

The culture of Viennese Jewry at the *fin de siècle* (Part II)

From 1848, and especially from 1867, Jews from elsewhere in the Austro-Hungarian Empire flocked to Vienna, with its opportunities for economic and social betterment, for life in a modern metropolis, and for a widening of horizons far beyond those of the traditional Jewish communities of the East. The creation of Vienna as a modern city was symbolised by the building of the Ringstrasse, which had begun in the 1850s but came to exemplify the emergence of a new, liberal, modernised capital. For Jews at this time, Vienna seemed to hold the prospect of almost limitless opportunities, and part of their response was the remarkable cultural efflorescence created by the city's Jewish community.

The most obvious feature of that community was its sheer dynamism, reflected in its rapid growth. From a small, semi-legal settlement of Jews, the community increased by leaps and bounds until it reached nearly 200,000, about one tenth of the city's population. In 1847, the Jewish population of Vienna was estimated at some 4,000, about 1 per cent of the city's total population. That number increased to some 40,000 by 1869, to 118,000 in 1890 and to 175,000 in 1910; the city's total population also increased, but 'only' about fivefold.

The dynamism of the community was also reflected in its eagerness to integrate into Viennese life and society. Viennese Jewry contained a high proportion of emancipated, secularised Jews who had discarded the traditional lifestyle and religious practice of their forefathers and adopted the German-speaking culture of Vienna; significantly, Vienna produced relatively little Yiddish culture, and Yiddish was not spoken widely there, at

least outside the Leopoldstadt, the Second District.

The acculturation of Vienna's Jews was among the fastest and most thoroughgoing in Europe; Viennese Jewry had the highest rate of conversion of any European city. However, Jews did not assimilate entirely into Viennese society, to the extent of losing their separate identity and being seen as indistinguishable from other Austrians. They tended to go to the same schools, to cluster together at the University of Vienna (where they were



The Burgtheater on Vienna's Ringstrasse, built 1888

banned from such student bodies as fraternities by the 1890s), to live in the same districts and to enter the same professions. The particular culture and achievements of Viennese Jewry were those of an assimilated Jewry, but one that preserved its social and communal identity.

Jews came to Vienna in three successive waves: from Bohemia and Moravia, from Hungary, and lastly from Galicia (Austrian Poland). These immigrant Jews developed a distinctive occupational profile. Many, especially in the Leopoldstadt, remained poor. But the patterns of Jewish economic activity were radically different from those of non-Jewish Viennese, in that Jews rose in far greater numbers, proportionally speaking, into the middle

classes, especially into the self-employed commercial and entrepreneurial class, the liberal professions and the new class of white-collar salaried staff created by modern commercial and financial enterprises.

Jews had been active as bankers and financiers in Vienna well before 1848. They had also traditionally acted as middlemen between the urban and rural markets in Eastern Europe, and were to some extent already urbanised. They were thus well adapted, as traders and merchants, to the liberal, free-market economy that they encountered on their arrival in Vienna during the heyday of liberal economic doctrine. Over three generations, Jews could rise from being small traders or shopkeepers to more prosperous and higher-status occupations in commerce or as independent entrepreneurs, and then into the liberal professions (law, medicine, journalism, academia) or the world of culture and the arts.

The residential patterns of the Jews of Vienna were as distinctive as their professional profile. They mostly settled in clearly defined areas of the city, where the concentration of Jews allowed a distinctive type of Viennese Jewish community to develop. The three areas concerned were the Innenstadt (inner city), the wealthy First District within the Ringstrasse; the Second District, the Leopoldstadt, known as the 'Mazzesinsel' ('matzoh island') on account of its concentration of traditional Jews recently arrived from the East, often still poor, religiously observant and true to traditional dress and lifestyle; and the Ninth District, Alsergrund, which became home to the new middle class of Jews active in the liberal professions and as white-collar employees in the larger

The culture of Viennese Jewry (Part II) *continued*

private enterprises (but not the public service, where Jews were notably few).

There were Jews in other areas, such as Mariahilf and Neubau (the Sixth and Seventh Districts) and the leafy outlying districts of Währing and Döbling (the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Districts). Though there was an established pattern of upwardly mobile Jews leaving the Leopoldstadt for more prosperous areas inhabited by a more assimilated community, the Jewish population of the Second District was continually replenished by immigration. The patterns of Jewish residence clearly bear out the middle-class profile of the community: Jews were thin on the ground in working-class areas, just as they were relatively few among those Viennese employed in heavy manual labour. In this they were quite unlike the other great immigrant group, the Czechs, who remained anchored in Vienna's industrial proletariat.

Education was the escalator that bore so many of Vienna's Jews up into the professional middle classes. This is evident from the very marked over-representation of Jewish students at Vienna's Gymnasien; the Gymnasium (grammar school) was the elite educational institution that opened the way to university entrance, to a degree in law or medicine, to a career in education or to the skills and qualifications that enabled young Jews to embark on careers largely closed to the proletariat or lower middle class. Only establishments which put up specific barriers could keep Jews out: the Benedictine-run Schottengymnasium with its religious bias and the Theresianum, which catered for the scions of the aristocracy. Otherwise, Jewish students flooded into the Gymnasien, like the prestigious Akademisches Gymnasium in the First District, where between 1875 and 1910 Jews regularly made up 40 per cent of the students.

These figures were matched by the Franz-Joseph-Gymnasium in the First District, and by the Maximilian-Gymnasium in the Wasagasse in the Ninth District, where the proportion of Jews doubled from 33 per cent in 1875 to 66 per cent in 1910, and were exceeded by the two Gymnasien in the Second District,

the Erzherzog-Rainer-Gymnasium and the Sophien-Gymnasium, where Jews made up between two-thirds and three-quarters of the students. Even among the poorer Jews of the Leopoldstadt, a powerful impetus towards social and economic betterment through education was at work. Though the Austrian educational system was a closed system that made it difficult for children from lower-class families to rise in society, Jews were exceptional in being able to use that system to propel themselves into the higher reaches of society.

From the Gymnasien, Jews proceeded in large numbers to the University of Vienna, where they were famously over-represented in such fields as law, medicine and the arts and humanities; it was the celebrated professor of medicine Billroth who publicly introduced anti-Semitic discourse into academic life at the University of Vienna by protesting at the number of Jews from the East. By 1910, Jews made up 37.5 per cent of students in the Faculty of Law, 21.6 per cent in the Faculty of Philosophy, and 51.2 per cent in the Faculty of Medicine. The result of the mass influx of Jewish students into these academic disciplines was that Jews went on into the middle-class professions and white-collar salaried employment, where they played a leading role as consumers of culture. Some, like the many noted Jewish writers, artists, scholars and other intellectuals, became creators of culture, giving rise to the phenomenon of Viennese Jewish culture.

The success of Jews in the fields of education and culture can in part be explained by the tradition of learning long established among the People of the Book. To this should be added the impact of

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Reception at the Austrian Embassy

To commemorate the 75th
Anniversary of the Anschluss
Wednesday 13 March 2013
at 6.30 pm

**His Excellency Ambassador
Emil Brix will host a
reception for AJR members**

Refreshments will be provided.
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**Please contact Susan Harrod
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the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, and the opening up of the narrow world of the Eastern Jews to the liberal, humanist culture of the German-speaking world. From this sprang the veneration shown by Jews towards such figures as Goethe and Schiller, Kant and Beethoven, which impelled much of Central European Jewry to embrace German-language culture so enthusiastically.

From the 1870s, Vienna's Jews were confronted by the growth of a new, racial anti-Semitism, both in the form of the Pan-Germanism advocated by Georg von Schönerer and in the specifically Viennese phenomenon of Karl Lueger's Christian Social Party, which swept to electoral success in the 1890s. The assimilated Jews responded by creating the Österreichisch-Israelitische Union, affirming their rights as Austrian citizens; those who despaired of assimilation espoused Zionism or Jewish nationalism. With the collapse of the Empire in 1918, Vienna became the capital of the rump state of Austria, where Jews were an increasingly beleaguered minority. Nevertheless, Vienna's cultural scene continued to be heavily influenced by its Jews, from the concert hall to the cabaret, from the theatre to the lecture hall and the psychoanalyst's couch, until the Anschluss put an end to Vienna's status as a leading European centre of culture.

Anthony Grenville

ABOUT THYME

I was going to meet an English-born friend at a restaurant in Victoria. 'It's called About Time,' she said. 'You can look it up.' I *had* looked it up. 'You mean About Thyme, don't you?' 'It's pronounced time,' she insisted.

Incredulous, I rushed – metaphorically speaking – to my dictionary. She was right! 14c: from French thym, Greek thymon.

I was incensed. Since when have the English been squeamish about anglicising the pronunciation of Greek words? What about theatre, pathos, therapy? The list is endless. Nor do they shrink from vandelising French. When my husband and I were driving in the New Forest we were encouraged to visit a place that sounded like Bjuli. It was Beaulieu!

Admittedly, English grammar is child's play compared to German or Latin, but what about its pronunciation? You never know where you are. Just when you think you have mastered all the oughs – though, through, thought and tough – you get trough and bough!

The other day a couple of tourists asked me the way to Le-ce-ster Square. To save them further embarrassment, I told them how to get to Leicester Square, pronouncing it correctly. They looked bewildered, as well they might. Why Lester? Why indeed? If there has to be a contraction, why not Leister as in reign, or Leester as in receive? The pitfalls for the unsuspecting foreigner are myriad.

For more years than I care to admit I was convinced that coherent was pronounced with the stress on the first syllable and a short e. And I must have pronounced theologian with a short second o, as in logic, more than once because finally a German-Jewish friend snapped 'For God's sake, it's theolo(long o)gian!' There is no logic to the pronunciation of English.

And what about the words that are spelt alike but have different meanings? A cousin of mine who had studied English and Latin at Vienna University and even got herself a doctorate, after having lived in English-speaking countries for some years pronounced row, as in quarrel, like row, as in tier. I didn't have the heart to correct her.

In the early 1990s I volunteered to help children with reading difficulties. I was assigned to a Church of England primary school in my area and was to have 30 minutes' one-to-one sessions with each child. Two of the children – a boy and a girl – were English; another boy was Irish. They were all between nine and ten years old. I was particularly taken with the English boy, who seemed bright enough and spoke fluently. Sadly, he, like the other two, was unable to read the simplest words. I knew nothing about his background but quite possibly both his parents were working and there were very few books at his home. The class teacher told me that about one third of her 30 charges struggled with reading and writing.

