

# AJR journal

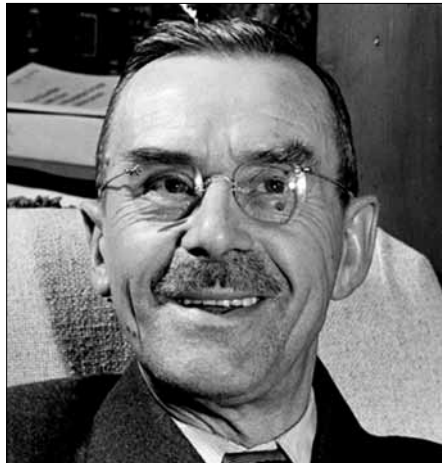
The Association of Jewish Refugees

## Thomas Mann's Czech Connection

The celebrated author Thomas Mann (1875-1955), who had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929 for his novel *Buddenbrooks* (1901), was, like many, caught unawares by the Nazi assumption of power on 30 January 1933. Mann was out of Germany when Hitler was appointed Chancellor, travelling in the south of France. He had a strong affection for Lübeck, the town of his birth, and for Munich, where he and his family had lived since 1891, so it was perhaps natural that he was reluctant to break his links with Germany outright. He was dissuaded from travelling back to Germany by the insistence of his outspokenly anti-Nazi older children, Klaus and Erika, that he must on no account return there.

In the earliest period of Nazi rule, Mann was probably not one of the writers who had the very worst to fear from the regime, though his wife Katia, née Pringsheim, was of Jewish origin. However, he was by 1933 a declared supporter of the Weimar Republic and its system of parliamentary democracy and had come to believe in the integration of Germany into the community of western European democracies. During the First World War, on the other hand, he had been an outspoken supporter of the cause of Imperial Germany and had passionately condemned Germany's western enemies, Britain and France. Only gradually had he changed his position after 1918, becoming one of the leading 'Vernunftrepublikaner', those who had come to support the new Weimar Republic as a matter of reasoned calculation, with their heads, if not fully with their hearts. Consequently, the Nazi government had in 1933 not altogether abandoned hope of inducing Mann to return to Germany. That would have represented a considerable propaganda coup for the Nazi regime; it would also have gone some way to compensate for the loss of the many writers, artists and musicians who had fled Germany in the wake of the Nazi assumption of power.

Mann settled in Switzerland; he did not at first declare his political intentions, despite an increasingly hostile campaign against him by the Nazis. But in February 1936 he published an open letter critical of Nazi Germany in a Zurich newspaper, which effectively marked



Thomas Mann, 1875 – 1955

the break between himself and his native land. Later that year, he was stripped of his German citizenship and in December the University of Bonn withdrew the honorary doctorate that it had awarded him in 1919. This roused Mann to a stirring response; he wrote a letter to the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty of the University, in which he castigated the Nazis and allied himself openly with the forces opposing Hitler, in the name of German culture that had been driven into exile. But, with the prospect of losing his German nationality, he faced a serious problem, since Switzerland, his country of residence, had not granted him citizenship. He could travel, to France for example, but that country, too, showed no sign of granting him citizenship. To acquire the right to permanent residence in a country like the United States of America, where Mann eventually settled and spent the wartime years, was very much more difficult for a stateless foreign national.

### Czechoslovakia to the rescue

The country which, to its great credit, resolved this problem for Thomas Mann was Czechoslovakia, and the small town to which the principal credit must go was called Proseč, in eastern Bohemia. I was reminded of the details of this important development in Mann's life when I was invited on 25 November 2016 to the annual dinner of the British Czech and Slovak Association by Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, née Fleischmann, a generous supporter of the Association, a charming host – and a native of Proseč. More than that: it was Lady Milena's father,

Rudolf Fleischmann, a businessman and ardent admirer of Thomas Mann, who was instrumental in securing Czech citizenship for the writer, by having him made an honorary citizen of Proseč. To that end, Fleischmann went to see the President of Czechoslovakia, Edvard Beneš, and persuaded him to allow the application on Mann's behalf to go ahead. This was an act of political courage: by 1936, Czechoslovakia was the sole democracy remaining in central and eastern Europe and a natural target for Nazi aggression, the more so as it contained a large German minority, in the border areas known as the Sudetenland, which had fallen dangerously under Nazi influence.

