

# AJR journal

The Association of Jewish Refugees

## An accidental warrior

Writing about German Jews in British uniform in last month's issue of the Journal brought to mind one of the most remarkable and entertaining autobiographical texts by a Jewish refugee who served in the British Army in the Second World War. Mark Lynton, author of *Accidental Journey: A Cambridge Internee's Memoir of World War II* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1995), was born Max-Otto Ludwig Loewenstein in Stuttgart in 1920, moving to Berlin two years later when his father was appointed head of a major German car manufacturer. The Loewensteins were a fairly typical assimilated German-Jewish family, proudly patriotic – Max-Otto's father had won the Iron Cross in the First World War – well educated, financially secure, comfortably established in the upper reaches of the professional middle class, and with a certain cosmopolitanism of outlook.

That latter quality led his parents to send Max-Otto to be educated at the Lycée Pasteur, in the wealthy Parisian suburb of Neuilly, in 1933, and from there to Cheltenham College in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, in 1936. His parents emigrated to Holland in 1935, subsequently moving to the United States. Lynton's description of Cheltenham as 'an English public school of indifferent academic reputation, sterling social standing, and towering military distinction' is typical of his ability to deal out ironically back-handed compliments to venerable British institutions. In 1938 he went up to St John's College, Cambridge, to read law. But his legal studies took second place to his pleasurable leisured existence as a member of a highly privileged elite at an institution that seemed more dedicated to preserving antiquated social values and customs than to learning. At first, the university appeared to regard the war as little more than an annoying irrelevance, but on Whit Sunday 1940 the young Loewenstein was rudely jolted out of his lotus-eating languor: returning to his college after a hard day's punting and drinking, he was arrested and interned. It was to be nine months before he saw Cambridge again.

Lynton's account of his internment highlights its farcical aspects: the 'staggeringly incompetent' but occasionally kindly and



Mark Lynton, 1920-1997

well-meaning British soldiers who guarded the internees; the shambles behind barbed wire that was Huyton, the holding camp on Merseyside where he was first taken; and the absurdity of the entire operation of the mass internment of so-called 'enemy aliens', directed from Whitehall with a logic apparently deriving from Lewis Carroll. If Lynton's time at Cambridge recalls Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, his years in internment and in the British Army recall Waugh's darkly comic depiction of wartime

service in his *Sword of Honour* trilogy. It was the same impenetrable and blinkered bureaucracy that saw Lynton shipped off to Canada on the *SS Ettrick*, in the improbable company of Hans Kahle, a convinced Communist who had commanded a division in the Spanish Civil War, and Fritz Lingen, a grandson of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Lynton spent several months in Canada, unable to return to Britain until 1941 since the Home Office, believing him to have drowned when the *SS Arandora Star* was sunk on its way to Canada in July 1940, had 'mislaid' him there. But at least the Canadian camps provided modern comforts, equipped as they were with 'every gadget known in the Western Hemisphere, some of which, I suspect, may not have reached England to this day'.

On his return to Britain, Lynton volunteered for the Pioneer Corps, serving in 251 Company, in an array of more or less futile and unsuitable occupations, including a hare-brained scheme to construct fake storage tanks to divert Luftwaffe pilots from attacking the oil storage facilities at Avonmouth, outside Bristol. His description of his company on parade in their new uniforms as 'almost indistinguishable from a Gräfin Mariza [operetta by Emmerich Kálmán] rehearsal' is classic Lynton. The time he spent back in Cheltenham, under the disapproving eye of retired army officers who had attended his old school, provided him with further rich material for a satirical depiction of establishment British attitudes and conduct. Eventually, he was selected for officer training at Sandhurst.

Having officially changed his name, Lt. Lynton was commissioned into the Third Royal Tank Regiment, an elite armoured unit with a proud record that had taken it from Libya to the Normandy landings. Lynton's commanding officer was Colonel Teddy Mitford, brother of the five Mitford sisters. One of the most gripping sections of the book consists of Lynton's account of the stubborn fighting in the Normandy *bocage*, followed by Eleventh Armoured Division's rapid advance through France and Belgium, during which Third RTR was involved in the taking of Amiens and the vital port of Antwerp, in the Battle of the Bulge, the

### SIR NICHOLAS WINTON 1909-2015

The Association of Jewish Refugees expresses its profound sadness at the passing of Sir Nicholas Winton. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

An obituary of  
Sir Nicholas appears on  
page 5.



Rhine crossing at Wesel and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, ending up at Flensburg on the Danish border. Third RTR had outfought the Wehrmacht from the sands of the Western Desert to the Baltic Sea – but at great cost. Often in the van of the British advance, the regiment's tanks frequently felt the force of the German defences, notably the 88mm anti-tank guns and the dreaded Tiger tanks. The life expectancy of a tank commander like Lynton was short; he was fortunate to have been wounded only once when his tank was hit, since his unit, 2,000 men strong, suffered some 600 killed.

Lynton describes the exhilarating but bloodstained advance across north-western Europe with gusto, and to no little comic effect. Here is a sample of his style, recounting the capture of one German town:

While nearing Neustadt, a small town north of Hamburg, the 'telephone caper' occurred to Teddy Mitford. He had come across some engineering unit restringing telephone wires who had told him that they had, quite by accident, tapped into the Neustadt Exchange a few miles up the road. He summoned me to join him, since I was the only German speaker in Third RTR, and suggested I try to phone the Neustadt garrison and talk them into surrendering, rather than put everyone to the trouble of fighting for it. [...] I got hooked into the line, asked for the Neustadt commandant, and promptly got put through to him. After that it became pure farce.

Pitching my voice somewhere between Erich von Stroheim and Dr. Anthony, I outlined a scenario of hundreds of tanks, clouds of planes, and swarms of paratroopers, all bunched down the road for the declared purpose of obliterating Neustadt. The party at the opposite end, hearing of this imaginary Armageddon, clearly felt that Neustadt hardly warranted so much attention, and politely wanted what we wished him to do. On being told to fly white flags, sheets or whatever, from

every building, assemble all his troops on the main square, men on one side, arms on the other, and do it all within ten minutes, he appeared to view that as an eminently sensible suggestion, provided he be allowed to phone his superiors to advise them that he was retiring from this war.

For all the apparent levity of Lynton's account of his often picaresque progress through the wartime years, the courage of the men he fought with – even when they maintained the outer appearance of sheep-faced British stuffed shirts of the officer class – was beyond question.

After the German surrender, Lynton was involved in some of the most notable events in the British Zone of Occupation. He observed the taking prisoner of Admiral Dönitz, Hitler's successor as Führer, and his cabinet at Flensburg, and was present by chance at army headquarters in Lüneburg when Heinrich Himmler was held there. He participated in the arrest of SS-Standartenführer Otto Bovensiepen, one of the early senior Nazi war criminals to be caught and brought to justice. Transferred from Third RTR to Military Headquarters at Bad Oeynhausen, Lynton was involved in the systematic pursuit and interrogation of war criminals. The high point of his activities here was his part in the arrest of Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz. Interestingly, Lynton's account makes no mention of Hanns Alexander, who, according to Thomas Harding's bestseller *Hanns and Rudolf*, was the man responsible for arresting Höss; perhaps unsurprisingly, Harding makes no mention of Lynton either, though the latter was, or at least claimed to have been, an eyewitness to the arrest.

After a spell in Denmark, Lynton returned to occupied Germany to participate in intelligence work, first in military intelligence, then, from early spring 1946, in political intelligence, with 16 SHIO (Schleswig-Holstein Intelligence Office), based at Kiel. In this capacity, Major Lynton, as he now was, met some of the most influential figures in post-war West German politics, including Kurt Schumacher, Ernst Reuter, Karl Arnold and Konrad Adenauer (whom he disliked). Demobilised in August 1947, Lynton resolved not to resume his law studies. He held his internment against the British authorities, also the tardiness with which they agreed to grant him British citizenship (in March 1947, nearly two years after the end of the war). Lynton soon emigrated to the USA, where he built a successful career as a corporate executive. He died in 1997.

Anthony Grenville

## Special KT Lunch

Wednesday 9 September 2015  
at New North London

Synagogue

Guest speaker: Barbara Winton

Please join us for a special KT Lunch on Wednesday 9 September at the New North London Synagogue, 80 East End Road, Finchley N3. We are delighted that Barbara Winton, daughter of the late Sir Nicholas Winton, will be our guest speaker.

Barbara will be talking about her father's remarkable achievements and signing copies of her book

*If It's Not Impossible ... The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton.*

We are also delighted that some of the Year 6 pupils from Akiva School will be in attendance to meet you and Barbara.

Please strongly encourage your families to accompany you for this unique gathering.

*NB: The KT Lunch will be at the regular venue at Alyth Synagogue for the August and October meetings.*



## AJR Lunch SUNDAY

11 OCTOBER 2015

Details to follow

## 10-DAY VISIT TO

# ISRAEL

NOVEMBER 2015

The AJR is considering organising a 10-day trip to Israel in early November this year.

The cost of the visit is not yet decided.

Carol Rossen will be accompanying the trip.

If you would like to join the trip, please contact  
Lorna Moss on 020 8385 3070  
or at [lorna@ajr.org.uk](mailto:lorna@ajr.org.uk)  
as soon as possible.