Although I tried hard, I fear I didn't make much difference. My heart went out to these children, who would go on to secondary school the following year illiterate and leave school at 16, in all probability still illiterate. And things don't seem to have changed much in two decades. Only the other day I read that one in five adult Britons was struggling with the first two of the '3 Rs'.

Of course, a number of factors are to blame for this – the system, lack of parental support and overcrowded classes – but the vagaries of the English language certainly play a part. In German, my mother tongue, everything is pronounced exactly as it is written. Not so in English. How can you explain to a child why, if the *but* in butler, but and butter read the same, a butcher is different?

Well, I did learn to read and write English but I wonder if I'm still guilty of mispronunciations that my English friends are too polite to correct.

I'm running out of space. It's about thyme I stopped.

Edith Argy

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VISIT TO SANDY'S ROW SYNAGOGUE AND THE JEWISH EAST END

MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2013

Sandy's Row Synagogue is the oldest Ashkenazi synagogue in London and the last remaining synagogue in Spitalfields.

We will have a guided tour of the Synagogue and the exhibition of photographs of C. A. Mathew, a selection of photographs of Spitalfields taken on 20 April 1912. It is the first time that many of these images have been put on public display.

We will also have the opportunity to see a film made by the Open University on the history of the Synagogue, together with another short film, *The Tenth Man*, which was filmed at Sandy's Row.



A coach will go from Stanmore, stopping at Finchley Road. We will be joined on the coach by Rachel Kolsky, a prize-winning Blue Badge Guide, whose passion is the East End of London, in particular areas of Jewish interest. Her first book, *Jewish London*, is published this year. Rachel will tell us the history behind the buildings, in particular the 'human stories'.

Lunch will be provided at the Synagogue.

For further details, please contact
Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070
or at susan@ajr.org.uk

ANNUAL AJR LONDON TRIP

Tuesday 12 March –
Thursday 14 March 2013



The trip will include a visit to Kensington Palace; a relaxing evening and dinner at an award-winning kosher Chinese restaurant; a tour of the Houses of Parliament, followed by lunch with an MP; a matinee performance of *The Audience* with Helen Mirren – it is hoped Dame Helen will speak to our members after the performance; a visit to the RAF Museum; lunch at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, where we will be joined by Eve Pollard, former editor of the *Sunday Mirror*; and the opportunity to meet friends old and new.

Members will also have the opportunity to attend a reception at the Austrian Embassy hosted by the Austrian Ambassador.

Accommodation will be at a London hotel for members based outside London.

Members living in London can participate in the daily events.

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CONTEMPORARY PAINTING
AND SCULPTURE

A very special relationship

In November 2011 I and members of my family travelled to Berlin to attend a memorial recital in honour of my grandmother, Ilse Strauss, and her cousins, Elsa and Anneliese Riess. All three had long and eventful lives.

My grandparents grew up in Germany. My grandma Ilse was an only child and her family was quite assimilated. As a teenager, she became involved in a Jewish youth movement and met my Socialist Zionist granddad Walter. The young couple fell in love and, although not easily accepted by Ilse's parents, married. They lived in Berlin briefly (working for Youth Aliyah) before heading to a *Hasharah* camp in Yugoslavia en route to Palestine. But in late 1938 they moved to the UK when they realised war was coming and – as there was some family here – thought they might be able to get my grandma's parents out of Germany (but were unable to do so). They eventually settled in Welwyn Garden City and then Southgate in north London when my mum and her sister were teenagers (so as to find them suitable husbands!).

Growing up, my grandma Ilse was close to her aunt and cousins, in particular her cousin Anneliese. They were close in age and grandma told me how they would stay up late chatting and whispering together. As with many families, there are numerous stories to tell, but it is Anneliese's story – a love story – that brought us to Berlin on this occasion.

Anneliese was in her early twenties when she met Karli in Berlin in May 1932. He was not Jewish and was studying medicine. They developed an intense relationship, but events intervened. Shortly after Hitler came to power, Anneliese left to study archaeology in Rome. Karli visited her in 1934 and they corresponded by letter. Anneliese included many of their animated and moving letters in her autobiography *Exile Becomes Homeland* (*Exil wird Heimat*, English translation by Eugene Strauss) and it is clear that it was a very special relationship. Karli's last letter to her arrived on her birthday in 1936. But in 1938 she received a postcard announcing his marriage with no covering letter, so this seemed to be the end of the love story.

As war approached, some of the family were able to emigrate. As mentioned, my grandparents came to the UK and worked as domestic

servants. My grandma was a maid and then a cook, my grandfather a butler.

For Anneliese, academic life in Italy became impossible and she fled to the USA in April 1939 to join her recently arrived parents. She settled in New York. Her brother Hans went to South Africa, but died when I was a child. His wife, Ruth, now lives in Australia, but came to Berlin for the memorial recital. Anneliese's elder sister, Elsa, emigrated to the USA after the war, having had a tough time in a concentration camp in Italy.



Elsa Riess (left), at top Ilse Strauss, Anneliese Riess. Elsa and Anneliese never married

In her 80s, Anneliese was encouraged to write her life story. She explored her memories and the treasure trove of letters she had managed to preserve. Among them, she found and re-read Karli's letters and wondered, as she had many times before, what had happened to him.

With help from the German consulate in New York, Anneliese got in touch with the town hall in Karli's home town. In her autobiography she writes:

On 18 August I received a reply with his address.

My heart stood still. He was still alive! What now? In my excitement, I'm sure I didn't do the most sensible thing. Within five minutes I had his phone number and called him. He himself answered the phone. I hadn't expected that. It was the same voice. At first, he couldn't understand me. I repeated my name several times. He repeated 'Anneliese Riess' several times to himself as if the name meant nothing to him. Then all of a sudden the penny dropped and he asked: 'You are alive? Where are you? Are you well? How is your heart?' I told him I had been in

America for many years and that I was well. He told me I was assumed to have died even before the war – they had received information I had drowned in a river in northern Italy. The source of this information was unclear.

Karli then told me he had been widowed for the last nine years and he had three sons, one daughter and many grandchildren. I gave him my address. My excitement was indescribable. My heart was racing like crazy and I didn't know what to do. I was alone at home and just had to talk to somebody. I phoned Elsa, broke into tears and blurted out 'I've just spoken to Karli.' I was shaking all over. This excitement lasted a long time. The impossible and unimaginable had come to pass. Karli was still alive and I had found him and now he knew I too was alive. Immediately we wrote many letters to each other and both of us wanted the other to know as much about our lives as possible.

But Karli wasn't in good health. Within a few weeks Anneliese travelled to Germany to visit him and received a tremendous welcome from all the family. She wrote:

Since my first visit in 1995, I have visited Karli every year. Unfortunately he is not well enough to make the long trip across the Atlantic. I would have loved to show him how and where I live. However, we write and phone a lot. His large family have become involved – children and grandchildren – some of whom have already been here to visit me in New York and others have promised to come. Despite the fact that we come from totally different worlds and despite the difference in age, this has spontaneously developed into a warm human relationship. All of them gave me the feeling I would be welcome at any time. They have even invited me to come to live with them when I am no longer able to do so alone. This suggestion brings tears to my eyes. I have not only found Karli but a whole new family has taken me into their hearts, as I have them. It's a miracle that such riches can be found late in life. Sometime I think I am in a dream from which I will awaken at any moment.

That I found again the old attraction to Karli after all these years attests to the strength and reality of our interrupted youthful friendship. The world events

continued opposite ➔

AN INCREDIBLE GATHERING

My father's ancestors were born in and lived many generations in the German village of Meudt (Rhineland-Palatinate) from the 1700s onwards. Even today, Meudt, though greatly expanded, has only around 1,800 inhabitants.

About a quarter of the 950-page book *900 Jahre Meudt*

1097-1997, published by the village to commemorate its 900th anniversary, proudly charts the history of its small Jewish community. Stefan Assmann, the local archivist, took the time and trouble to research the descendant lines and all were published in detail in this book.

In the early 1700s, there were only four Jewish couples. Two of these lines, the descendants of Jakob son of Feist and Esther daughter of Löw, who became the Falkenstein family, and the descendants of Jakob son of Moses and Sara, who became the Heilberg, Löwenstein, Stern and other families, were quite prolific.

One Löwenstein descendant, Haium son of David, born in Meudt in 1808, famously had 20 children all with the same wife – and 18 of these survived into adulthood!

Around 25 Jewish residents of Meudt still living there in the 1940s were deported and murdered by the Nazi



The entire group of 60 descendants of Meudt Jewish families. In front are local archivist Stefan Assmann (left) and Mayor Karl-Heinz Müller

regime. Thankfully, others escaped and fled, mostly to the USA, the UK and South America.

Unusually, especially given the size of the village, every three years the mayor of Meudt writes to all known descendants around the world and invites them to attend a reunion and a Holocaust remembrance ceremony.

The book, published by the village, aided by growing interest in genealogy and helped enormously by use of the internet, has led to a growing number of these descendants coming into email contact with each other. But who would believe that 60 descendants would all make their way to Meudt and be present on Sunday 18 November 2012? Over half came especially from the USA but others also attended from the UK, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Israel and Germany.

The day began with a guided tour of Jewish Meudt led by Stefan Assmann,

who had also organised the event. This was followed by lunch courtesy of the village. It was amazing to consult the family trees based on information researched by Mr Assmann and then to meet there in person third, fourth and fifth cousins all present with similar purpose.

The ceremony of remembrance which

took place in front of the Holocaust memorial in the Jewish cemetery included addresses by the mayor, Karl-Heinz Müller, local Church clergy and a very moving speech by two Falkenstein family descendants. Finally, there was a poignant address in German and English by Rabbi William Wolff, Landesrabbiner based in Schwerin and Rostock. All of this was interspersed by the obligatory German brass band and a separate male and female choir.

Kaddish was recited once again in Meudt by a goodly *minyán*, all *mishpacha* of those who perished. The ceremony evoked much emotion and it was in many respects quite cathartic to be able to pay our respects. It was also moving to see our group of 60 descendants gathered in pouring rain under umbrellas and swelled threefold by villagers who came to pay their respects.

Gerald Stern

A very special relationship cont.

which separated us could not destroy those old feelings. I am grateful that fate blessed us with the opportunity to be together once more in our old age. The loving acceptance by Karli's family has made my reconciliation with Germany easier.

