gisela Feldman was born to parents of Polish origin.

Her father had moved to Berlin when he was 15, eventually opening a grocery store in Reichenberger Strasse. In 1920 he married Chaya, who helped in the shop, and they had Gisela and, almost three years later, Sonja. They lived on Liegnitzer Strasse, which was not a Jewish area, and attended the state school. The family attended the Kottbusser Ufer Synagogue and kept an orthodox home. All Gisela's friends were non-Jewish and they played well together.

Gisela's first experience of Nazism came with the May Day March in 1933, when she saw someone being shot. At first her teacher told the class to treat Gisela the same as before, but at age 11 Gisela was sent to the Jewish school. The family's Catholic neighbour's house was daubed for being friendly with them and eventually her father was forced to close the shop. Gisela left school and studied dressmaking. In October 1938 her father was arrested and sent back to Poland. The morning after Kristallnacht Gisela walked over glass to see if her aunts were alright.

Her mother obtained visas for Cuba and tickets for the *St Louis*. Arrangements were made for her father to follow. But the drama started when they were not let off the ship in Havana. Eventually they docked in Belgium, after England, Holland, Belgium and France had each agreed to take one quarter of the refugees. Gisela, who had studied English for four years at school, volunteered them for England. They were put on a cargo boat to Southampton and then on a train to London.

Gisela was sent as a cleaner to a convalescent home in Broadstairs, then became an au pair with a Jewish family from London until they evacuated in 1940. Renting a flat with her mother and sister, first in Highbury and then on the Finchley Road, she worked making soldiers' uniforms, then gun powder bags, then children's coats.

Gisela felt a sense of freedom in England, enjoying the Czech Club, cafes, dances and the cinema in between the air raids. In 1942 she met Oscar Feldman from Crakow and they married in February 1943.

In November 2023 Gisela celebrated her 100th birthday with a party at the Belong Morris Feinmann care village, south Manchester, where she spent her final years. Speaking of the secret to a happy life, she candidly said: "A drop of whisky every night!"

Along with younger sister, Sonja, Gisela dedicated her life to Holocaust education and both sisters were awarded a BEM in 2020.

The AJR is grateful to have had the opportunity to film interviews with both John Goldsmith and Gisela Feldman as part of our **Refugee Voices** archive. We are honoured to hold these records of their remarkable lives and the contribution they both made to their adopted country. You can watch their interviews on www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/Interviewees

Irene BRAUNER

Born: 25 October 1937, Krakow

Died: 28 August 2025, London



After her father was shot dead by the Nazis in 1943, Irene fled Poland with false papers, together with her mother and grandmother, and spent the remainder of the war on a farm in Germany.

She settled in England in 1946 and met my father, Jacob, on a holiday to Israel in 1961. They got married two months later and lived happily together in North London for the next 63 years. She leaves behind her husband (Jacob, b. 1931), two sons (Jonathan, b. 1962 and David, b. 1968) and two grandchildren (Joseph, b. 1996 and Jessica, b.1998).

Irene had a very difficult childhood. In addition to the traumatic death of her father when she was just five years old (for years she prayed every day that he would somehow miraculously turn up alive), she had to live with the constant fear of being exposed while living under an assumed identity (she had to learn to make the sign of the cross so that she

could pass as Catholic). After the war, her beloved mother made an unhappy second marriage, to a man who was prone to sudden rages and bouts of paranoia.

Irene had a great love of cinema, theatre, art and literature. She was also a gifted linguist: she spoke six languages and used to swear colourfully in many of them! Her dream was to become a translator but she was never able to realise this ambition as she had to discontinue her A-level studies when her mother fell ill with a nervous disorder whose symptoms included severe alopecia. Later, Irene resumed this role as carer for her mother after she developed early-onset dementia in her sixties (Irene spent the best part of two decades looking after her). This experience gave her a deep-seated fear of falling prey to dementia herself (she used to say 'if I ever get like that, I want you to take me out and shoot me!'), which made it all the crueller when she began to display clear signs of cognitive decline. Her own illness took a very different course from her mother's: after many years of gradual deterioration, her condition worsened

considerably during the pandemic and she became bed-bound for the final two years of her life.

In spite of all this, until near the end she was still able to enjoy being read to (and was able, remarkably, to recite lines from some of her favourite Romantic poems that she had learned at school) and listening to her favourite songs from Hollywood musicals. She also retained her love of dirty jokes!

Irene was a warm, witty and feisty woman who made a lasting impression on everyone with whom she came into contact. She was a devoted daughter, a wonderful wife, a loving mother and a doting grandmother. She will be greatly missed by her family, friends and neighbours.

Professor David Brauner

Note from Editor: read Irene Brauner's My Story book on

<https://www.ajrmystory.org.uk/people/irene-brauner>



Hallo!
Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

German Conversation Group

Would you like to speak or practice your German but have no opportunity to do so?

Join our German group where you get the chance to meet other German speakers and have lovely conversations in German about various themes.

Sessions take place every Wednesday at 10-11am on Zoom

For more information contact:

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or volteam@ajr.org.uk



IN PERSON EVENTS

Please note to attend in person meetings you must contact the co-ordinator listed for exact times and venue.

DATE	TIME OF DAY	AREA	CO-ORDINATOR
Monday 20 October	Morning	Golders Green, with Author Michael Kushner talking about 'Action at Station X', the secret war work at Bletchley Park	Ros Hart
Tuesday 21 October	Morning	Ealing	Ros Hart
Tuesday 21 October	Morning/Lunch	Central London	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 21 October	Lunchtime	North Lincs	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 21 October	Lunchtime	Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs
Wednesday 22 October	Morning	Glasgow	Agnes Isaacs
Monday 27 October	Afternoon	South Herts (with Radlett)	Ros Hart
Tuesday 28 October	Lunchtime	Birmingham	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 28 October	Afternoon	Manchester, with Ron Ibbitson sharing his journey to uncover his mother's story.	Michal Mocton
Thursday 30 October	Lunchtime	Kinder Lunch	Susan Harrod

CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

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ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 20 October @ 4pm	QUIZ TIME https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89830361496	Meeting ID: 898 3036 1496
Tuesday 21 October @ 4pm	Author Tamar Hodes about her new novel <i>Mixed</i> (see article on p.17) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83487087088	Meeting ID: 8348 7087 088
Wednesday 22 October @ 4pm	Book Discussion (no speaker) – <i>The Music Shop</i> by Rachel Joyce https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88662613678	Meeting ID: 886 6261 3678
Monday 27 October @ 4pm	Film: <i>Watermarks</i> by Yaron Ziberman https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83178537235 <i>Watermarks tells the story of the champion Jewish women swimmers of Hakoah Vienna, who dominated national and international competitions, but whose club was shut down after the Anschluss.</i>	Meeting ID: 831 7853 7235
Tuesday 28 October @ 7pm	Dunera Internees – Art in Hay Camp 7 https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89412995997	Meeting ID: 8941 299 5997

KEEP FIT WITH AJR

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

Every Mon @ 10.30am	Get Fit where you Sit (seated yoga)	https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Every Tues @ 11.00am	Shelley's Exercise class	https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622	Meeting ID: 884 6694 5622

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