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

## THE 'JECKES' IN ISRAEL

The AJR is not alone in this world. We are one of three parallel organisations, with the other two based in Israel and the USA, and which together form the Council of Jews from Germany.

I recently met senior figures in our sister organisation in Israel and thought our members here might be interested in their work, which is very similar to ours.

Israel's equivalent of the AJR was established in British Mandatory Palestine in 1932. Its overall title is Irgun Merkaz Europa - the Central Organisation (of Jews) of Europe, meaning in fact Central Europe. Together with its subsidiary organisation, the Solidaritaetswerke, it is indeed Israel's sister organisation to the AJR. The email address – <http://www.irgun-jeckes.org> – tells you exactly who they are!

Together they do much the same work in Israel as the AJR does in the UK for much the same constituency, namely German-speaking refugees from Nazi Europe. Membership stands at some 3,500, including many from the second and even third generations.

Their core values as described on their website are:

- Mutual assistance and social solidarity
- Volunteering and contributing to community and society
- Zionism and building the country
- Immigrant absorption
- Excellence in all occupational and knowledge fields
- Education and culture
- Civilised society
- Intellectual pluralism
- Preserving and imparting the heritage to descendants and society at large

Solidaritaetswerke provides welfare benefits through a network of inter-agency collaboration with elder services, community agencies, government healthcare providers and cultural frameworks.

They help hundreds of people, including Holocaust survivors and the chronically ill. They pay monthly assistance grants to those with financial difficulties (similar to our own Self Aid arrangements) as well as giving one-off payments

for urgent needs such as dental care, glasses, hearing aids, emergency alert systems, and mobility aids.

In addition, they run eight 'Parents' Homes' in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa, accommodating nearly 1,000 residents. Having visited one of these 'Homes' in Jerusalem, I was enormously impressed not only by the quality of the buildings and gardens in which the residents can enjoy the sun when it's not too hot, but also by the dedication of the staff who work there. If only we had such facilities in the UK!

There are over 500 social meetings throughout Israel every year.

They publish a full-colour magazine, *Yakinton*, which claims over 7,000 readers and covers the same ground as the *AJR Journal*, with numerous life stories forming a regular feature of the magazine. Their website has 20,000 monthly visitors.

They also have their own museum, The German-Speaking Jewry Heritage Museum, also known as the Jeckes Museum, and one of a number of galleries in an Open Museum. Even the location of the museum in Tefen, an industrial park in north-western Galilee near Ma'alot, Karmiel and Nahariya, has a strong German-Jewish connection.

Tefen was founded by Stef Wertheimer, himself a German-Jewish refugee who in 1937 came with his parents from Kippenheim to Palestine aged 11 or 12. He became an enormously successful industrialist, selling the majority stake in his business Iscar to Warren Buffett and is today a major philanthropist.

A visit to the museum is very worthwhile. Those who remember our Continental Britons Exhibition

will find many echoes not only of the stories but also of the way they are told. The exhibits have explanations in Hebrew, German and English.

It is difficult in a short article to reflect the impact the 'Jeckes', as they proudly call themselves, have had on the State of Israel, from the very way it looks – the Bauhaus style of Tel Aviv's world heritage architecture – to science, medicine, education, the arts, business and banking.

Just a side comment will show how they are seen in Israel. In 2012 they published a lighthearted illustrated book, *Sabre Deutsch – Das Lexikon der Jeckes*. Published as a hardback, it became an instant bestseller in Israel, with over 20,000 copies sold.

David Rothenberg

### KINDERTRANSPORT LUNCH

Wednesday 12 August 2015  
at 12.30 pm

Please join us for our next lunch at  
North West Reform Synagogue, Alyth Gardens,  
Finchley Road, London NW11 7EN

**CARL DAVIS**

'How and Why I Composed  
*The Last Train to Tomorrow*'

To book your place  
please phone Andrea Goodmaker  
on 020 8385 3070  
Early booking essential

VISIT TO

### CHILTERN VALLEY WINERY AND BREWERY

Henley-on-Thames  
Monday 7 September



Join us for a visit to this family-owned business producing English wine.

You will have the opportunity to taste and purchase the produce following a behind-the-scenes guided tour of the Winery, Brewery and liqueur production. The Brewery has a Royal Warrant.

Lunch will be provided together with travel by coach.

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



Holocaust survivor Freddie Knoller meets HRH Prince William at a June fundraising dinner at Alexandra Palace, London, given by Jewish Care

# BURIED HISTORY: IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

Ruth Barnett

I recently spent a week in Berlin witnessing the results of some amazing endeavours to make factual evidence of injustice available to public knowledge.

The most moving part of the week was an event in honour of my father in the court in which he had been a judge for five years until the Nazis chased him out – literally at the point of a gun – in 1933.

I knew very little about my parents' pre-war life until that event as I came to England on the Kindertransport at the age of four with my seven-year-old brother in 1939, while my father escaped to Shanghai and my non-Jewish mother remained in Germany throughout the war. I was thoroughly anglicised in my upbringing in three foster families and a hostel during the ten years my brother and I were separated from our parents.

Inevitably, I developed a deep anti-German prejudice from British war-time propaganda and the desire to belong in England. Therefore, when my father returned from Shanghai after the war and I was repatriated to Germany against my will in 1949 aged 14, I experienced a repeat of the disjunction and disorienting effect of the Kindertransport. This soured both my relationship with my parents and my attitude to Germany and left me with shattered self-esteem and deep mistrust, a re-traumatisation that took another 40 years to overcome.

I have written about this in detail in *Person of No Nationality* (2010), a book to supplement the Holocaust education talks I give regularly in schools and elsewhere. The upshot is that from the time we were reunited in 1949, talking about the past was taboo – too raw, frightening and dangerous. This meant that I had a huge blank over the pre-war and war-time experiences of my parents that I was not confident enough to face until the 'Reunion of the Kindertransport' in 1989. By that time, both my parents had died, my mother in 1966 and my father in 1973.

## IN SEARCH OF MY FATHER

Buried history has strange ways of finding its way into daylight. A series of amazing events was set off when

a German author, Ursula Krechel, won the Frankfurt Book Prize with her novel *Landgericht* (County Court) (see review by Peter Fraenkel in *AJR Journal*, April 2013 and my article in *AJR Journal*, March 2014).

The first I heard of this was when a friend in Mainz sent me a copy of the local paper in which there was a large photo of my family and the exposure of Krechel's protagonist, 'Richard Kornitzer', as my father, Robert Michaelis. My publisher of *Person of No Nationality* wanted to sue Krechel when he heard she had used my book to write a chapter in her book about my brother and me but I wanted to meet her and find out why she hadn't contacted me.

Although Krechel lives in Berlin, I met her in Mainz when I went there to give a talk for the Local History Association. I found her a very shy, rather unforthcoming person but with an excellent command of English. I thanked her for giving my father the recognition through 'literary justice' that he was never able to achieve when he returned to Germany after the war. *Landgericht* is not what I would call 'reader-friendly' – even some German people have difficulty with it – but in this book I began to learn about the injustice my parents suffered not only before and during the war but also in the decades after my father returned from Shanghai.

I wasn't at all sure what was based on facts Krechel had found in archives and what was her imagination filling in the gaps in her research. So I decided to contact the court in which 'Richard Kornitzer' in her novel worked before the war. I was pleasantly surprised to receive not only verification that my father had been a judge there but an invitation to meet a group of judges. They had, of course, read *Landgericht*. I asked them to try and find a trainee

who might like to research the real story of my father as a postgraduate dissertation. To my surprise and delight, Dr Bernd Pickel, President of the court, decided to do this research in-house with two colleagues, Dr Thomas Heymann and Dr Susann Mueller, both judges. They were interested in this piece of the history of their court – an awesome building, beautifully restored after misuse by the DDR and now dedicated to Hans Litten, the defence lawyer who had the courage to subpoena Hitler as a witness in the case against his storm-troopers' assault on the Workers' Club. The street, formerly Friedenstrasse, has been re-named Littenstrasse.

The outcome of their two years of research – the real life and work of my father – was presented on 28 May in the court in which he had been a judge prior to the Nazi takeover under the title 'Ich bin meiner Ermordung zuvorgekommen' (I Escaped My Own Murder). My father received the recognition he had fought for but was denied on his return after the war when President Monika Nohre opened the event by addressing him as a 'former colleague'. He had never been addressed as a colleague in the Mainz court where he worked when he returned to Germany after the war and

suffered severe discrimination and injustice again by 'colleagues' who did not want him there.

Drs Pickel and Heymann described in heart-warming detail my father's achievements as a brilliant law student, a judge at age 26, and a man whose advice was sought widely on extra-complicated cases. Even before the Nazi takeover, he had had to

fight for due promotion in the face of anti-Semitic senior colleagues. He challenged the Nazi order over the removal of Jews from professional



Robert Michaelis ('Richard Kornitzer')

## Sir Nicholas Winton, 19 May 1909-1 July 2015

**S**ir Nicholas Winton's deed in rescuing 669 Czechoslovak children, most of them Jewish, might have remained unknown had his wife, Grete, not found a scrapbook containing the documentation while clearing out the family attic decades later at their home in Maidenhead.