Anneliese visited several times, and sadly Karli passed away three years later, in 1998. She made a special connection with Karli's family and they became close to her sister, Elsa, and my grandmother, Ilse, as well as my parents and our generation, many of them travelling to New York and London for significant birthdays.

The three ladies all lived long lives: Anneliese was 95 when she died, my grandma Ilse 96, Elsa 103.

Following Elsa's death in March 2011, Karli's children suggested a memorial recital for the 'three ladies'. All were lovers of classical music and the arts. The recital was held at St Thomas's Church in Berlin and was a mixture of beautiful music, stories and a short film of the two New York sisters.

Some 40 members of Karli's family travelled to Berlin, including all his children and most of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Others came too – the daughter of a German school friend of my grandma and a couple from my grandma's home town (Halle, near Leipzig).

We four travelled to Berlin with my parents, my sister and her daughter. We were greeted as part of the family and as good friends. We were all so moved

by the recital – the words, the music and the effort everyone had taken to be there and organise the day.

Of course, we saw something of the city too and wandered over the commemorative stumbling stones and through the very moving Holocaust Memorial. The girls climbed trees in the Tiergarten and we made them walk and walk around this most fascinating city!

How special and how very important to have had this time to be together! What a great opportunity to think about and share our memories and stories and to show our children the connections with the previous and current generations of our family and Karli's family.

Louise Gellman



Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

IDENTICAL JOURNEY

Sir – I was delighted to read the letter 'From Theresienstadt to Switzerland' from Dorothy Graff, Melbourne, in your December 2012 issue. She described the identical journey my dear late mother undertook in February 1945.

My parents had been in Theresienstadt since September 1942. My father had just passed away from typhus at the end of 1944 and, when my mother was asked if she wanted to go to Switzerland, she fully expected to be sent to another camp. Naturally she did not believe this was where she was being sent but thought she had nothing to lose. She also thought she might just see her two children again – and by a miracle she actually did.

Your correspondent mentioned all the places my mother went to. The first postcard, saying that she was alive and that my dear father had passed away, came from St Gallen. I couldn't believe the miracle. I immediately sent a prepaid letter to verify it.

The hotel my mother lived at was the Edelweiss, and her job was to take care of the hotel linen.

I am trying to remember the names of some of my mother's friends in Switzerland. One was a lady called Löwensen and there was a Hungarian couple, Dr Braun and his wife. Also, there was a nursing sister called Hirsch in Lucerne – she had a sister in Manchester, with whom we became very friendly.

My mother was Anna Horn and my father Herman Horn of Chemnitz, Saxony. He arranged many musical and cultural evenings in Theresienstadt during his time there.

I would love to hear from anyone who knew my mother. Please contact me through my daughter at suzelynn@hotmail.com.

*Ann Cohen (Hannelore Horn),
Manchester*

THE DAY I KISSED RICHARD TAUBER

Sir – Like Inga Joseph (December, Letters), I, a fellow refugee from Vienna, met Richard Tauber in London. But it was I who gave the great singer a kiss.

Our meeting in 1939 was, however, unrecorded by me as I was not yet seven years old at the time. It came about after my father, Salamon Brainin, had been given two complimentary tickets for an operetta called *Land of Smiles*, performed

at the Golders Green Hippodrome. Papa had chosen me, his youngest child, to accompany him to the theatre. I clung to him throughout the performance, excited and frightened in equal measure by the colourful costumes and loud singing. When the show finished and the applause had died down, Papa, holding my hand firmly, asked if I would like to meet 'Onkel' Tauber. I nodded dumbly and we went backstage.

I wasn't then aware that the singer had been a client of my father in Vienna, at Gebrüder Brainin Pelze on the Bauernmarkt, and, following emigration, at Brainin Brothers in London's New Bond Street, where my father and uncles were fortunate enough to be able to continue making and selling elegant furs. There they supplied Mr Tauber's wife (as well as his mistress!) and were introduced to several of his influential friends.

In the Artists' Room, I hid behind Papa while the two men shook hands. Then he pulled me forward and introduced me, saying 'Das ist meine Kleine, die Putzi' (This is Putzi, my little one). Herr Tauber bent down to shake my hand and I saw the greasepaint on his face. I was ready to hide once more when my father said confidently 'Komm, Du kannst dem Onkel ruhig ein Pusserl geben!' (Go on, you can give Uncle a little kiss, can't you!) Hot with embarrassment, I gave the great singer a quick peck on the cheek, clinging on to Papa the while. Within a few moments the men shook hands again and we were safely outside, Papa carrying a large envelope.

Back home, the family crowded round us. The envelope was opened. It contained a black-and-white studio photograph of the singer across which he had scrawled his name and added 'Für die liebe Putzi' (For dear Putzi). The following week my mother had it framed and for a while I was the envy of my siblings (my English friends, of course, had never heard of him!). The photograph, alas, did not survive our move to a new home.

Mary Brainin Huttner, London N3

Sir – How anyone could have been excited by a kiss from Richard Tauber with his monocle and schmaltzy 'Leise flehen meine Lieder' beats me. Huh!

Margarete Stern, London NW3

HORTHY AND THE HOLOCAUST

Sir – I refer to the review in your January issue of Paul Lendvai's book *Hungary: Between Democracy and Authoritarianism*. I was deeply saddened by the way in which Lendvai shows how Hungary has, similarly to Putin's Russia, moved from a relatively brief post-Communist democratic dawn back to authoritarianism, but I slightly disagree with a statement that appears to make Admiral Horthy solely responsible for wiping out Hungary's Jews.

I do not know if this was a misunderstanding in the original book or in Mr Ország-Land's review. Granted the Regent intervened too late – after the deportations began, following the arrival of the German 'envoy' Veessenmayer – but he did intervene eventually and stopped the deportations. As a result, at the end of the war Hungary appears to have been left with the largest number of survivors of the indigenous Jewish community of any Continental country (possibly after France). Nor can Horthy be blamed for the massacres in Budapest, when the Arrow Cross storm-troopers – men and boys who turned out Horthy himself – went on the rampage in the final weeks of the siege of the city. There are sufficient sticks to beat this questionable figure without blaming him for what he eventually, and inadequately, tried to prevent.

*Francis Steiner,
Deddington, Oxfordshire*

BUT STATUES DON'T TALK ...

Sir – I am writing in connection with the article by Ruth Schwiening in your December issue. In Vienna in 2010 for a *Stolpersteine* ceremony for members of my mother's family who had been murdered in the Holocaust, I spent my last evening walking along the Path of Remembrance in Leopoldstadt. Rounding a corner, I too saw a man on his knees and, as I drew closer, I could see he had a small scrubbing brush in his hand. However, he was not a statue but a real person who then stood up and entered his home after cleaning the *Stolpersteine* on the pavement outside his home.

The irony of the situation was not lost.

*Judith Gordon,
Handforth, Wilmslow*

IN DEFENCE OF WEISSENSEE

Sir – In response to the letter by Rudi Leavor (January), the last word I would use to describe the Weissensee cemetery is 'deplorable'.

When I came home from Berlin in October 2012, having attended the laying of four *Stolpersteine*, my mother told me there was a family grave at Weissensee and that after the War my Oma had returned to Berlin but had been unable to find the grave on account of bomb damage.

Due to the kind help of Mary Bianchi and Herr Pohl at Weissensee, I was sent a map showing the location of two family graves. I returned to Berlin and went to

Weissensee map in hand and found the grounds beautiful. Much has been done to put right the damage; the paths were cleared and it had been snowing recently. The walk to the grave was emotional for me but I found within a few minutes the graves of my great-great-grandparents, one perfect, the other demolished. On my return home, my mother then told me about another family grave there.

Herr Pohl not only located this grave but also obtained copies of the death certificate of my great-great-grandmother and other papers and her last two addresses. So again I flew to Berlin, this time with my daughter, and we visited both addresses and Weissensee. The grave of my great-great-grandmother, Lea Luise Nebenzahl (née Siodmak), is amazing, with the most beautiful words. Two of the three graves have been there since 1902 and 1903 and look perfect. I am now waiting for a quote to have a new stone erected in place of the one demolished. Sadly not everyone there has survivors to do this.

Also in your January issue was an article entitled 'Jewish film-makers in Germany during the silent era'. Mentioned in the article is Seymour Nebenzahl. He was my great-great-grandmother's brother-in-law and managed to go to the USA before war broke out. Also mentioned are Robert and Curt Siodmak – could they be brothers of Lea Luise Nebenzahl née Siodmak? Another trip to Berlin beckons

Lauren Collins, Watford, Herts

THANKS FOR THE COOKBOOK

Sir – Just to say a big thank you to the AJR for the cookbook you sent as a seasonal gift. It is much appreciated and I'm really looking forward to trying some of the delicious recipes during the rather dull-seeming months of January and February.

The AJR is so valued by all the elderly folks who go to regional meetings and is of very real therapeutic value, so thank you so much for all your hard work.

*Janet Weston,
Westerham, Kent*

THANKS FROM STOKE MANDEVILLE

Sir – Thank you for your kind words about the AJR visit here. I thoroughly enjoyed hosting the day and meeting so many of your members.

Will you please pass on thanks from WheelPower to all who attended for their generosity on the day and subsequent donations, which to date have reached just over £300.

*Joyce Sheard, WheelPower
Stoke Mandeville Stadium,
Buckinghamshire*

ANTON WALBROOK BIOGRAPHY

Sir – I am writing a biography of the émigré actor Anton Walbrook and wondered if any AJR members might have personal recollections, anecdotes or other information they might wish to share. As you are no doubt aware, Walbrook

provided financial assistance for Jewish refugees during the war and, I believe, for some years afterwards. There are a number of references to him in the *AJR Journal* archives but I am very interested in hearing from people who encountered him in person.

Regarding my background, I am a former librarian and archivist who now volunteers at the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture, part of Exeter University Library. I wrote a short article on Walbrook for the Centre's website and was interviewed at his graveside for the 'Life and Death in Hampstead Project'. I recently gave a paper on Walbrook at a conference in Senate House, London, where I spoke on his portrayal of Prince Albert in two films he made after arriving in England: *Victoria the Great* (1937) and *Sixty Glorious Years* (1938). I am a devoted fan of his films and enjoy collecting Walbrook memorabilia. Most of my published work to date has been on the history of photography, although in 1991 I curated an exhibition at Glasgow University Library on another Viennese-born émigré, Rudolf Schlesinger (1901-69).

*James Downs, Exeter
jamesdowns77@yahoo.com*

LOOKING FOR STORIES

Sir – Following the interest in my book on Holocaust rescuers, *The Other Schindlers*, I am now researching into those who betrayed Jews in the Holocaust.