Czechoslovakia, though very exposed to the threat of German intervention – as the events of 1938/39 were to show – took the honourable path: on 23 November 1936, Thomas Mann became a Czech citizen. In this, he was following in the footsteps of his elder brother Heinrich (1871-1950), in his time also an acclaimed novelist; the famous film *The Blue Angel* (*Der blaue Engel*) (1930), which made a star of Marlene Dietrich, was based on his novel *Professor Unrat*. Some readers may remember the excellent BBC TV adaptation of his novel *Der Untertan*, entitled *Man of Straw*, starring Derek Jacobi as the loathsome Diederich Hessling (1972). Heinrich Mann had fled Germany before his brother and decided to take Czechoslovak nationality, for which the prerequisite was the right of domicile (*Heimatsrecht*); Heinrich Mann first applied for this right to Liberec but was refused, as the city, close to the German border, contained a large number of pro-Nazi, German elements. Proseč, however, resisted the campaign against Heinrich Mann and, at the instigation of Rudolf Fleischmann, offered him citizenship, which he accepted in 1935.

Thomas Mann visited Proseč in January 1937, and Czech citizenship was subsequently extended to his three younger children. In 1939, following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany, he emigrated to the United States, settling in 1942 in Pacific Palisades, a suburb of Los Angeles. In October 1940, he began his celebrated broadcasts to Germany, *Deutsche Hörer!* (*German Listeners!*), which were flown

*continued on page 2* ➔

**Thomas Mann's Czech Connection**  
*continued*

to London and broadcast by the BBC to Germany between October 1940 and August 1943. Mann made a significant contribution to the Allied war effort, becoming in effect the leading cultural spokesman for the anti-Nazi Germans in exile. He was naturalised as an American citizen in June 1944, but returned to live in Switzerland in 1952. Rudolf Fleischmann was forced to flee Czechoslovakia as soon as the Germans invaded in March 1939, since he was a marked man after his initiative on Thomas Mann's behalf, as well as a Jew. He made his way to Britain where, in poor health, he struggled to establish himself in business; his wife arrived in Britain in 1940, via Norway. His daughter Milena came to Britain in 1939 with her younger sister Eva, on one of the trains organised by Sir Nicholas Winton that brought 669 Jewish children to safety from Czechoslovakia.

Milena Fleischmann was educated at the Czechoslovak State School, which was established in 1940 at Whitchurch in Shropshire, following the fall of France, the arrival of the Free Czech forces in Britain and the recognition by Britain of the Czech government in exile, with Beneš as President; the school moved to Llanwrtyd Wells in the Brecon Beacons in 1943. The school has been lovingly described by another of its alumni, Vera Gissing, née Diamant, in her moving memoir *Pearls of Childhood* (London: Robson Books, 1988). Since the Czechs were allies of the British in the war against Hitler, young Czechs like Vera Diamant and Milena Fleischmann had no need to feel ashamed of their nationality or to fear any of the anti-German venom to which child refugees from Germany and Austria could be exposed. On the contrary, Vera was proud of the exploits of her fellow countrymen fighting alongside the British, while the daughter of her British foster parents could not disguise her delight at showing off her new Czech foster sister to her schoolmates, a reception that would scarcely have been extended to German or

**THE DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM**

As a member of the UK delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), AJR CEO Michael Newman was honoured and privileged to witness the IHRA's unanimous adoption of the Working Definition of Antisemitism.



The UK will become the first country to officially adopt the definition. According to Prime Minister Theresa May, who announced the decision in front of 800 guests at the Conservative Friends of Israel annual lunch on 12 December, "There

will be one definition of anti-Semitism – in essence, language or behaviour that displays hatred towards Jews because they are Jews – and anyone guilty of that will be called out on it."

The definition had been agreed by the IHRA, an intergovernmental body made up of 31 member countries, earlier last year. In his capacity as Chair of the Communication Working Group, Michael Newman helped relay support for the initiative to the IHRA chair and leadership.

The definition states: "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

The wording can be adopted by the police, councils, universities and public bodies in order to "call out" anti-Semites. Although it is not legally binding, having an official definition will make it harder for culprits to get away with harassing and abusing Jews.

"This is a positive step forward and we hope it will make an impact," said Dave Rich, deputy director of communications at the Community Service Trust (CST), the organization that monitors the security of the Jewish community in the UK.

In his review of 2016 Sir Eric Pickles, the UK Government's Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust issues, wrote "I am immensely proud the British Government has this year become the first in the world to formally adopt the definition of anti-Semitism as set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. There must be no doubt that racism and hatred towards the Jewish people will not be tolerated. The adoption of this definition is especially pertinent because it comes at a time when anti-Semitic incidents are reportedly on the rise."

Austrian children. A reunion of the school's former pupils was held in Llanwrtyd Wells in June 1985.