Sir Nicholas disliked the repeated comparisons of his actions with those of Oskar Schindler, the industrialist who saved 1,200 Jews from the Holocaust by employing them in his factory. He said at the time that he felt he was doing 'nothing remarkable' and insisted he was not a hero because he had never been in danger – he had merely been 'working from the safety of my home in Hampstead'.

Sir Nicholas - 'Nicky' as he was known to many - was born into a well-to-do Anglo-Bavarian Jewish family that had emigrated to England in the 19th century. His parents were Rudolph and Barbara Wertheim. By the time of Nicholas's birth, the family had converted to Christianity, though the name was anglicised to Winton only in 1938. Sir Nicholas's predominant attitude to his Jewish ancestry appears to have been that too much conflict was caused by religions dwelling on their differences rather than on shared ethics. 'When I set out to try and bring children from Czechoslovakia,' he said later, 'I didn't do it because they were Jewish children. I did it because they were children.'

In December 1938 Sir Nicholas, then a London stockbroker, was asked by a friend, Martin Blake, to cancel a planned skiing trip and meet him in Prague instead. On his arrival in Prague, he was introduced to the organisers of the recently formed British Committee for Refugees. There were an estimated 250,000 people, many of them Jewish, who were fleeing Germany, Austria and the German-speaking Sudetenland, which the Nazis had annexed. Others were from political families and opponents of the Nazis. Their living conditions in camps were squalid.

Sir Nicholas became determined to help at least the children of some of the families. He began taking names and found his hotel room besieged by families queuing all day in the freezing cold to ensure their names were on the list. Sir Nicholas and his colleagues, Doreen Warriner, a lecturer at the LSE and organiser of the committee, and Trevor Chadwick, a schoolteacher, began to organise the evacuation of the children. The first flight of 20 left in January 1939; it was sponsored by the Barbican Mission, whose intention was to convert them to Christianity.

After three weeks Sir Nicholas returned to London with a long list of children and,



after a day's work in the City, returned home to Hampstead each evening to organise permits and travel warrants for them. The British bureaucracy moved unhurriedly, believing there was no urgency as war was deemed unlikely, and the government demanded a bond of £50, no small sum in those days, for each child as well as the nomination of foster parents. 'If America had only agreed to take [the children] too,' Sir Nicholas said, 'I could have saved at least 2,000 more.'

Frustrated by the slowness to react of the British authorities, Sir Nicholas personally organised the children's placements. As the situation in Czechoslovakia grew more desperate following the German occupation of the entire country in March 1939, he began forging the Home Office entry permits. That summer eight rail transports were conducted. A ninth Kindertransport, which was due to leave on 1 September 1939 with 250 more children, was cancelled by the Germans and most of those who would have been on board were transported to concentration camps. Nevertheless, Sir Nicholas saved at least 669 children, including 561 who were Jewish, 52 Unitarians, and 34 Catholics.

Most of the children, sent across Europe alone or with their brothers and sisters, would never see their parents and relatives again. Of 15,000 Jewish children who remained stranded in Prague after war was declared in September 1939, only about 100 survived.

With the outbreak of war, Sir Nicholas became an ambulance driver in Normandy but was evacuated at Dunkirk and then joined the RAF. After the war he worked for a time for the International Committee for Refugees and took charge of selling Nazi booty to aid Jewish organisations. He later worked for the International Bank in Paris, distributing loans to the war-ravaged countries of Europe. It was there that he met his Danish wife, who was a secretary at the bank. The couple had three children, one of whom died in childhood.

Sir Nicholas was able to retire early

and he devoted himself to fundraising for Mencap and the Abbeyfield charity, which provides accommodation for elderly people. It was for this work that he was appointed MBE in 1983.

In the late 1980s, Sir Nicholas approached the BBC to try and trace some of the 'Winton children' – those he had helped bring to the UK in 1939. He was moved to do so by the discovery at their home in Maidenhead by his wife, Grete, of a scrapbook in which he had inscribed their names, addresses and dates of birth, together with photographs of the

children at the time of their rescue.

Eventually, Sir Nicholas turned to Elisabeth Maxwell, who showed the scrapbook to her husband, Robert, and within weeks the story appeared in the *Sunday Mirror*. At the same time, appearing on the BBC's *That's Life* programme, hosted by Esther Rantzen, Sir Nicholas was unaware that he was surrounded in the audience by many of those whose lives he had saved, their whereabouts having been traced by the programme's researchers.

Sir Nicholas subsequently received many awards from the Czech authorities, including in 2014 their highest award, the Order of the White Lion. In 2001 he was the subject of a Czech documentary *The Power of Good*. In the same year, his story, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation: Save One Life, Save the World*, co-authored by Vera Gissing, one of the children he had saved, and Muriel Emanuel, was published. In 1999 he received the freedom of the city of Windsor, an honour he shared only with members of the Royal Family. Having been appointed MBE for other charitable services, he was knighted in 2003. In 2014 his daughter Barbara published an account of his life: *If It's Not Impossible ... The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton*.

In June 2013 Sir Nicholas was a guest at a Reunion organised by the AJR commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

Sir Nicholas himself insisted he had never been a hero. He claimed that it had been his colleague Trevor Chadwick, who had stayed in Prague to organise the evacuations, who had been the real hero. However, writing to Sir Nicholas to award him the Order of the White Lion, the Czech President, Miloš Zeman, said: 'You did not think of yourself as a hero but you were conducted by a desire to help those who could not defend themselves, those who were vulnerable. Your life is an example of humanity, selflessness, personal courage and modesty.'

Grete died in 1999. Sir Nicholas is survived by his children Nicholas and Barbara and by two grandchildren.



# Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication

translations before broadcasting them. His verdict was always the same: 'OK, but definitely more German expressions and less Viennese ones needed!' – definitely 'Guten Morgen' (Good Morning) and not 'Grüss Gott' (Greet the Lord). And I certainly need not teach them 'Grüss Gott tritt ein, bringt Glück herein' (Good morning arrives, brings happiness along)!

Well, I hope German youth learnt well!!

Kitty Schafer (née Kaufmann), North York, Ontario, Canada

## COLLECTION IN SEARCH OF A HOME

Sir – As I get older I am increasingly aware of the contribution our people have made to the world and civilisation in so many spheres.

As a result, I have collected several hundred obituaries of people of Jewish descent over the past few years. They are mainly from the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph*.

If anyone is interested in this collection (e.g. for research or archiving) I would be pleased to find a home for it.

Peter Briess, London NW3  
pbriess@btinternet.com

## 'LOOTED ART IN THE GDR'

Sir – I was very interested and moved by the above mentioned article in the latest issue of your journal for two reasons. First because I grew up in the GDR and feel ashamed how the authorities dealt with the works of Albert Schäfer-Ast and subsequently with his heirs. And second because I am very familiar with Prerow, where I have been spending lovely summer weeks for the last six years.

I often cycle along the Schäfer-Ast-Weg and have never questioned the origin of the name of this street. I also know the Darss-Museum which is mentioned in the article.

In a few weeks' time I am travelling to Prerow again with the article in my bag and hope to find some pictures in the museum or even more information about their history.

Susanne Bates, Abingdon

## SEEKING INFORMATION

Sir – My great-grandfather, Dr Benjamin (later Berthold) London, born in Ungvar (now Uzhgorod), qualified in Vienna in 1865. In 1866 he did his army service as *Oberarzt* in the Santa Chiara hospital in Venice.

Presumably this was an Austrian garrison hospital. I have been unable to trace it. I hope someone can point me in the right direction.

While we are on the same period, I know fragments of a song which begins: 'Wer will mit nach Italien ziehn, Radetzky kommandiert' and ends 'Legt an, gebt Feuer, und ladet schnell, Weich' keiner von der Stell.' Does anyone know the full text?

Now to more recent times. My first army unit, 246 Coy. Pioneer Corps, had its own song:

## RECOGNITION OF CONTRIBUTION OF FORMER JEWISH REFUGEES TO THE WAR EFFORT

Sir – Not another memorial! Leslie Baruch Brent proposes (July) one in London. Why not in Plymouth, Oxford or Edinburgh for those refugees who served in the armed forces of this country in the last war?

What of those in, say, the Civil Defence, Air Raid Wardens, Rescue, Auxiliary Fire Service, Woman's Land Army and Voluntary Service and many others who 'did their bit'?

The Great and the Good will have a wonderful time organising the building of this folly, of which few people will take notice once the novelty of seeing it will have worn off.

Much better to devote funds

earmarked for such a monument to be devoted to Service or similar funds where they could be put to better use.

This, however, would be far too simple for the 'do-gooders', who like to see their names in newslights when organising the building of memorials, be they in a synagogue or in Hyde Park!

Ernest G. Kolman, Greenford, Middx

Sir – For information: there is an excellent book by Martin Sugarman – *Fighting Back: British Jewry's Military Contribution in the Second World War*, published in 2010.

Bernd Koschland, London NW4

ideas themselves, or can offer support, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We have set up a website and blog and you are welcome to add your comments. There is also an email contact form: <http://rememberingeleanorathbone.wordpress.com> We have already had a plaque put up at the cemetery in Hoop Lane in 2013 and look forward to doing a lot more to commemorate this amazing woman.