I should be really grateful to hear from any of your readers who have stories to tell. I am particularly interested in cases of betrayal by neighbours, school-friends, teachers and others but want to hear from as wide a spread of countries as possible. Any photos will be copied and returned or can be emailed. All stories will be clearly acknowledged as in *The Other Schindlers*.

*Agnes Grunwald-Spier
agnesgrunwaldspier@gmail.com
tel 07816196517*

DOES ANYONE KNOW?

Sir – Do any of your readers know why in her 1946 novel *Westwood* (Vintage reprint 2011), Stella Gibbons drew such a vicious picture of Zita, the German-Jewish refugee?

Also, do any readers have any information on Elsa Olga Hollis, author of *Mistress und Maedchen*, a comprehensive German and English domestic phrase-book containing simple recipes in both languages (Cobden-Sanderson, 1937, 3rd impression, 3s 6d)?

(Mrs) Lilly Lewy, London NW9

GREETINGS FROM A BAVARIAN-JEWISH BRIT

Sir – I do understand Peter Phillips (January, Letters) not wanting to be an Austrian: Jews in Vienna suffered terrible humiliation when Germany took over

in 1938 to the delight of the Austrian population. But after the war the Austrians 'pretended' to have been victims.

No, the Bavarians did *not* throw me out. At one point, the Chief of Police of Munich advised my father, a lawyer, to try and get out as things were hotting up: 'Machens dass S' rauskommen, hier wird's brenzlig!'

The Weisse Rose movement occurred in Munich. And, after the War, several of my non-Jewish classmates 'found' me in England.

As for Norman Tebbit: I wouldn't go to him for advice on *any* subject! What does trouble me is anti-Semitism in *this* country. Will my grandchildren emigrate to Germany?

And finally, to soothe Peter Phillips's brow, a little grammar lesson: Bavarian and Jewish are both used adjectivally qualifying the noun 'Brit'.

A belated happy New Year from Bavarian-Jewish Brit Bea Green.

Bea Green, London SW13

THE SOUND OF BROKEN GLASS

Sir – Further to my November letter, I appreciate the lengthy responses (December) of Mark Schuck and Rubin Katz, but both attribute to me thoughts I do not hold and considerations or analogies I can only regard as irrelevant to the basic question I raised.

Indeed, I might agree with some of what both have to say but the Balfour Declaration was cautiously drafted and imprecise and no legal case can be built on it.

Israel exists. The question is: Where does it go from here? Not far on present evidence – and please do not misinterpret that!

May I add only my regret at Mr Katz's reference to 'uncivilised' and 'backwardness' (people and region). Do I hear, again, the sound of broken glass?

Alan S. Kaye, Marlow, Bucks

CLOAK-AND-DAGGER OPERATIONS

Sir – I was pleasantly surprised to see the letter (November) from Solly Kaplinski, Executive Director, Joint Ventures, JDC, Jerusalem. I had the honour of meeting him only once, but I never forgot the *mentsch* or the name. At the time, Solly was with Yad Vashem. It was on Yom Hashoah 2005, at a world gathering of Survivors and Liberators in Jerusalem marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the war. We mingled with retired Red Army generals, their chests festooned with medals. One high-ranking officer pointed to a medal on his chest: 'For the Freedom of Warsaw', where I had been liberated. On that notable day, Solly gave me the honour of placing a wreath on behalf of the Child Survivors at the Warsaw Ghetto Fighters' Memorial and of reciting the *Kaddish* at the eternal flame.

continued on page 16 ➔

ART
NOTES

Gloria Tessler

Two years ago the **Ben Uri** acquired **Marc Chagall's** *Apocalypse en Lilas*, the artist's powerful response to the Holocaust, in which the crucified Christ in a *tallit* is shown with a Nazi at the base of the cross, an upside-down clock and two flying figures holding a *Sefer Torah*. The Museum's latest acquisition, **Chaim Soutine's** *La Soubrette* (The Waiting Maid, c. 1933), suggests something apparently calmer, yet with an equally disturbing message – about time and place in society.



Chaim Soutine *La Soubrette* Oil on Canvas, 46.7 x 41 cm 1928-33

The Soutine was purchased after 18 months of negotiations with Sotheby's, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts Council, England and other public bodies, including several philanthropists and private donors. Other than three landscapes at the Tate and a portrait of a young woman at the Courtauld, this work is only the fifth by Soutine in a public collection in London. The artist falls within

a selection of Ben Uri's collection of the artist's contemporaries, including Chagall, who fled native restriction and persecution for the artistic freedom of Paris.

Soutine sold *La Soubrette* at auction in Paris in 1937. In the expectation that the name Chaim would limit his appeal, his first name was changed by his dealer or the auction house to Charles.

This portrait of a young servant girl whose eloquent nose points down to her white rumpled apron demonstrates the depth of the artist's vision. The background is dark, the girl's face a rounded triangle with an inverted, pointed chin, also reflected in the shape of the apron, and her eyes and clenched mouth suggest cynicism and sadness at her domestic lot.

The outline of the jug to her left is the only other detail and sketchily emphasises the unusual shape of her face and her otherness – the sense that she is there to serve but has a deep and impenetrable private life of her own, no less fragile than the glass jug.

You can't help asking – is this a Jewish painting? In its servile and humbled character, does it prefigure the fate of European Jewry, which the artist escaped by his early death?

Perhaps this is too much to read into it but, as I study this painting, it seems to me increasingly that the face tells a story that dares not speak its name. Certainly, the interior life of the Minsk-born artist is present in this portrait, as it is in many of his other works, including his dreamy landscapes of tumbledown *shtetl* houses that to us today strongly evoke Sholem Aleichem and the Anatevka of 'Fiddler on the Roof'.

But it is portraits like *La Soubrette* that speak to us of an eccentric and private anguish. Typical of Expressionism – although some critics argue that Soutine cannot be simply defined by it – many border on caricature but for their artistic integrity. These faces are so asymmetrical that they cannot be contained by their bone structure and seem to leap out of the canvas, urging us to look, look and look again in order to grasp something that is ungraspable – Soutine's secret universe.

REVIEWS

A record of the fate
of Polish Jewry

GONE TO PITCHIPOI
by Rubin Katz

Academic Studies Press,
2012, 326 pp. hardback,
ISBN 978-1-61811-234-7

This is one of the few books about the Shoah reviewed in the *AJR Journal* that relates to the experiences of the rare survivors from Poland. 'Gone to Pitchipoi' was the term used by Polish Jews to describe fellow Jews sent to unknown destinations by the Nazis, knowing that few would be seen again.

Only eight years old when the Nazis invaded, the author had led a very pleasant life with his middle-class family, who were active in the community and owned a confectionery factory. In a fascinating 40-page prologue, he describes life in pre-war Ostrowiec, a town of 30,000 inhabitants, where over a third of the population were Jewish. The general description of the community is enlivened with many personal anecdotes and pen-portraits of its various characters.

The invasion of September 1939 had catastrophic effects on Rubin Katz's family and on the Jewish population of the town. What had been a child's carefree existence turned into a bitter five-year battle for survival. Rubin, a frequent contributor to this journal's correspondence columns, chronicles the gradual deterioration of the life of his family and community. Initially the Jews were treated as slave labour but remained in their homes. Later they, together with several thousand co-religionists from the surrounding area, were crammed into a ghetto in the town. In October 1942 the first major deportation – destination 'Pitchipoi' – took place. During 1943 there were further deportations and mass shootings within the town, and Jewish life in Ostrowiec ceased to exist.

Using elaborately planned hiding places, and with the encouragement of his family, Rubin escaped and the greater part of the book relates to the period when he was living under cover. Part of the time he was in hiding but for the rest he assumed the role of a Polish Christian orphan, changed his name and attended church. However, the continuous threat of exposure to the Nazis remained. The most challenging aspect was that in round-ups the Nazis could identify men suspected of being Jewish simply by telling them to pull down their trousers. Rubin used ingenious techniques to overcome this problem. At one time, he even became leader of a gang of young Poles and with them managed to scrape together enough food for survival.

The author's older sister had managed to escape to Warsaw and she too was

The Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies at the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London requests the pleasure of your company at the 2nd Martin Miller and Hannah Norbert-Miller Memorial Lecture

The Hitler Emigrés Revisited

to be given by **Daniel Snowman** (writer and broadcaster) on Thursday, 21 February 2013, at 6 p.m. Reception afterwards. Venue: The Court Room, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

RSVP by Friday, 8 February 2013 to jane.lewin@sas.ac.uk (tel: 020 7862 8966)

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living with an assumed identity. For some time they shared dangers together, and Rubin feels he owes his survival to her. There were individual Poles who either knew or suspected that he was Jewish and turned a blind eye or even helped. This also applied to a German soldier who helped him to avoid starvation. He is very bitter, however, about the great majority of Poles, who, he feels, were only too happy to turn Jews over to the Nazis or demanded extortionate bribes to keep silent, at least for a while.

Throughout the book the author puts his own dramatic story in the wider context of the Nazi campaign to liquidate all Polish Jewry as well as of the war itself. During the Warsaw Uprising he was particularly shocked when he saw leaflets with the message 'CITIZENS OF WARSAW! We are fighting for a FREE POLAND – a Poland without Germans, Russians and Jews.'

There is a moving account of the day Rubin and his sister were liberated by the Red Army, but their troubles did not end there. They were initially looked after in a Jewish emergency centre in Lublin, where Rubin was even able to go to school for the first time in over five years, but then they decided to return to Ostrowiec. There they and a few Jewish survivors were exposed to a hostile reception from the Polish population, who had not expected any returnees. There was good news, however, as their mother and two of their four brothers had survived after horrific experiences in camps. As it was not safe to stay in Poland the survivors left for Palestine – or in Rubin's case for England, as he was one of those rescued by Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld. The concluding part of the book describes his initial difficulties in settling down in England but these were followed eventually by a successful life in this country. The author ends with fuller accounts of the individual fates of members of his family and of his return visits to the place of his childhood.

Rubin Katz's remarkable memory has enabled him to produce an account not only about his own life and family, but also a record of the fate of Polish Jewry.

The only minor criticism is that some of the photos are of poor quality and do not add to the value of the record.