Lesley Urbach and Dr Susan Cohen  
lurbach@aol.com

## IN MEMORY OF THE 'MP FOR REFUGEES'



Sir – We are planning a number of events next year to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the death of the humanitarian activist Eleanor Rathbone MP. Our particular interest is in her campaigning activities and support for refugees from Nazi Europe, earning her the soubriquet 'MP for refugees', but she was also a formidable social and welfare reformer, feminist, suffragist, architect of the family allowance and more besides. Her contributions to society were far greater than the sum of their parts.

We are confident that members will agree that Eleanor Rathbone deserves to be remembered, particularly by the Jewish community. There are numerous plans underway to commemorate her in Liverpool, Oxford, London and elsewhere but, if any members of the AJR have any

## 'GOOD MORNING ARRIVES, BRINGS HAPPINESS ALONG'

Sir – I always enjoy Dr Grenville's articles and found the recent one about the German broadcasts in Hamburg (July) very interesting. It reminded me of my wartime 'efforts' at the BBC – in England however.

During the war I worked with the Monitoring Service of the BBC and, after the war, I was transferred to Bush House, where they assigned me to the newly established department *Erziehung der Deutschen Jugend* (Education of German Youth). My work consisted of translating various articles from English into German. The work was sometimes easy, sometimes difficult, but always interesting and often funny.

I was fortunate that my supervisor, Rolf Sigler, a delightful person with a great sense of humour, often corrected my

We are the Amps, the jolly good Amps  
We give a good show wherever we go  
We're working hard and yet we are smart

Whether it's outside the gate or  
whether it's on parade ...

Now, there's a bit missing, then it finishes '... twofoursix company are we.'

I hope someone can supply the missing bit.

*Peter Block, London SE24*

#### A 'DUNERA BOY'

Sir – By pure chance I came across your March 2009 issue in which you mentioned the 'Dunera affair' – the expulsion of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany who lived in the UK to internment in Australia.

I am one of the 'Dunera Boys' who came to England in January 1939. After the outbreak of the Second World War I was interned in Douglas, Isle of Man, and forcibly placed on the *Dunera*, which was supposed to sail to Canada.

It's a long and interesting story how we eventually landed in Sydney, Australia, in order to be interned in an Australian army camp near Hay in New South Wales.

I was born in Fürth, Germany, on 13 April 1920. I assume there are not many alive today of the approximately 2,000 German Jews on the *Dunera*.

I am now 95 years of age and – thank G-d – medically quite well, who has collected over the years many documents referring to this unbelievable story. I have published my life story (in Hebrew).

I am neither a grandfather nor other relative of the 'Dunera Boys' but one of them myself and therefore in a position to answer truthfully any possible questions readers may have.

*Eliezer (Emil) Hoehster, Jerusalem*

#### 'REVOLT OF THE SAINTS'

Sir – Dr Jennifer Taylor has drawn my attention to Anthony Grenville's article (May) about the book *Revolt of the Saints* by my grandfather Ernst Sommer.

We hope that Ernst Sommer's books will gradually be republished in their original German and then in other languages. I myself published this particular historic translation and it would be good to see it reaching a wide audience with all the anniversaries of the Second World War approaching.

I would like to add that I am interested in finding out more about Ernst Sommer's ancestry. I can trace the line of his wife, Leontna (Lella) Illovy, quite far back but I know surprisingly little about Ernst's family background.

I would like to make contact with anyone who can supply me with further information.

*Miranda Pinch, Alresford, Hampshire*

#### 'HUGHIE'

Sir – Permit me as the spouse of one of your members to refer to the liberation of Belsen. Brigadier-General Dr Glyn Hughes

was the Senior Medical Officer in charge. 'Hughie', as he was known to his friends, saved many lives by careful management of food and drink.

In 1977 my wife Nina and I were in Toronto for a wedding, following which we were invited to dinner by two survivors and two of their friends. My hostess turned to me and said she had a friend in London called Dr Hughes. My reply was 'Do you mean Hughie?' She then told me that she, her husband and their two friends visited London every year and that Hughie and his wife were their guests.

May I also mention that after liberation Hughie was very short-staffed so he asked some London teaching hospitals to canvass senior students to go to the camp and help. One of the young men who did this became Dr Roger Sheridan, who in later years also became my friend.

*Murray Cohen, London N11*

#### UNFAMILIAR TERMINOLOGY

Sir – I am in the process of preparing a book for publication based on the First World War correspondence of my uncle, who served as an officer in the Austrian Imperial Army and was killed in action in 1915 on the Russian front in Eastern Galicia.

The vast majority of the correspondence has been translated but there are a few bits where there is unfamiliar terminology and some problems in extracting the correct meaning, partly due to illegibility. But there remains very little to bring it to completion.

Might it be possible for you to put me in touch with someone from the AJR who could help me sort this out? Someone with some knowledge of Austrian military matters who can read old-style German script would be ideal.

*John Adler, Bristol eagle@uk1.co.uk*

#### ANTI-SEMITIC MATERIAL ON SALE

Sir – In his article 'Jews, minorities and anti-Semitism in Britain today' (June), Anthony Grenville refers to 'crude, lower-class racial prejudice [that] has continued to lurk below the surface of British society since the war'.

I'd like to add that, as in Germany and Austria before the Nazi takeover, so in Britain today (and in the USA and South Africa) the universities have become centres of anti-Semitic agitation.

Furthermore, in December the *AJR Journal* published my letter about the Amazon Kindle history category, which included a number of books of Holocaust denial. Looking at this source again, I found Kollerstrom and Fetzer, *Breaking the Spell: The Holocaust: Myth and Reality* and Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, the blurb of which includes 'Except, if those exterminations simply didn't happen.' Both these books are part of Holocaust denial and a number of other books from something called Sprech Media look highly suspicious.

The role of Amazon in our society is such that its tendencies are a matter of real concern. I think it would be worthwhile for a historian of Germany to peruse their catalogue of history books. Perhaps Anthony Grenville would be interested?

By the way, my mother, Else Levin (Stettin 1900-London 1988), was a keen subscriber to the *AJR Journal*. Some years after her death, I realised that I missed the journal enough to become a subscriber.

*Michael Levin, Forest Hill London*

#### ATROCIOUS ACCUSATION

Sir – Peter Phillips (June) is frightened by Netanyahu's new coalition government. He knows that 'Netanyahu will do anything to keep power.' This reads like a very belated realisation – with which I fully agree. I've agreed with it for a long time.

Does this mean that Peter Phillips is now against Israel, which is what he accuses Ed Miliband of? That is an atrocious accusation, with which I do not agree. It totally lacks evidence. But it fits someone who is 'delighted with the UK election results' – someone who doesn't care for the increased suffering and the continuing decline of our NHS that this election result has promised us.

*Eric Sanders, London W12*

#### DOWN MEMORY LANE!

Sir – I consider it very presumptuous of Margarete Stern (June) to tell me where I lived during the war! She refers to my letter (published in April) 'claiming' to have lived at 3 Adamson Road when, according to her, I 'obviously' lived at Boarding House Sachs at 4 Adamson Road!

May I assure her that I lived happily at Number 3 between 1940 and 1945 and know nothing about Number 4 except that it was across the road from us! In case she doubts this, I even still have my blue Junior Ration Book with my name and address on it. It is always best to check one's facts before rushing into print and I look forward to seeing Mrs Stern's apology in the next issue.

*George Vulkan, Harrow*

Sir – I wish to apologise unconditionally to George Vulkan for causing him such distress. What I want to reiterate is merely this: There existed during the war, and for many years after it, a boarding house at Number 4 Adamson Road popular with refugees from Nazi oppression. It was run by one Mrs Pick and one Mrs Sachs, after whom it was called Boarding House Sachs.

The house directly opposite is No 9, which was like a sort of extension of No 4. They belonged together.

We – my parents, grandmother and I – went to stay at No 4 in the autumn of 1943 after our return from Tring. About half a year later we moved back to our flat

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

Israeli artist **Matan Ben Cnaan** has won the £30,000 BP Portrait Award at the **National Portrait Gallery** for his painting *Annabelle and Guy*. His super-realistic portrait of his friend Guy and his step-daughter Annabelle with their dog is based on a theme from *The Book of Judges*.

The narrative concerns a vow made



**Matan Ben Cnaan *Annabelle and Guy* Photograph:**  
Matan Ben-Cnaan/National Portrait/PA

to God by Jephthah before leading the Israelites into battle against the Ammonites – that if he won the battle he would sacrifice the first thing that greeted him on his return. He assumed this would be his dog but, in fact, the first welcome came from his daughter. Jephthah honours his vow after allowing her to wander in the desert with her friends, weeping that she will never marry and trying to come to terms with her terrible destiny – which she, noble soul, totally accepts out of love for her father.

The Biblical theme reflects a similar dilemma in the Greek myth on which Mozart based his 1781 opera *Idomeneo*. But here the god Neptune, who has rescued King Idomeneo, is prepared to forego the sacrifice of the first thing the King sees – his own son.

Greek mythology has supplied a happier ending. Ben Cnaan's brooding painting seems at odds with the fierce Israeli desert sunlight, which implies a problem between the seated father, whose hand rests on the intended sacrifice, a panting boxer-

type dog, and the child, standing stolidly behind him, her hand gently resting on his shoulder. Both are dressed in blue and there are sharp shadows of trees etiolated by the sun.

Perhaps the subtext to this painting is a more contemporary political one - to do with land, possession and the threat posed to Israel's national integrity. But does it convey Jephthah's Biblical message? Well, no. The ominous quality of this painting reflects Ben Cnaan's early love for Rembrandt and Titian and the facial intensity and composition detail shared by both artists in Ben Cnaan's portrait. But I could not feel the Biblical message.

In an interview with freelance journalist Richard McClure, the 35-year-old artist said: 'For me Biblical themes are like the mythological and religious inspirations for the Old Masters. They contain the most extreme and complex situations and moral.'

Ben Cnaan hints at parallels between Jephthah's dilemma and Guy's struggle with his faith and the secular world, symbolised by his casually dressed daughter. This more abstract parallel gives the work an exciting definition.

I particularly liked the Second Prize-winning portrait, *Eliza*, by Leicester-based Michael Gaskell, who won £10,000 for his pellucid head-and-shoulders portrait

of his niece. The acrylic painting has a touch of a Florentine Old Master but the idiom is contemporary as it conveys the mind of a young girl contemplating womanhood. Its particular charm is in its suggestion of all ages of womanhood.

The third prize of £8,000 went to 36-year-old Spanish artist Borja Buces Renard for *My Mother and My Brother on a Sunday Evening*. His mother Paloma and brother Jaime are depicted in soft focus in their living room in this quiet and reflective family portrait, which invites you in to a delicate moment in their lives.

## Annely Juda Fine Art

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**CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

## REVIEWS

### Three women who defied the odds

**BORN SURVIVORS: THREE YOUNG MOTHERS AND THEIR EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF COURAGE, DEFIANCE, AND HOPE**

by Wendy Holden

*Sphere*, 2015, 386 pp. hardback, £18.99, ISBN 978-0-7515-5738-1

Although the true stories told here inevitably reflect the horrors inflicted on human

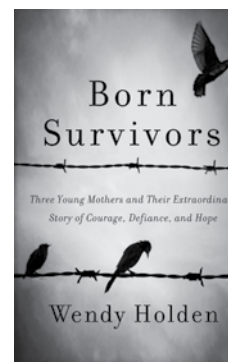
beings by the Nazis, they are primarily concerned with the courage and determination of three young women who not only survived but gave life to new generations. Being sent to

Auschwitz was in most cases equivalent to a death sentence and for pregnant women this was nearly always the case. In this remarkable book the author recounts how these three women managed to defy the odds.

The book is based on three separate stories about women who did not know of each other's existence until long after the war but whose main common experience was being in the early stages of pregnancy when arriving in Auschwitz and facing Dr Mengele's selection process.

The first third of the book describes the individual life stories of the women and their families in pre-war times, with the central part covering their ordeals in Auschwitz, Freiberg and Mauthausen. The final section describes their liberation with its difficult readjustment but ends on a positive and hopeful note with new lives beginning and their children meeting each other.

Priska Rona was born in 1916 in Slovakia, where her parents owned a kosher café in Zlate Moravce. She had a very happy childhood and, even after the start of the war, was able to lead a relatively normal life, including getting married in 1941. This state of affairs suddenly and terrifyingly changed in September 1944 when she



and her husband were transported to Auschwitz. She was already pregnant but managed to deny this when facing Mengele.

Rachel Abramczyk was born near Lodz, Poland, in 1918. She became part of a large, cultured middle-class family and, despite the prevalent anti-Semitism, had a pleasant childhood. She married in 1937 and with wealthy in-laws had no need to work. She shared her husband's Zionist ideals and spent her time on fundraising. Unlike Priska, she and her family were affected immediately war broke out. Life became a battle for survival, mostly in the Lodz ghetto, until August 1944, when they were also transported in cattle trucks to Auschwitz. Rachel too hid her pregnancy.

In September 1944, when Anka Nathanova, née Kauderova, arrived in Auschwitz, she had already spent three years in Theresienstadt. Anka was born in 1917 in a small town near Hradec Kralove, Czechoslovakia. Her family owned a factory and she was able to go to university as well as enjoying a life of sport and travel. She married Bernd Nathan in May 1940 and initially they were able to continue living in Prague. In November 1941, however, Bernd was sent to Terezin and a month later Anka followed him. They were unable to live together but did manage to meet and remained optimistic irrespective of the regular transportations to the east and the continuing worsening conditions. Despite losing a baby she again became pregnant shortly before she too had to join one of the feared transports.

There are separate chapters covering each of the three individual experiences following their arrival in Auschwitz. In spite of the appalling conditions and the need to keep their pregnancies secret, Priska, Rachel and Anka managed to survive Auschwitz, only to face equally horrendous experiences in a labour camp in Freiberg, Germany, where they had to work 12-hour shifts in bitter cold with practically no food. On 12 April 1945, while still in the factory, baby Hana was born to Priska. This was followed by a nightmare train journey lasting 16 days in open trucks. During the journey, on 20 April, on bare planks, Rachel gave birth to Mark. The train finally arrived at the Mauthausen KZ on 29 April 1945. On the same day

Anka gave birth to a baby girl, Eva.

Fortunately the gas chambers in Mauthausen had just become inoperable and a few days later the camp was liberated by American troops of the 11th Armored Division. Medical assistance for the babies, their mothers and the other prisoners from Freiberg had arrived just in time.

The liberation forced the mothers to face up to the grim reality that their husbands had been killed, as had most of their families. Their dreams of going home turned bitter as all they had known from before the war had vanished and their return received a mixed reception from the local population, especially in Poland.

The book concludes with their eventually successful return to relatively normal lives and the creation of new families. Sixty-five years after the liberation, Hana, Mark and Eva, the 'miracle babies', met for the first time at a commemoration organised by veterans of the 11th Armored Division at Mauthausen. They have since remained in touch and consider themselves 'honorary siblings'.

As well as the personal stories of the three mothers, the book covers some of the wider history which affected them before, during and after the war. Wendy Holden has gone to great lengths to make the stories as full and accurate as possible and this is borne out by the impressive seven-page list of sources and bibliography.

Despite the harrowing nature of some parts of the book, it is full of hope and a fitting tribute to three very courageous young women. Highly recommended.

**George Vulkan**

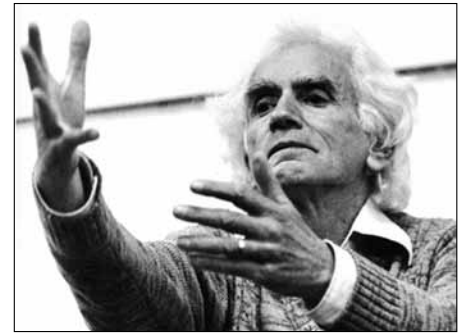
## A difficult man

### OUT OF TIME – THE VEXED LIFE OF GEORG TINTNER

by Tanya Buchdahl Tintner

*University of Western Australia Publishing, 420 pp. paperback*

This book, first published in 2011, was written by Georg Tintner's third wife and widow. Tintner is not well-known in this country as his career as a conductor and composer unfolded almost exclusively in New Zealand, Australia and Canada. He was born in Vienna in 1917, the second child of Alfons Tintner and Marie Elisabeth ('Mitzi') née Steinhof. Both his parents were of Jewish origins



and had converted to Lutheranism so as to make life easier for their children. (According to the author, 'many Jews converting for practical reasons could not quite bring themselves to join the Catholic Church, the primary source of Austrian anti-Semitism'.)

Georg's own views about Judaism are touched on several times. He says, for instance, that 'one of the worst things that has befallen the Jews is ... that they think they are the salt of the earth. I don't feel any of that.' And of the Jewish operetta composers of the Austrian monarchy (Oscar Straus, Emmerich Kalman, Leo Fall and others) he says that although 'they absorbed the characteristics of their surroundings ... no matter how hard they tried, they were never really "one of them"'.

Georg began piano lessons at the age of six and it became clear that he had the very rare gift of absolute (or perfect) pitch, the ability to correctly classify a note simply by hearing it. Taken to a concert of the Vienna Boys' Choir, he was so enchanted that he wanted to join them. He was permitted to do so – the first Jewish boy to join the choir – and remained a member for four years. In the choir, however, he suffered many instances of anti-Semitism not only from the other boys, but also from the conductor. He later said that he felt 'like a hunted animal'. He never mentioned it to his parents as they would have taken him out of the choir immediately, whereas he wanted to remain a member for the education and pleasure the music gave him.

Tintner emigrated to New Zealand in 1938, shortly after the *Anschluss*. He fell in love quite early with the music of Anton Bruckner, who remained his favourite composer until the end of his life. About a year before his death in 1999, he recorded in Glasgow a cycle of Bruckner symphonies which were

*continued on page 10* ➔

 Reviews continued

very favourably reviewed. The *Times* praised his 'majestic, surely-paced conducting' and the author says 'in only a year Georg had gone from obscurity to more fame than we had ever imagined.' He conducted most works without a score and quite early on dispensed with a baton.

It is clear from this book that Tintner was a very eccentric man who was often difficult to get on with. He seems to have been oblivious of other people's feelings and what impression his pronouncements would make and was usually convinced that his own views were correct.