George Vulkan

The work and short life of Stefan Sebök

IN SEARCH OF A FORGOTTEN ARCHITECT: STEFAN SEBÖK, 1901-1941
by Lilly Dubowitz

London: Architectural Association, 2012, 212 pp. paperback, ISBN 9781907896217

This book is an account of the work and life of Stefan Sebök, a Hungarian-born architect who was unable to study in Hungary due to his Jewish origins. Like many other Hungarian intellectuals, he emigrated to Germany in the 1920s and during his studies became

interested in the Modernist movement. In work for his diploma, he presented a highly *avant-garde* model of a theatre. This prompted Walter Gropius to invite him to join his group in Dessau and Berlin. There he also worked with fellow Hungarian émigré Laszlo Moholy Nagy.



Stefan Sebök

With the rise of the National Socialist movement in Germany in the early 1930s, the flourishing cultural life in Germany was suppressed. The persecution of Jews and other anti-Nazi individuals prevented the further development of new ideas and forced creative individuals wishing to continue their work into emigration. This applied equally to representatives of the Modernist movement. Members of Gropius's group scattered to various European countries that allowed them to continue their work. In the early 1930s cultural life in the Soviet Union seemed to flourish and architecture in particular provided an attractive possibility for young creative architects like Sebök. Accordingly he moved to the Soviet Union to work with the Constructivist architects Ginsburg, El Lissitzky and the Vesnin brothers.

Unfortunately, refugees from Germany and other countries living in the Soviet Union were less fortunate than those who moved to other parts of the world as, during the subsequent years of Stalin's rule, most were arrested and many killed. Sebök was imprisoned in 1941 and died there of malnutrition.

Both in Germany and in the Soviet Union, Sebök carried out numerous original projects which became central to a generation of emerging young architects throughout the world.

In this book, Sebök's niece Lilly Dubowitz describes in meticulous detail her search for his work. Following various clues, she uncovers details of her uncle's life and work in the manner of an architectural detective, providing a compelling account of the work and short life of a once-forgotten architect.

Lilly Dubowitz's research has uncovered Sebök's substantial contribution to some of the Bauhaus's iconic architecture and designs as well as the important work in the Soviet Union. It reflects the current trend towards a more detailed examination of the legacy of Modernism. This book not only uncovers Sebök's contribution to the Modernist movement but highlights personalities who were indispensable in inspiring many first-rate projects but were overshadowed by the signatories of those projects.

Sebök's career path from Hungary through Germany to the Soviet Union, combined with his international outlook in architecture and kinetic art, epitomises the journey of those capable young specialists

who offered their professional expertise to the community wherever life took them. It also illustrates their idealism, which as in the case of Sebök, often rendered them victims of totalitarian regimes.

The book contains numerous superb illustrations of Sebök's design work and essays on the Hungarian and Soviet context by Eva Forgacs and Richard Anderson. This is an unusual scholarly piece of literature that illustrates both the dilemma of creative personalities faced with a totalitarian regime and the importance of uncovering and bringing to light the work of creative individuals whatever the effort involved.

Sebök's biography also uncovers new aspects of the persecution of European Jews in the 20th century and illustrates the loss to European cultural life resulting from the domination of two dictatorships.

Gerta Vrbova

Internment reports by 'enemy aliens'

CIVILIAN INTERNMENT IN BRITAIN DURING WW2: HUYTON CAMP. EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS

edited and introduced by Jennifer Taylor

London: Anglo-German Family History Society, 2012, 118 pp.

In May/June 1940, as Britain faced the threat of imminent invasion, the government ordered the mass internment of 'enemy aliens' as a supposed security measure. This short volume contains eye-witness reports by internees at Huyton Camp in Liverpool, which the government had created by requisitioning a newly-built housing estate. Huyton functioned as a transit camp, housing prisoners who were transferred to the Isle of Man or, in some cases, deported to the Dominions. During the early weeks of internment, conditions were hard. Behind barbed wire and guarded by armed soldiers, internees were held in isolation from the outside world; newspapers and radios were banned; post was censored. In addition, Nazis and anti-Nazis were forced to live cheek by jowl – a source of great resentment.

This volume contains four accounts of life in Huyton, only two of which have been published before (and only one in English). The first is the anonymous diary of an Austrian refugee, held at Huyton from May to July, which the Council of Austrians sent to Eleanor Rathbone MP for use in her campaign against internment. This account first appeared in 1940 in François Lafitte's indictment of internment policy *The Internment of Aliens*. It is followed by the report 'Experiences and Observations over Two Months', compiled by the well-known pacifist Otto Lehmann-Russbuehldt, which was submitted to Lord Lytton's Advisory Council on Aliens. Also published are pages from the diary of the Austrian composer Hans Gál, written

Reviews continued overleaf

REVIEWS *cont. from page 9*

during his brief stay at Huyton. Gál considered the conditions there 'primitive' but miraculously managed to compose his *Huyton Suite* – which was later performed in Central Promenade Camp, Douglas.

Finally, the volume contains extracts from the diary of Paul Bondy, a businessman, journalist and Social Democrat who was detained at Huyton from June to December 1940. Bondy's diary, hitherto unpublished and indeed unknown, begins with a detached account of his own arrest and goes on to record the circumstances which ruled the detainees' daily lives – and their reactions. While this short volume adds little to academic discourse on internment, thanks are due to Jennifer Taylor and the Anglo-German Family History Society for making these interesting sources accessible to a wider audience.

Richard Dove

A backward look at glamour HOLLYWOOD MOVIE STILL: ART AND TECHNIQUE IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE STUDIOS

by Joel W. Finler

*Titan, 2012, 224 pp. hardcover,
ISBN 9781781161937*

At first glance, this is a book of yesterdays. But we all love our yesterdays, especially if we're film buffs, because they are full of romance, sentiment and nostalgia. The recent revival of interest in Hollywood's golden age has spawned art exhibitions and encouraged retrospectives by leading photographers like Eve Arnold who captured the glamour images of the Hollywood stars. Last December BBC4 showed a new series: 'Screen Goddesses'.

So Joel Finler's coffee-table book of black-and-white images, which he claims is the first collection of movie stills for over 40 years, is well timed. His new, expanded edition includes over 30 pages of photos and captions, including an original contact sheet for the film *Witness for the Prosecution*, stuntmen in action and the stars themselves as photographers. It also includes photos of Humphrey Bogart in *High Sierra* by Scotty Welbourne and Conrad Veidt in *Casablanca* by Jack Woods. There are rare photos of leading stillsmen at work in Hollywood studios and an expanded bibliography.

The book offers five chapters of insight into the studio and star system, reproducing the studio shots of the most famous stars of the first half of the 20th century – Greta Garbo, described by her stillsman as having the most inspirational face he had ever seen, Marlene Dietrich, the translucent Marilyn Monroe, Gloria Swanson – many of which would have ended up on the cutting-room floor, lost to posterity.

The passion Finler, an occasional contributor to this Journal, exhibits for movie stills as a genre undervalued by writers, critics and film historians is clear. He explores the role of the photographer – sometimes shunted out of the way by pompous and narcissistic directors, sometimes hounded off the set, as in the case of the mistreated Cecil Beaton, even though the still was essential pre-publicity.

It all began in 1910, with the birth of stars like Theda Bara, the scary, animalistic *femme fatale* (whose name is an anagram for Arab death!). The era of tinsel-town glamour flourished in the early 1930s, but that period also saw the birth of horror – there's a photo of King Kong hovering over New York's Empire State Building holding a terrified Fay Wray in his paw with planes surging towards him – the image can't help but suggest a horrific fast-forward to 9/11.

And then there's Marilyn with her skirt famously blowing in the wind, a cheeky shot of Betty Grable in swimsuit and high heels, and the inimitable Fred Astaire and Rita Hayworth giving *Strictly Come Dancing* a run for its money. Jean Harlow, her platinum hair matching her white silky dress, betrays a secret: for the gowns to stay wrinkle-free when worn off-set, someone designed a lean-to against which the star could rest without sitting down! One sculptural shot of Harlow prefigures by 30 years the yet unborn Twiggy, down to the wan face, pale hair and huge, dark chalky eyes.

Between the 1920s and 1950s Hollywood spawned an outpouring of black-and-white photographs. Stars were snapped at parties, restaurants, award ceremonies, night clubs, and their own stunning homes – just like today's *Hello!* and *OK!* magazines.

Although most stars were no more than wholly owned subsidiaries of the powerful studios, with little input of their own, feistier ones like Lauren Bacall bucked the trend. She famously asked her stills photographer for a 'police photo'! Most stars had to submit to the system of clever re-touching – and even, in the case of Rita Hayworth, electrolysis to make her

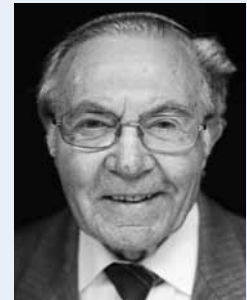
forehead higher – whose result bore little resemblance to the subject being filmed. The author analyses the development of these photographic techniques, trick shots, double exposures, subtle lighting, vertical lighting, shadow and silhouette shots.

But it would all end soon. The post-war years generated a more natural look for the stars with the development of the *film noir* genre, plus the invention of less clunky, lighter, smaller cameras. The black-and-white period had reached its zenith by the 1950s; the following decade of colour filming drove black-and-white photography into decline.

This book is a must for all who love beauty – you can gaze at it for hours on end

Gloria Tessler

MBE for Holocaust Survivor Mayer Hersh



© Matt Writtle/Portraits for Posterity 2009

Mayer Hersh, a survivor of nine concentration camps who now lives in Manchester, has been awarded an MBE. What a wonderful achievement and his fellow survivors in the '45 Aid Society are very proud of him! As Secretary of that Society, I have known Mayer for many years and you could always rely on him to assist in any project we had. At one time, he regularly visited schools and colleges and gave talks on the Holocaust.

Louise Elliott

Austrian Holocaust Memorial Award for Ladislaus Löb

Ladislaus Löb, Professor Emeritus of German at the University of Sussex, received the award for his book *Dealing with Satan: Rezső Kasztner's Daring Rescue Mission*. Professor Löb was a passenger on the 'Kasztner train', which saw almost 1,700 Jews given safe passage out of Hungary to Switzerland during the Holocaust.

Ladislaus Löb is the first UK recipient of the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Award, which is sponsored by Austrian Service Abroad, an organisation which has sent hundreds of young Austrians abroad for a year of service of social, peace or Holocaust remembrance work.