The author has clearly done a great deal of research for this book: it took her five years and she fills four pages with the names of people she wishes to thank for their co-operation. But I couldn't help feeling that as a result she incorporated many details which might have been left out. Thus she quotes the programme of practically every concert Georg conducted and the names of soloists probably mean more to readers in their countries than to English ones. The book is full of quotations – extracts from letters and newspaper reviews as well as verbal comments. Frequently the author speculates about the psychological reasons for actions or pronouncements of her late husband and, in my view, the book would be improved if some details were omitted.

All quotations are given their origin in the Notes at the back – there are 13 pages of them. A comprehensive Index (14 pages) is also included as well as numerous photographs.

Fritz Lustig

## ARTS AND EVENTS AUGUST DIARY

To 2 Oct 2015 'Humanity After the Holocaust: The Jewish Relief Unit, 1943-1950' This newly curated temporary exhibition at the Wiener Library marks the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen. The exhibition focuses on the Library's outstanding collections relating to the post-war relief and rehabilitation work of the Jewish Relief Unit in Bergen-Belsen and elsewhere. 10 am-5 pm Monday to Friday and until 7.30 pm on Tuesdays. Admission free. Tel 020 7636 7247

## BIRMINGHAM YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION

With Ukraine again in the news for all the wrong reasons, this year's Yom HaShoah commemoration in Birmingham focused on the 'Holocaust by Bullets' that took place in that part of Eastern Europe. Over 130 people attended the commemoration at the King David School.

As the German army overran the region in the summer of 1941 it was closely followed by the *Einsatzgruppen* – the murder squads. Directed by Heinrich Himmler and supervised by Reinhard Heydrich, these 'Task Forces' operated in all of the occupied territories of Eastern Europe, often with the willing assistance of local Nazi collaborators. *Einsatzgruppe C* was assigned to north and central Ukraine, and *Einsatzgruppe D* to Moldavia, south Ukraine, the Crimea and north Caucasus.

Before the war, a little under one-third of Ukraine's urban population were Jews, the country's largest national minority, numbering around 2,700,000. After the war, a Soviet census counted some 840,000 Jews in the country, equating to a loss of 1,860,000, of which around 1 million had been machine-gunned by the *Einsatzgruppen*.

Of the many massacres recorded



Babi Yar memorial, Kiev

by the Nazis themselves, perhaps the most notorious is that at Babi Yar, a ravine near the Ukrainian capital Kiev. It was there, on 29-30 September 1941, that 33,771 Jewish men, women and children were murdered by *Einsatzgruppe C*.

In 1961 the renowned Soviet poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko published his epic poem 'Babi Yar' as a protest at the Soviet Union's own persecution of Jewish people and its refusal to recognise Babi Yar as a Holocaust site. Dmitri Shostakovich subsequently set the poem to music as the first movement of his Symphony No. 13. This highly emotive work formed the backdrop to the Birmingham commemoration, the music being interspersed with readings by four members of the local community – AJR members Lia Lesser, Ruth Drapkin, Peter Posaner and Yvonne Stollard – each having a personal link to that terrible period.

Brian Cooper

## CUBA'S RESILIENT JEWISH COMMUNITY

We were delighted to have Andrea Goodmaker's husband Philip as the speaker at our June Kindertransport Lunch meeting.

Philip told us about his and Andrea's recent visit to Cuba, where they made contact with the resilient Jewish community, which is now down to 1,300 people. There is no anti-Semitism but no rabbi. There is

rationing but not for *matzos*. Friday night is the main weekly service in the capital, Havana, followed by a communal Friday night dinner.

Many items are in very short supply – for instance toothbrushes and toothpaste – so, if anyone travels to Cuba from the UK, please bring some for the Jewish community.

David Lang

## BAD CAMBERG'S ALTE JÜDISCHE SCHULE REOPENS AS CULTURAL CENTRE

During the Shavuot weekend, two former Jewish citizens of Bad Camberg (Hesse-Nassau), as well as 30 descendants from many countries, attended the opening of the town's newly re-erected Alte jüdische Schule, a project conceived some years ago and now brought to fruition under the auspices of the Historical Society of Bad Camberg.

Addressing the gathering, Ruth Akron (Israel), who as Ruth Landau fled with her parents in the early 1930s to what then was Palestine, explained: 'Camberg is my homeland (*Heimat*), Israel is where I feel at home (*mein Zuhause*).' Sylvia Hurst (England) recalled her childhood visits to her grandparents in Camberg.

Philippe Pierret, the Curator of the Jewish Museum in Brussels, spoke of the recent attack at the Museum in which four people were killed. A one-minute silence followed his words.

Ruth Wagner, a former *Land* Hessen minister, emphasised the importance of remembering the past and praised the initiative of Camberg City Council in supporting the project. Doris Ammelung of the Camberg Historical Society thanked the visitors for having undertaken the strenuous journey to be present at the festivities, adding, visibly moved: 'You made our day!'

The event took place in the presence of representatives of the town, the *Land* Hessen, the Council of Christians and Jews (Limburg), and organisations connected with the project. The new building is designed as a cultural centre and lasting memorial to the centuries-old, erstwhile vibrant Jewish community of Bad Camberg, so brutally destroyed.

Walter E. Goddard

## On the family run

Ruth Young's interesting letter in the June issue of the *AJR Journal* reminded me of how she and I met entirely thanks to the Journal's 'web'. A couple of years ago I wrote a short note to the Journal after watching a TV programme about Jewish shops in north London. The note was about my somewhat limited memories of living in the Stoke Newington area during the war.

A short time later I received a letter from the *AJR* enclosing a letter addressed to me from

Ruth in which she asked if I was the 'little four- or five-year-old' she sometimes looked after when my mother went out to work in Weymouth. Her husband and my father were both in the 74 Coy of the Pioneer Corps. She said that she and I spent many air raids together 'in the little house' where we were all living.

Of course, as soon as I received the letter I rang her as it was indeed me aged four-and-a-half at the time! We had a long chat and she told me that whenever an air raid began we would go and sit on the stairs and I would call out 'Those bloody Germans! I



Reunion, December 2013:  
Peter Gildener, Ruth's  
daughter Eva Seely,  
Ruth Young

hate Germans!' At the time, she was only 22 or 23 and pregnant. They moved to London, where her daughter Eva was born.

As I have a daughter who lives in Kent we arranged to meet the next time I visited and did so. We had a lovely time and Eva came round for tea. We talked about those dreadful times, although I remembered nothing. I told her that my niece, who was piecing a family history together, had discovered that Dad had gone AWOL one weekend and got seven days 'CB'

(confined to barracks) for his efforts, which resulted in the birth of my brother nine months later!

The irony is that Ruth said my parents spent the whole time arguing. And could my mother argue! From an early age I learned every filthy German swearword and insult – that was the only time they ever spoke in German! – that existed and I must confess there are times when I enjoy using them!

Ruth and I are still in touch via email and I very much hope we will meet again next time I'm on the family run.

Peter Gildener

## THE 'CONCORDE EXPERIENCE'



Photo: Paul Lang

It was chocks away when, under clear blue skies and a blazing sun, making it the hottest day of the year so far, Paul Lang, aviation enthusiast and younger son of *AJR* members Charlotte and David Lang, led a group to visit Concorde at Brooklands in Surrey.

Following a talk about the history of motor racing and aircraft manufacturing at Brooklands, the group boarded Concorde G-BBDG to view the displays detailing its development and construction, then took a seat in the front section for a 'virtual flight' to New York.

The trip was finished off with a visit to the flight simulator, where the British Airways pilots learned to fly Concorde and watch a short flight over Brooklands and back to Heathrow. A good time was had by all!

Paul Lang

## A LOVELY EXPERIENCE – A VISIT TO PORTERS



Everyone from the different groups present – Ilford, Kent, North London, Pinner and our own Essex (Westcliff) – introduced ourselves. We had the pleasure of seeing Myrna Glass, Janet Weston, Kathryn Prevezer and our own Esther Rinkoff, plus Eppie Byrne, the first-aider on the coach.

After a very nice buffet lunch we saw Southend pier – the longest pleasure pier in the world – and enjoyed a tour along the seafront.

On our arrival at Porters Civic House, we were greeted by the Mayor, Andrew Mooring, and his mace-bearer Adam, who gave us a tour 'upstairs and downstairs'. We let the eldest person, aged 93, sit in the 'Mayor's throne' first and most members followed his example. Everyone said it was a lovely experience. We had tea and coffee with the Mayor and more photos were taken in the garden.

Larry Lisner



### CAFE IMPERIAL A Lunch Washed Down with Many Memories

We met for a celebratory lunch to commemorate the 70th anniversary of VE Day. Union Jacks bought by Peter Wayne in 1945 were waved enthusiastically. A delicious lunch washed down with many, many memories. Thank you, Peter Eden, for suggesting we meet.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### EALING One of the Most Influential Jews of All Time

David Barnett gave a most interesting talk on the life of Daniel Mendoza, who rose from humble beginnings to become the most famous and successful boxer of the turn of the 18th-19th centuries. The book *The 100 Most Influential Jews of All Time* ranks Mendoza no. 82, the highest-rated athlete on the list.

*Leslie Sommer*

### ILFORD In a Merry Mood

We all found Debbie Pearson's talk on wine very interesting. Debbie is the chair of a local wine society as well as a City of Westminster Guide and therefore the samples of red and white wine handed out at the end of her talk were a fitting conclusion. We all left in a merry mood.