Professor Ladislaus Löb received the award from the Austrian Ambassador to the UK, His Excellency Emil Brix, at a ceremony at the Austrian Residence in London

Children of Resistance Fighters and Exiles

A conference in Berlin last October was aimed at the children of resistance fighters and exiles. Funded by, among others, 'Helle Panke' e.V.-Rosa-Luxemburg Stiftung Berlin, and organised by the VVN-BdA (Union of People Persecuted by the Nazi Regime-Association of Anti-Fascists), it followed two conferences on the 'Second Generation' whose parents had found asylum in the USSR and frequently become victims of the purges.

The conference addressed itself to those who had found exile in 'the West'. Those present spent their early childhood anywhere from Shanghai to Uruguay and included children of resistance fighters who had survived in Germany itself.

'At last we are talking to each other' – this was the feeling among the over 100 participants. The need to tell their story – and that of their parents – was palpable. Many contributors came from the descendants of those persecuted, displaced, imprisoned, tortured, or executed, from the descendants of refugees, and those who fought with the Republicans in the Spanish War, with the Allied armies or underground.

Parents' complicated life stories have an effect on their children, often causing identity crises. Hans Coppi had been born in prison; his father saw him once before he was executed; his mother was executed after he was weaned. Both were in the resistance and were caught with many others active in the Red Orchestra or the Herbert Baum group. Andrée Fischer-Marun spoke of her grandfather, a Jewish Social Democratic member of the Reichstag murdered in 1934, and her Communist parents, who found exile in France and Mexico. Alice Czyborra, daughter of Peter Gingold, a Jewish Communist active in the French Resistance, told how Jewish Communists faced discrimination and persecution in the FRG long after the war.

Dieter Nelles, Armin Nolzen and Heinz

Sühnker discussed their interviews with over 200 children of anti-fascist activists in Wuppertal who witnessed their parents' resistance and imprisonment first-hand early during the Nazi period. The three-year project of the Bergische Universität Wuppertal documents the effects of their parents' persecution on their own lives. Some refused any political involvement as a result of their experience; others, e.g. Christa Bröcher and Klara Tuchscherer, who spoke of their Second Generation activities in North-Rhine Westphalia, resolved to oppose actively ignorance, injustice and amnesia, widespread in the FRG, where a number of active Nazis achieved influential positions. Merylyn Moos – 'Breaking the Silence' – discussed her research among the British cohort; I contributed to the discourse about the Second Generation and its organisations in Britain; and Helene Maimann from Vienna spoke about the Jewish socialist Kinderjause.

Irene Runge's subject was 'Wir für uns', a group of secular children of political Jewish

refugees and Holocaust survivors founded in 1985 in East Berlin and reconstituted as the Jüdischer Kulturverein Berlin in 1989. Wolfgang Herzberg examined patterns of the mental inheritance and barriers damaging both First and Second Generations in the GDR, the chasm between their understanding of socialism and the reality of living in 'real existing socialism'. Micha Brumlik and Irene Dieckmann introduced their research: interviews with people born in exile in 'the West' who moved to the Soviet Zone, later the GDR, with their parents.

Oswald Schneidrat, born in the USSR to parents persecuted not only in Germany but also in the USSR, made a plea to bring together the different memories. He, and other participants, opposed 'hierarchies of suffering'.

There were opportunities for informal exchanges too. What emerged was that whatever the individual history of the participants, all felt the long-lasting effects of Nazism, exile and dislocation.

Irene Fick

Child Survivors at Cleveland conference

Five members of the CSAGB-AJR attended the recent 24th annual conference of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants, in Cleveland, Ohio. Over 500 delegates from all over the world attended the event. In addition to socialising and reminiscing, there was a full programme of panels, workshops and seminars.

Robert Krell, himself a Child Survivor, gave the keynote address on 'Child Holocaust Survivors: 30 Years of Friendship, Healing and Education – Our Legacy'. It was based on his address to the United Nations earlier in the year. Another speaker was the physicist Henry Fenichel, who gave an amusing talk about the astronauts who in 2006 took a miniature Torah into space. Other

topics presented ranged from 'The Claims Conference and Child Survivors' and 'Jews Rescuing Jews'.

Some of the workshops covered issues which many survivors find increasingly relevant as they age, e.g. 'Memories and Their Impact on Our Ageing' and 'Facing Today with Yesterday's Baggage'. Others were of a more practical nature, such as 'Art, Writing and Music and Movement'. Several workshops were geared to the Second and Third Generation attendees.

The arrival of Superstorm Sandy, which hit Cleveland a day after the east coast, did focus the mind of delegates in that it badly affected our travel plans. But then, most of us have endured a worse journey and survived!

Joan Salter, Chair, CSAGB-AJR

Kindertransport 75th Anniversary

The AJR is delighted to announce a series of events that we are organising this year to mark the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

The central event will be the Kinder reunion on Sunday 23 June at the JFS. We will shortly be sending out invitations with details of the day, which will include contributions from Kinder, JFS pupils and guest speakers. We very much encourage the participation of the Second and Third Generations of Kinder. The reunion will also incorporate a new exhibition to be curated by the Wiener Library which will be on display at the Library from May.

The day after the reunion, on Monday 24 June, the Leo Baeck Institute London, together with the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies, will be holding a symposium at the German Historical Institute in London. The conference will focus on the experiences of Kinder after their arrival in Britain and will be a great opportunity for scholars and Kinder to exchange thoughts and ideas. As with the reunion, it is hoped that younger generations will come along as well as Kinder from out of town and overseas who hope to come to JFS.

Later in the year, on Wednesday 20 November, we are organising, with the help of Lord (Alf) Dubs, a special Tea in the Houses of Parliament to mark the debate held there on 21 November 1938 which paved the way for the arrival of the Kindertransport.

To round off the year, World Jewish Relief, in conjunction with the AJR, will be organising a memorial service at Liverpool Street Station on Sunday 1 December, which recalls the arrival 75 years to the day of the first transport of children.

We look forward to welcoming Kinder and their families at these historic events as well as of course to the monthly Kinder lunches at the Belsize Square Synagogue.

Invitations will be sent out shortly

Sir Erich Reich

Call for Memorabilia for an Exhibition on the Kindertransport

The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide is one of the world's leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust and Nazi era.

The Wiener Library is developing a new temporary exhibition to mark the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport and we are looking for original artefacts and materials to use in the exhibition.



If you or someone you know has materials related to the Kindertransport, we want to hear about it.

We are looking for original documents, photographs or artefacts that can be loaned to the Library for the duration of the exhibition run in Summer 2013.

Contact Katy Jackson at kjackson@wienerlibrary.co.uk or on 020 7636 7247 if you have materials you think may be of interest.

For more information about the Library and our current exhibitions, visit our website at www.wienerlibrary.co.uk. The Wiener Library is always interested in acquiring new material. If you do not have anything for this exhibition but have other documents, artefacts or books related to the Holocaust, please contact us.

The Wiener Library
for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide

supported by
The National Lottery
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



INSIDE the AJR

Edinburgh A Delightful Afternoon

Having gathered for a pre-Chanukah get-together at the beautiful home of Françoise Robertson, we were regaled by fiddle player Gica Loening, who told us the fascinating history of klezmer music, illustrating it with toe-tapping examples of the various tunes for weddings in the *shtetl*. Following a scrumptious tea, a reading of the comic poem 'Twas the Night before Chanukah' rounded off the afternoon. Warm thanks to Agnes Isaacs for organising this delightful afternoon and, of course, to our generous hostess Françoise.

Flora Selwyn

BRIGHTON AJR GROUP

Monday 18 February 2013
at 10.45 am



We are delighted we will be joined by
The Mayor of Brighton & Hove,
Cllr Bill Randall

Meetings held at Ralli Hall, Denmark
Villas in Hove (nr Hove Station)

All members in the area welcome

For further details, please contact
Esther Rinkoff on 020 8385 3070 or
at esther@ajr.org.uk

Ealing My Life at the Home Office

Member Leslie Sommer spoke about his career as a civil servant. From Town Planning he went on to work at the Parole Unit, Immigration Deportation, Fire Services, Passport Agency and Coroner's Unit. He also sat on the Home Office's Equality and Human Rights' Commission.

Esther Rinkoff

Birmingham/West Midlands

The Complex Technology of Blood Transfusion

Our member Walter Loeb, retired head of the Midlands Blood Transfusion Centre, spoke about his former work. From the relatively basic beginnings of giving and receiving blood, it has become a most complex technology.

Ruth Shire

Liverpool KT Anniversary

Our Chanukah Party was held at the home of Inge and Eric Goldrein, to whom we are once again indebted for their hospitality. We were entertained by Greg Abrams, son of our member Rita, and his wife Shelley

with a medley of Yiddish, Chanukah and traditional songs – much enjoyed by all. We welcomed new member Faye Healey, who came to Liverpool on the Kindertransport and to the day it was the 74th anniversary of Rita Abram's arrival in this country on the first Kindertransport.

Guido Alis

A Most Pleasant Meeting: Chanukah Party for North London groups

Our slightly belated Chanukah Party, at the Sha'arei Tsedek Synagogue in Whetstone, was attended by some 35 guests from Edgware, Hendon, HGS, North London, Temple Fortune and WGC groups. We were entertained by Lynne Bradley with songs and commentary interspersed by a light, but very pleasant lunch. Our thanks to Myrna, Hazel and volunteers for a most pleasant meeting.

Herbert Haberberg

Ilford Early Chanukah Party

We had an early Chanukah Party with lots of food! Myrna Glass then set us a lively quiz with prizes and this was followed by a second dip into the wonderful André Rieu DVD recorded in front of the Hofburg Palace in Vienna.

Mark Finkeltaub

Leeds Members Say Farewell to Susanne Green

A fond farewell was said to Suzanne Green for her many years of hard work over here in the 'North East'. The occasion was the local Chanukah Party and there were so many accolades that we lost count! Susanne gave us all so much – she cared about us, organised us, encouraged us to meet and socialise. She could be counted on to offer real friendship and support. Her commitment to the refugees and survivors shone through and could be seen in her smile. We will miss her dearly over here but we know it's not 'goodbye' but 'au revoir' as no doubt we will see her again at the Northern gatherings. The bonds between this band of brothers and sisters has been strengthened by her endeavours and we can only wish her all the very best for her future, as she concentrates on the North West. She can count on a grand reception if she ventures 'over the border'. Susanne, thank you for everything and we hope you have fond memories of us all here.

Lilian Black

Pinner Chanukah Party

We enjoyed the annual Chanukah Party with latkes and lots of other savoury and sweet food. Entertainment was delightfully provided by Gayathrie, who sang a wide range of songs accompanied by her husband Bill.

Robert Gellman

Oxford 80 Years of the Film Industry

Howard Lanning gave us a Powerpoint presentation on 80 years of his family

in the film industry, following which we enjoyed Chanukah refreshments.

Anne Selinger

Essex Chanukah Lunch

Westcliff and Southend Synagogue Ladies Guild hosted a Chanukah lunch to which AJR members were invited.

Esther Rinkoff

Glasgow CF

New Year's Eve Recreated

New Year's Eve was recreated on 19 December when we, 17 members and volunteers, finished the year off in true Scottish style and sat down to an afternoon of socialising and relaxation with soft background music and balloons and mulled wine, haggis neeps, tatties and trifle. Taking bookings for next year already

Agnes Isaacs

St John's Wood Unconventional Account of Bank of England

The Bank of England's Tim Pike gave a riveting and unconventional account of the Bank and those responsible for running it plus an overview of our financial situation and prospects for the future. We would have Tim back any time!

Yvonne Klemperer

Café Imperial

Superb Memorial to Willie Field

Over 20 of us celebrated the life of Willie Field at Giacomo's in Finchley Road. Judy, Willie's wife, their two sons and his twin sister from Westcliff were present, as was Dr Helen Fry, who helped Willie write his book. It was suggested that this superb memorial to Willie, organised by the AJR along with Lord Peter Eden, might become an annual event.

Hazel Beiny

Newcastle Chanukah Lunch and Highlight of the Year Concert

Soprano Lynne Harvey Allen and Alaister Sim of Glasgow enthralled us with favourites from *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Merry Widow*, *Carmen* plus Yiddish songs to name but a few. The three-course lunch, catered by Brenda Dinsdale, including home-made bread, hand-made chocolate spoons and latkes, was simply delicious. Flowers were presented to our Social Worker Eileen Brady, who is leaving the AJR and will be much missed. It was a chance to meet locum Social Worker Jim Sutherland. The Chanukah concert was undoubtedly the highlight of the year.

Agnes Isaacs

Wessex Light-hearted Quiz and Sumptuous Tea

Over 30 members and guests gathered in Bournemouth Hebrew Congregation Communal Hall. Myrna welcomed everyone and began the afternoon with a light-hearted quiz, following which we had a sumptuous tea including latkes and doughnuts. Candles were lit by Walter Kammerling and we concluded with the singing of *Ma'oz Tsur*.

Renee Oberlander

Manchester Chanukah Social Neither 'Pre' nor 'Post'

We held our very popular Chanukah Social, this year neither 'pre' nor 'post' but with just a few hours of the festival remaining. Some 50 members and friends enjoyed tasty seasonal refreshments. The musical entertainment this year was provided by Liverpool-based Bobby Abrahams, himself Third Generation from refugee stock, who regaled us with songs in the style of Sinatra and Michael Bublé. There is continued enthusiasm for the Social – long may it remain so! Thanks are due once again to Susanne Green for all her help in ensuring the success of the occasion.

Werner Lachs

Brighton-Sarid (Sussex)

A Most Interesting Morning

We enjoyed Esther's doughnuts with our Chanukah quiz – amazing how much we didn't know we knew! Having congratulated ourselves, we heard a little about the lives of our members, during and after the War. A very interesting morning and we look forward to our next meeting.

Shirley Huberman

Kent Chanukah Get-together

At our Chanukah get-together we lit candles and ate doughnuts and mince pies, then answered questions in a fairly light-hearted quiz prepared by Esther.

Josephine Singer

Book Club Delicious Cake and the Usual Group Therapy

Meeting at Joseph's Bookstore in Temple Fortune, we enjoyed delicious cake and our usual group therapy session. Deborah Feldman's *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots* was considered one of the best books we've read to date. For our 27 February meeting, we'll be reading *The Seamstress* by Maria Duenas.

Hazel Beiny

Yorkshire Chanukah Party Klezmer and Crooning

We held a pre-Chanukah celebration combined with fond farewells to Susanne Green. First and Second Generation members came from Hull, Sheffield, Bradford, Doncaster and Leeds to enjoy a wonderful mixture of klezmer and crooning music followed by afternoon tea. Ruth Rogoff told us the story and significance of Chanukah and how it relates to life today. Rudi Leavor sang the *brachot* whilst members lit candles and we all sang *Ma'oz Tsur*. There was much emotion due to Susanne's retirement from Yorkshire after 11 years of travelling over the Pennines. Pippa Landey had organised tributes by Veronika Keczes from Hull, Heinz Skyte from Leeds, Rudi Leavor from Bradford and Rachel Hunter from Sheffield. Susanne introduced Wendy Bott, the new Yorkshire Group Co-ordinator.

Barbara Cammerman

Radlett Disproportionate Role of US Jewish Composers

The early 1900s were the heyday of the

FEBRUARY GROUP MEETINGS

Location	Date	Activity
Café Imperial	Date tba	Social Get-together
Glasgow CF	3 Feb	Social
Ealing	5 Feb	Winter Warmer – Social Get-together
Edinburgh CF	6 Feb	Jewish Poetry
Ilford	6 Feb	David Barnett: 'Shops and Shopping in Regency London'
Pinner	7 Feb	Howard Lanning: '80 Years in the Film Industry'
Newcastle	10 Feb	Screening of <i>Watermarks</i>
HGS	11 Feb	Prof Michael Spiro: 'The Story of Penicillin'
Essex	12 Feb	Sharon Wheeler, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Bradford	13 Feb	Introducing Wendy Bott
St John's Wood	13 Feb	Representative from Wallace Collection
Welwyn GC	14 Feb	(Thur at synagogue) Ros Nagler: 'Light-Hearted Poetry'
Brighton	18 Feb	The Mayor of Brighton (see box, page 12)
Edgware	19 Feb	Discussion Group – An object that means a lot to you
Kent	19 Feb	Film: Alice Sommer Hertz, still playing piano at 107
Oxford	19 Feb	Angela Schluter: 'Jewish Mother, Nazi Father'
Liverpool	20 Feb	Members share stories and research
Radlett	20 Feb	Local Council Member
Cambridge	21 Feb	David Barnett: 'The Story of Joseph Nathan and GlaxoSmithKline'
Hull	24 Feb	Introducing Wendy Bott
North West London	25 Feb	(Mon at Hendon) Ruth Berman – Extend Exercises
Marlow CF	26 Feb	Social Get-together with Lunch
Book Club	27 Feb	Social
Wembley	27 Feb	Social Get-together
North London	28 Feb	Andy Epstein, Trustee of WIZO UK

CONTACTS

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020 8385 3077

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0151 291 5734

Susan Harrod, Groups' Administrator
020 8385 3070

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

Esther Rinkoff, Southern Region Co-ordinator
020 8385 3077

KT-AJR (Kindertransport)
Andrea Goodmaker 020 8385 3070

Child Survivors Association-AJR
Henri Obstfeld 020 8954 5298

American musical. At that time, Jews constituted about 3% of the American population. It's therefore astonishing, as Brian Nathan pointed out to us, that over 50% of the musicals were written by Jews and the same is true for other types of popular music. Brian produced an almost unending list of Jewish composers and librettists, including later ones writing film music. Often their Jewish origins came as a surprise to us.

Fritz Starer

Wembley Warm and Friendly Intimacy

At our belated Chanukah get-together Myrna laid on a very special tea – one of our members had turned 103 years old. We are a small group and hence have no

speakers, but our meetings have a warm and friendly intimacy and are always greatly enjoyed.

Ingrid Morland

BOOKS BOUGHT MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

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07855387574

ejlevine@blueyonder.co.uk

I also purchase ephemera

'Like a Film Star' – Search for a Precious Photo

Last year Garry Mandel of Manchester said he would love to see again a photo of his elder brother Leo that had appeared in an East Anglian newspaper when the first Kindertransport group arrived there on 17 December 1938. Leo was the first of four siblings to come to the UK from Vienna. He then arranged guarantors for his two brothers and sister. Their mother obtained a domestic visa and their father survived the war in hiding, so eventually the family was reunited in Manchester. They were very aware of how lucky they were.

Garry said the photo showed Leo looking out of the train window 'like a film star'. AJR Northern Social Worker Barbara Dresner heard this and put her Sherlock Holmes hat on. She rang Lowestoft Library and asked if

they had a newspaper archive. Put through to the archive, Barbara asked archivist Brenda whether they might have a paper dated 17 November 1938 and explained why. Brenda said she'd look and ring back. Fifteen minutes later Brenda rang back and said 'Bingo!' She had found the photo, plus associated articles. She too had put her Sherlock Holmes hat on – the photo was not in the Lowestoft newspaper, but the *East Anglian Daily Press*. It would cost £16.00 for copies of the papers to be made (there are rules as to who can

receive copies of archive papers).

At the end of the year a delighted Garry showed Barbara the photo he'd spoken of so warmly. There was his brother Leo – exactly as described!