*Meta Roseuil*

### DIDSBURY 'Fulfilled and Unfulfilled Ambitions'

In a discussion centred around 'fulfilled and unfulfilled' ambitions, it was most interesting to hear how members had managed to fulfill 'similar' or 'related' goals. An example was one member's desire to be an opera singer, which was impossible due to family obligations and commitments. However, this lady was able to showcase her talent by joining a choir!

*Wendy Bott*

### BROMLEY CF An Afternoon of Companionship and Lively Discussion

First and Second Generation members enjoyed an afternoon of companionship and lively discussion, encompassing a broad range of topics – from the merits

of Ocado deliveries to cultural and leisure events. Exhibitions, film music and books were recalled and reviewed. Hazel told us about future visits and provided a delicious lunch at Liane's home.

*Dorothea Lipton*

### LEEDS CF Fulfilled Ambitions

As always, Leeds members enjoyed a 'sumptuous' afternoon tea courtesy of the host, Barbara Cammerman. The welcome refreshments followed a most interesting discussion session about fulfilled ambitions and things we may still wish to do.

*Wendy Bott*

### PINNER Six Point Foundation

Six Point Foundation (SPF), clearly explained by Susan Cohen, was set up in 2011 from disposal of assets to support needy Holocaust survivors. Working closely with the AJR, SPF helps individuals in major or minor ways by funding, e.g. stair lifts, roof repairs, dementia care. There is also an SPF net technology project which introduces survivors to computers and connects them with family and friends.

*Walter Weg*

### HGS An Extraordinary Woman

A woman who spoke several languages, was proficient as a musician and a singer, was a seasoned traveller, and wrote the first Jewish cookery book: the life of Judith Montefiore is unlike any other of her time or even by today's standards. One wonders why a movie has not been made about her. Once again David Barnett gave us a fascinating life story he has researched.

*Hazel Beiny*

### HARROGATE/YORK 'Summertime' Meal Out

Members enjoyed a 'summertime' meal out at a local restaurant. Good company, good conversation and good food made the whole evening a success and an extremely good time was had by all!

*Wendy Bott*

### WESSEX Outing to Water Gardens

We were joined by members of the Bournemouth Reform Congregation for an outing to Bennett's Water Gardens at Weymouth. This houses the national collection of water lilies in a group of large ponds connected by broad grass walkways. At the centre is a charming replica of the Japanese bridge in Monet's garden at Giverny. We admired the many water lilies of various

colours and enjoyed a fine cream tea.

*Harry Grenville*

### Edinburgh CF 'Jews in Scotland' Exhibition

Members visited the ancient town of Linlithgow, birthplace of Mary Queen of Scots, where an exhibition of some 80 black-and-white photos by Judith Passow were on show at the Burgh Hall. The subject of the exhibition was 'Jews in Scotland'. Passow spent a year on this project, tracking down Jews in such far-flung locations as the island of Yell in the Shetlands as well as the larger communities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee.

*Vivien Andersen*

### BRIGHTON & HOVE 'SARID' A Special Treat

Richard Stanton gave us a special treat with his own version of the Last Night of the Proms. His arrangement of the classical favourites, the sing-along and the flag-waving transported us spiritually to the Albert Hall. It was an enjoyable morning. Well done!

*Ceska Abrahams*

### KENT Dealing with Local Criminals

Police Community Support Officers Claire and Dave, based in Tunbridge Wells, reassured us there was not so much crime locally – they mainly deal with shoplifting – but gave us useful tips on dealing with bogus callers.

*Janet Weston*

### RADLETT In Hungary after the Holocaust

The end of the Second World War ended the catastrophe of the Holocaust in Europe but sadly it was not the end of all troubles for the remaining Jewish communities. Andrew Roth gave a very interesting talk on his experience as a child of the Hungarian revolution in a small town and of his journey to England.

*Fritz Starer*

### CAMBRIDGE Life as an Officer in the Royal Marines

Simon Granham, Deputy Head at Dovercourt/Harwich High School, has been very involved in relating the events of the Kindertransport to his pupils. On this occasion, he gave us a most interesting talk about his time as an officer in the Royal Marines, including many amusing anecdotes, and stimulated a wide discussion of life in the Services.

*Keith Lawson*

**KINGSTON UPON THAMES/SURREY CF****Another Very Entertaining Get-together**

A delicious lunch at Edmee's lovely home and garden, which was in full bloom, was enjoyed by members of both Surrey and Kingston Groups. Another very entertaining get-together.

*Susan Zisman*

**BRADFORD 'Meat is the Finest Vegetable'**

We devoted our evening to a *gemütlicher* Kaffeelatsch musing on (un)fulfilled ambitions or opportunities. Wendy brought – to quote Michael Winner – 'historic' home-cooked salt beef, adding a new dimension to her usual delicious teas and endorsing my late father's contention that meat is the finest vegetable. Oh Blooms, where art thou?

*Stephen Tendlow*

**WEST MIDLANDS (BIRMINGHAM) A Wonderful Trip to Blenheim Palace**

Our trip to Blenheim Palace was wonderful! We were impressed by the scale of the Vanbrugh building and

admired Capability Brown's gardens. On an excellent tour, we learned about the Dukes of Marlborough and the Churchill family. After admiring the splendid Meissen china, paintings, furniture and tapestries, we enjoyed a convivial lunch on the terrace and took the train to the Pleasure Gardens.

*Janet Weston*

**WEMBLEY London and the Wine Trade**

A small but very 'select' group met for a most interesting talk on the joint subject of 'London and Wine'. Debbie Pearson, our speaker, an official guide in the City of London and Westminster, drew a fascinating parallel between the connections of her subjects. This was followed by the usual refreshments and a good chit-chat among us.

*Tom Heinemann*

**NORTH LONDON Flowers and Fables**

Nick Dobson, using some beautiful slides, shared with us his extensive knowledge of flowers and their association with fables and various countries. Interesting

to note that the earliest fossilised rose – from 35 million years ago – was found in Colorado!

*Hanne R. Freedman*

**NORTH WEST LONDON A Holistic Treatment**

Lesley Woolfe, AJR Dementia Befriending Co-ordinator and a Reflexologist in private practice, told us about Reflexology, which originated thousands of years ago but came into general use again after being rediscovered in 1890 in the USA. It is a holistic treatment which concentrates on the feet and hands to treat the whole body. Following a Q&A session, Lesley did a hand massage for some of us.

*David Lang*

**CHESHIRE CF Lively Discussions**

We had lively discussions on a variety of current topics, including an in/out referendum on the EU. The afternoon was completed by a magnificent tea. Many thanks to Wendy for organising the afternoon and to hosts Peter and Heather for their hospitality.

*Ernie Hunter*

**AUGUST GROUP EVENTS**

Ealing	4 Aug	Bring a Poem to Discuss
Glasgow	5 Aug	BBQ
Ilford	5 Aug	Nick Dobson: 'Dazzling Dahlias – a Colourful Introduction with Slides'
Pinner	6 Aug	Annual Garden Party
Bristol	10 Aug	David Barnett
Edinburgh	10 Aug	Shostakovich Concert
HGS	10 Aug	Lesley Urbach: 'The Story of Herbert Morrison'
Essex (Westcliff)	11 Aug	Lawrence Collin: 'People in Their 90s'
St John's Wood	11 Aug	Alice Owen: 'Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK, 2015 and Beyond'
Book Club	12 Aug	Social Discussion and Lunch
Café Imperial	13 Aug	Lunchtime Social
Birmingham	16 Aug	Annual Garden Party
Edinburgh/Glasgow	16 Aug	Outing to Edinburgh Festival Open Day
Brighton	17 Aug	Tour of Brighton Library
Edgware	18 Aug	Lynn Julius: 'Jews in the Arab World'
Kent	18 Aug	Fish and Chips Lunch
Radlett	19 Aug	Marion Friend: 'A Musical Career'
Cambridge	20 Aug	Eva Clarke: Her Latest Book, <i>Born Survivors</i>
Hull	23 Aug	Lunch at East Park
North West London	24 Aug	Susan Shaw: 'Magistrates JPs, Not Jewish Princesses'
Whitefield/Prestwich	24 Aug	Discussion Group
Welwyn GC	25 Aug	Summer Luncheon
Didsbury	26 Aug	Social
Wembley	26 Aug	Paul Lang, Professional Photographer
Surrey/Kingston upon Thames CF	27 Aug	Summer Luncheon
North London	27 Aug	Annual Lunch with Light Opera Performance by Bronwen Stephens

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**IN MEMORIAM  
PETER CLAUS RICKENBACK**

\*20 April 1920 †11 June 2015  
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Elizabeth A (Bagnall)  
Martin H and Yvonne with Suzanne E and David  
Antonia Jill  
Jessica Laura

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**FAMILY ANOUNCEMENTS**

**Death**

**Finkeltaub, Gertrude (Gerty)** Dressmaker.  
Born Vienna (20th District) 5/2/1925,  
died 28/06/2015. Only child of Simon and  
Charlotte Bandmacher. Left Vienna March  
1939 to North Shields, Leicester (WW2),  
Maida Vale (1947-52), Ilford (1952-2015).  
Deeply missed by her children Mark and  
Beverly Judith.