The AJR Paul Balint Centre

at Belsize Square Synagogue
51 Belsize Square, London NW3 4HX
Telephone 020 7431 2744

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays – 9.30 am to 3.30 pm

Activities February 2013

Lunch is served at 12.30 unless otherwise stated

NEW TIMING

Please note: Current Affairs Discussion Group will now start at 10.30 am

ONE-TO-ONE BASIC COMPUTER LESSONS

To book a session with Rim, please call her on 020 8385 3070

Tuesday 5 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 10.45 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 12.30 **KT LUNCH Speaker Olivia Marks-Woldman, Chief Executive, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust**

Thursday 7 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 **Lynne and Michael Valentine's show 'Let Me Call You Sweetheart'**

Tuesday 12 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group
- 11.30 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Mike Marandi**

Thursday 14 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.30 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.00 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 12.00 **Lunch**
- 12.45 **Film Show 'Best Exotic Marigold Hotel'**

Tuesday 19 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 10.45 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Margaret Opdahl**

Thursday 21 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 12 pm **LUNCHEON CLUB Speaker David Lawson, 'Steel and Schnapps, Sausages and Soldiers, Scrolls and Survival – the Story of Ostrava' Lunch**
- 12.45 **Lunch**
- 10.30 Current Affairs Discussion Group
- 11.30 Seated Exercises with Jacky
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Ronnie Goldberg**

Tuesday 26 February

- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10-12 One-to-One Computer Tuition
- 10-12 Coffee/Chat/Knit/Board Games
- 10.00 French Conversation
- 10.45 Let's Read and Discuss
- 11.15 Seated Exercises with Rosalie
- 13.45 **Entertainer – Mike Ryan**

THE AJR PAUL BALINT CENTRE – LUNCHESES FRESHLY PREPARED

Please note that lunches at the Centre are freshly prepared on the premises by our in-house chef Cassie

MEALS-ON-WHEELS

To order Meals-on-Wheels please telephone 020 8385 3075 (this number is manned on Wednesdays only) or 020 8385 3070



FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS

Birthday

Eve Mary Kolman (née Rosenberg) Congratulations with love and best wishes on her 90th birthday from her husband, children, grandchildren, family and friends

Engagement

Congratulations to Eleanor and Tim Angel and grandmother Anne Marx on the engagement of Jeremy and Anne-Marie

Death

Condolences to Agi Alexander and sons Michael and Nicholas on the death of Simon

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ARTS AND EVENTS JANUARY DIARY

Wed 30 January (until 12 May 2013)
'Schwitters in Britain' Exhibition of art at internment camp on Isle of Man. At Tate Britain, London SW1. £10, concessions available

Mon 18 Feb Prof Neil Gregor (University of Southampton), 'Mockery as Politics: The Degenerate Art Exhibition, 1937' At Wiener Library, 6.30 pm. Tel 020 7636 7247

Wed 20 Feb B'nai B'rith Jerusalem Lodge. Dennis Hart, More Tales of a Fleet Street Photographic Journalist 2.30 pm, venue to be arranged

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OBITUARIES

Ruth Whyte (née Kremnitzer), 11 August 1914 – 2 September 2012

Ruth Gudrun Kremnitzer was born in Leipzig the daughter of Rosi and Gerhard Kremnitzer. Her father, born on the Polish-Austrian border, took Austrian nationality but chose to live in Leipzig. Here he built up a flourishing fur business, enabling Ruth and her younger brother Ernst to enjoy a happy childhood.

All this changed in 1933 when Hitler came to power. Ruth had just left school and vividly remembered her last carefree summer spent with friends dancing, partying and playing tennis. By autumn the idyll was over and Gerhard decided to move his fur business to Milan. The family started a new life in Italy, where they spent five happy years and Ruth learned fluent Italian. When the onset of hostilities forced them to move to



London, Ruth became restless and returned to her beloved Italy, settling in Venice and working in a fashionable couturier shop adjacent to the Piazza San Marco. Realising Italy was no longer

safe, she returned to London, where her parents were now living in the Belsize Park district.

During the war years Ruth provided translation services for the BBC, which covered all aspects of war reporting, and in 1946 she started work with the Office of War Information. She was deeply involved in helping other refugees who had escaped to London and was always grateful for the help and support she herself had received.

In 1947 she rented a flat in Thurlow Road, Hampstead. This was a time of going to the theatre and parties and celebrating the end of the war, and it was here that she died some 65 years later. She loved her life in Hampstead and moved in a circle of cultural-artistic Mittel-European friends. She developed great skill in mounting drawings and paintings, and her first big assignment was an exhibition of Gwen John at the Matthiesen Gallery, whose mounts were admired by Gwen's brother Augustus. Ruth went on to make many mounts for the great artist and he became a good friend.

Ruth's life was further enriched when in 1959 she met John Whyte at a dinner party given by her best friend Lore Petzal. After discovering a shared passion for travel and opera, Ruth and John, a widower with two teenage sons, fell in love and were married in 1961. He moved into her Hampstead home, where they lived happily until John died in 1984.

Ruth continued to enjoy the company of close friends, who supported her through this sad time, and she loved going to concerts, art exhibitions and visiting family in New York and Vermont. She was upset as she started to lose her sight and hearing and became increasingly housebound. She was grateful to the library for their selection of large-print books and television became a lifeline. She enjoyed listening to music, especially the Proms, and never missed the famous New Year concert from Vienna. She was also a huge sports fan and regretted it when she was no longer able to follow Wimbledon. Ruth's amazing memory never deserted her: she remembered dates and loved celebrating anniversaries. Even as she grew older, she was always brilliant at remembering birthdays.

Genista Toland

Clare Barrington, 30 October 1923 – 25 November 2012

My dear mum, Clare Barrington, passed away peacefully in the early hours at Peterhead Cottage Hospital, Aberdeenshire, after a short illness. She was 89 years of age.

She was born Klara Albina Fränkel in Vienna of Polish parents and came to England on 10 August 1939 with the Kindertransport. Her father, Abraham David Fränkel, died in Dachau in February 1940, her brother, Ignatz, in Buchenwald before his 26th birthday. Her mother (née Pesel Gittel) and sister were sent to a Polish concentration camp. Her mother died after liberation in 1945 though she never learned what became of her sister.

Clare married in 1951. I was her only child, born in 1952. Unfortunately her marriage lasted barely five years, partly due to the pressures of struggling financially and partly due to her mental condition (floating anxiety), directly linked to her experience of being uprooted at a tender age and the total loss of her own family and culture. Of necessity, I was taken into care, never experiencing normal family life after the age of five and finally moving to Scotland aged 23, where I married and have two children. My parents lived separately in London but, as age crept up on them, I moved them one by one to nearby, where I could care for them in their old age. My father died



two years ago.

With the passing away of my mum, although I am naturally very sad, I have a distinct feeling that Clare – a Survivor with a capital 'S' – has finally escaped and the memories of her dreadful childhood experiences are now far, far away from her, where they can do no more harm.

I would like to thank all at the AJR for helping Clare both practically and materially. Even though she moved 500 miles north, she was not beyond your reach and a special thanks to Eileen Brady in Newcastle and Jim Sutherland in Dundee for your personal assistance. You helped my mother in many ways and, in doing so, you certainly helped me too.

Norman Barrington
nb@normanb.net



LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

Truly inspiring events

Three books I have read in the last few months, all of them well-researched and dealing in one way or another with art or artists and the Second World War, have given me many hours of interest and plenty to think about.

The first, which I picked up by chance last year in the bookshop near our hotel in Bloomsbury, *Villa Air-Bel* by Rosemary Sullivan, describes the events in a house on the outskirts of Marseille where several of the leading Surrealist and Dadaist artists of Europe found refuge from the Nazis while they awaited rescue and escape from France. The story of Varian Fry's efforts to rescue leading Jewish intellectuals and artists from Vichy France is fairly widely known by now, but this story has not been brought into the public eye until recently. Artists such as Marc Chagall, Max Ernst and André Breton, together with several others, were able to survive and even continue their creative work thanks to the efforts of the French Resistance, American benefactors and Fry (who actually lived in the house too).

I happened to pick up the second book on a similar subject, *21 Rue la Boetie* by

Anne Sinclair, in a French supermarket. I read it in French, but it may also exist in an English version. The author is, by now, the ex-wife of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, someone whose reputation is rather problematic, but she is a journalist and TV personality in her own right in France. She starts her story in 2010, when she was required to submit identity documents at a French town hall and was asked where her grandparents were born. All her grandparents were Jewish and her maternal grandfather, Paul Rosenberg, had been a renowned art dealer in pre-war Paris, representing, *inter alia*, Matisse, Braque and Picasso. In fact, he and Picasso became good friends, with Picasso living next door to the family in the early years of his first marriage. When the Nazis invaded France the family escaped to the south of France and eventually the USA. Paul Rosenberg managed to send many of his paintings ahead and was therefore able to open an art gallery in New York. It is thanks to his efforts and acumen that many Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works have survived since they were regarded as 'degenerate art' by the Nazis, who even destroyed some pieces. Anne

Sinclair gives a detailed account of the way the Nazis ravaged her grandparents' former home and place of business as well as how, after the War, her grandfather succeeded in reclaiming much of what had been stolen from him.

The last book, *Monuments Men* by Robert Edsel, was mentioned to me in passing by my sister after hearing about Anne Sinclair's book from me. I was intrigued by what she told me and promptly ordered the book from Amazon. It gives a detailed account of the work of a special Allied unit, consisting mainly of Americans but also of representatives from England and France, whose job it was to protect the monuments of Europe from destruction and damage by both the retreating Germans and the advancing Allied forces in the final years of the War. The unit also worked valiantly to trace and rescue the art that had been filched by the Nazis throughout Europe and secreted in over a thousand (yes, one thousand!) hiding places, mainly in Germany and Austria. These included salt mines, castles, marshland and other sites too numerous to mention. The entire book reads like a detective story and involves heroic and courageous acts by men whose pre-War life had been spent in libraries and museums and whose principal motivation was to rescue the art treasures of Europe and restore them to their rightful owners.

All three books describe events that are amazing, admirable and truly inspiring.

LETTERS *cont. from p.7*

Further to Dr Scarlett Epstein's reference to the American Joint's good work, I would like to bring up an example of their cloak-and-dagger operations in wartime Poland that is little known. This goes back to the dark days of 1944 in Warsaw, which had been declared *judenfrei* by Hans Frank, the Nazi hangman of Poland, as a birthday present to his Führer. This was after the epic Ghetto Revolt the previous year. At this time, my elder sister and I were 'passing for' non-Jews in 'Aryan' Warsaw. She had a forged *Kennkarte* and I, a 12-year-old, was armed with a baptism certificate. This was genuine enough – except that I was not that baptised boy, though I was pretty well versed in the catechism for children.

My resourceful sister somehow made

contact with a Polish courier from the Joint, whom she would meet secretly in a park, and he handed her an envelope containing about 20 US dollars, which went some way during the War. It's amazing how the Joint managed to operate in Warsaw right under the nose of the Gestapo. They apparently got the funds into Poland via diplomatic channels and the Polish Home Army distributed it to any covert Jews they could locate, with the Home Army taking their cut. Regrettably, contact was lost when on 1 August 1944 a general uprising erupted in the capital and, in the ensuing street fighting, the city was obliterated and the entire population ruthlessly driven out. As a result, I lost my safe house.

Rubin Katz, London NW11

DISTURBING BUT LOVELY FILM

Sir – A DVD of the disturbing but lovely film *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, directed by Vittorio de Sica, has just been released. The film contrasts greatly with most of de Sica's other work, the most famous of which is *Bicycle Thieves* (regarded by some professional critics as the best film ever made).

In *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, a wealthy Jewish family leads an idyllic life in pre-war Ferrara during the Mussolini era. But the family ignores the rising fascism and pays the ultimate price for doing so. I strongly urge readers who have not previously seen this film to take this opportunity to see it.

Janos Fisher,
Bushey Heath

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