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 Buried history: in pursuit of justice *continued*

posts until the Gestapo hounded him out of his court at gunpoint and he left Berlin only in 1939 after Kristallnacht made clear the Nazis' intent. Dr Mueller then presented a live conversation with me about my reactions to their research. I was amazed and gratified that nearly 200 people attended this event in recognition of my father. Included among them were all three of my deceased brother's children and their partners, so that it was also a very moving family gathering.

Hearing that I was coming to Berlin for this event, Minister Heiko Maas invited me, accompanied by my daughter, nephew and his son, to an informal discussion with members of the Ministry of Justice in Berlin. This turned out to be a group of over 40 people who were very interested in my family's history. We also heard details of the 'Rosenburg Projekt' being researched by the Ministry of Justice to bring to light the details of how the legal system, located in the Rosenburg district of Berlin, functioned in the immediate post-war years. I was presented with the first volume of their findings.

#### INDIFFERENCE A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN PREJUDICE

The interest and energy that these two institutions are deploying in exposing former injustices is encouraging and inspiring and will hopefully have a bearing on more recent injustices such as the ongoing case of Jeremiah Duggan, a 22-year-old British-Jewish student who was found dead on the motorway in Wiesbaden 12 years ago. This was covered up as suicide. Rather like Doreen Lawrence, the mother of Stephen Lawrence, a British teenager who was murdered in a racist attack in London in 1993, Jeremiah's mother has fought a 12-year battle, which culminated in May 2015 in a new inquest in London. The coroner found that the death was definitely not suicide and was probably instigated by a cult her son had been seduced into. Perhaps this case too will lead to an independent police investigation body.

While in Berlin I visited a number of exhibitions with my daughter: an open-air exhibition of the end of the Second World War at the Brandenburg Tor, the new Memorial for the Sinti and Roma

murdered in the Holocaust, the exhibition under the Main Holocaust Memorial, the exhibition of German Resistance and the Topography of Terror. What impressed me was that these exhibitions, most of which I had seen before, had been updated and extended to contain so much new material from recent research and that they did not shrink from detailing the injustices in full. Inclusion of material about the Sinti and Roma part of the Holocaust is impressive and the Sinti and Roma Memorial is extraordinarily moving. The stories of numerous small cells and networks of resistance, including Jews and Sinti, in virtually all ghettos and concentration camps expose the lie that they 'went like lambs to the slaughter'.

My current interest is in applying my knowledge of exposed former injustice to addressing current injustices, such as denial of the Ottoman genocide in the First World War, that have not yet been fully exposed. Holocaust research, education and commemoration are essential but not sufficient. There has to be action to resolve current injustice against individuals and minority groups, especially the ignorant and prejudiced attitude to Roma and Travellers. Injustice can be challenged but there are not enough people with the courage to care and the will to act. Indifference is, in many ways, a bigger problem than prejudice.

The demons in our human nature cause some people to commit injustice, usually for power and self-interest. But, as Steven Pinker says in his book *The Better Angels of our Human Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (2011), we have angels in our human nature too, so some people develop a strong sense of fair play and justice. My father was one of them and I like to think that

I resemble him in this. Perpetrators of injustice often create a cloud of denial to cover up their crimes. Denial then masks the corrosive effects of injustice that continue until it is exposed. Recognition and acknowledgement of the injustice, even decades later, is an important form of justice.

#### LEARNING LESSONS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

Whenever I tell my Kindertransport story in schools and to other audiences I always refer to what is happening today. I emphasise that we have not learned two major lessons from the Holocaust: to treat all people as equal human beings and to protest early enough when unacceptable violence begins. Unchecked violence against a target group ultimately leads to genocide if it is not brought under control.

Learning about and commemorating the Holocaust is simply not enough without action. I challenge the audiences I talk with to move from being passive bystanders to becoming active *upstanders* by doing something – even very little multiplied by hundreds and thousands of people will have an effect. I challenge people to think of ways to protest against what they know to be wrong. I always focus on groups within our own local communities that are unfairly treated because people have stereotypes in their minds, particularly challenging the way people think about (or fail to think about!) Roma and immigrants.

Too many people fail to see 'immigrants' as individual human beings and don't question the bad press they get. I emphasise the difference between asylum-seekers and refugees. We were given refugee status on the Kindertransport but this status is today denied many people in England who are fleeing for their lives from mortal danger just as we were. Failure to take note of the warning signs and protest at emerging violence has led to the ever-growing number of people fleeing their home countries. Locking them up in detention centres or keeping them in 'tent cities' outside the borders of our affluent countries is not only inhumane but exacerbates their problems and ours too. We have to face – and act on – why they have a need to flee and bear to look at what we ourselves might be contributing to the problems.

#### CORRECTION

In the obituary of Marianne Leavor in your July issue, Dr Engel's first name was given as Fritz. It should have read Richard. I am grateful to Lord Peter Eden (previously Engel) for pointing this out – Rudi Leavor



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### 'The daughter of refugees'

It's something we see almost every day on our TV screens. Hundreds of people are packed into rickety boats as they throw themselves onto the mercy of the sea and the countries of Europe. It's enough to wring the hardest heart. A similar story has been unfolding in South-East Asia but there, it would seem, some kind of solution has been found and Malaysia has agreed to accept its fellow Muslims.

Many people in Europe, including governments, object to granting these people sanctuary. Many of these unfortunates have paid considerable sums of money for the privilege of being tossed by the waves for days and many have perished in the process. Many of them are exploited by unscrupulous racketeers who take their money, abuse them physically and sexually, and send them on their way without food or water.

These people come from the countries of Africa, where conflicts, poverty, corruption and hopelessness are endemic. Others come from Middle Eastern countries such as Syria and Libya, where orderly government has collapsed, wars are being fought and no one is safe from danger.

They are refugees.

Anyone reading this journal knows what that word means, whether at first hand or at one or two removes. It is a word that has defined an entire generation of Jews who were forced to flee their homes in Europe. Though I was born in England, to this day I still proudly define myself as 'the daughter

of refugees'.

The Jews of Europe who tried to find shelter in the years following Hitler's rise to power were subjected to rigorous restrictions. A sponsor or place of employment had to be found, a place of residence guaranteed or an affidavit provided, and to all this were added the exorbitant taxes that had to be paid in order to be allowed to leave Germany. The heartbreak arising from having to leave home and family was not confined solely to the children who were fortunate enough to obtain a place on one of the Kindertransports.

At that time, no one thought of getting into a crowded rubber dinghy and throwing themselves onto the mercy of some kind person out there. No one expected to be provided with food and accommodation after enduring a hazardous journey and being exposed to the elements. The nearest thing to that experience may have been that of the illegal immigrants to pre-State Israel but that didn't save very many Jews from the fate the Nazis had prepared for them.

Mankind has always been on the move. Millions of years ago Neanderthals and Homo sapiens migrated from one part of the African and European continents to another in search of food and shelter. Migration is an integral part of human nature and as we all know there have been more than a few battles for territory and booty in the course of human history. But unless one tribe was being threatened with extinction by another, the people involved in this kind of movement could not be defined as refugees.

Israel has its own refugee problem. First there are the Palestinians who left Israel in the course of the War of Independence in 1948 and have been kept in that state of limbo ever since. Their children and grandchildren have the same refugee status and demands. They continue to live in poverty and privation in UN-sponsored refugee camps and are not enabled to obtain citizenship in the Arab countries where those camps are situated. The contrast with the Jewish refugees who left Europe and scattered all over the world in the 1930s and 1940s, rapidly becoming self-supporting, could not be greater.

In more recent years, Israel has been forced to contend with the problem of people coming from Sudan and Eritrea, seeking refuge and a way out of the conflicts and poverty that afflict their countries. Faced with a constant flow of these refugees, Israel felt obliged to build a fence to prevent their entry from Egypt and a special holding camp for those who nonetheless managed to enter. Some of them have found low-paid work but many of them constitute an almost insoluble problem.

Many Israelis come from families that were themselves once refugees and find it difficult to harden their heart to the problem of the refugees of today.



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

in Northways but my grandmother stayed on at No 4 until her death in November 1955! So obviously we were all very familiar with the boarding house and the area it was in. At no time had anyone ever mentioned any other boarding house at No 3 Adamson Road!

Eventually No 4 was converted into the so-called Swiss Cottage Hotel. I went there this afternoon (first week of June) for the sole purpose of finding out some more. The place looked eerily deserted except for some receptionist or porter (a male), who had heard that the house had once been

a boarding house frequented by Jewish refugees but didn't know anything else.

No 3 Adamson Road is – as can be guessed – three houses down the road from No 9, almost at the beginning of it. I was trying to gain access, ringing door bells and banging loudly. It's all flats now – no one responded; there was no sound to be heard. The house seemed completely deserted, as did all the others I was passing.

As for No 4, I can furnish proof of its existence and function by photocopying a few pages from my grandmother's alien's

Certificate of Registration.

I moreover went to our local library but drew a blank there too and was advised to go to the library in Holborn, which I didn't bother to do. What I wanted to find out was whether there is any record of No 3 Adamson Road ever having been a boarding house.

Please forgive me for causing you vexation, Mr Vulkan, but do try to bring me proof that the house you claim to have been staying in was indeed a boarding house! What was its name?

*Margarete Stern, London NW3*

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