Britain also benefited in another way from Thomas Mann's Czech connection. In 1935, admirers of the author established the Thomas Mann Society in Prague; its members, many of them exiles from Germany, included a number of notable figures from the literary and artistic world. After the Munich Agreement and Hitler's occupation of the Sudetenland in autumn 1938, the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC) was set up to bring people under threat from the Nazis from Czechoslovakia to Britain. These were in the first instance known opponents of Nazism, mostly political or cultural figures. After the Germans occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, the BCRC's caseload was taken over by the government-funded Czech Refugee Trust Fund. Members of the Thomas Mann Society were among the considerable number of anti-Nazi writers and artists who escaped to Britain in this way, including Friedrich Burschell, Bernhard Menne and Wilhelm Sternfeld. The Society published its Thomas Mann Newsletter in London from 1940 till 1945.

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## DIAMOND LEGACY FOR GERMAN REFUGEE

Last year was the 60th anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards – the world's leading youth achievement movement, which has inspired and transformed the lives of millions of young people from all walks of life.

It is a source of great pride that a German-Jewish refugee, Kurt Hahn, was one of the brains behind the DofE Awards. Hahn, who was also the founder and headmaster of Gordonstoun School in Scotland (which HRH Prince Philip attended), was a great inspiration to his

pupils and is particularly credited with the creation of the International Award, which has touched the lives of young people in more than 140 countries.

Over 4,000 Jewish children have participated in the Awards scheme and every single mainstream Jewish secondary school now has a DofE programme delivered by the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade, creating a fantastic legacy for this particular émigré.

Look out for the full profile of Kurt Hahn in the March issue of the *AJR Journal*, written by Tony Grenville.

## MIXED RESPONSE TO UN RESOLUTION

The AJR has received a number of letters in response to the UN Resolution 2334, passed in December, which states that Israel's settlements in Palestinian territories, including those in east Jerusalem, have no legal validity.

Some AJR members and/or readers of our Journal have expressed disappointment that the UK voted in favour of the resolution. For example Lloyd Levy of London wrote that "Prime Minister Theresa May is forever saying how much she admires and protects the Jews, and likewise the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson.

It is a revelation that they are both agreeable to this travesty, and shows yet again that politicians' words are meaningless."

Janos Fisher of Bushey Heath shared his concern that integration grants issued by the United Nations, who he described as "biased and openly anti Israel", might end up in jihadist causes.

Finally George Vulkan wrote that "Irrespective of the rights and wrongs of the decisive vote, the reactions of Mr Netanyahu by threatening to 'punish' those countries which dared to vote for the resolution.... could be immensely damaging to Israel."

## Hostel Gets Display

A new display about Bradford's Kindertransport hostel was launched at the Bradford Peace Museum on 27 January.

The only accredited museum of its kind in the UK, the Peace Museum is a national resource that educates and inspires people for peace, using a unique collection of artefacts and stories.



## CALLING ALL WOMEN

One of the AJR Journal's regular contributors, Agnes Grunwald-Spier, has been commissioned to write a new book about Women's Experiences in the Holocaust.

She is hoping to demonstrate how different and difficult women's experiences were, and would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has such information either in letters, memoirs or books. All information will be properly referenced and

acknowledged in the book.

"I am particularly interested in hearing about women caring for children and other relatives, being involved in resistance work, being in hiding, pregnancy and abortion and anything else people feel would be of interest," says Agnes.

If you have any information you feel might be helpful to Agnes please contact her direct via [agnesgrunwaldspier@gmail.com](mailto:agnesgrunwaldspier@gmail.com) or 020 3720 1596 / 07816 196517.

## SECOND GENERATION SWELLS THE NUMBERS

Two-thirds of the people who joined the AJR last year are second or third generation, illustrating that the Association's reach spans the age groups.

In some cases, the children and/or grandchildren are joining the AJR to maintain the link to the AJR and as a way of honour their relatives. This helps to bring the average age of AJR members down considerably, given that over 600 of our 'original' members are aged above 90 – in fact 28 of our members have reached their century!

Although the delivery of social, welfare and care services remains our primary mandate, according to CEO Michael Newman, "We are also committed to ensuring that future generations can learn about the Holocaust. As well as supporting educational, research and commemorative projects, the AJR has produced several resources to perpetuate the legacy of the remarkable community we represent and support so that future generations can learn and study their experiences."

Many descendants of Holocaust survivors actively welcome the efforts of the AJR and other organisations in keeping their families' stories alive and strengthening the links between them and future generations. Marcelle Black, whose mother Lela was featured in 'My Story' in the AJR Journal January issue, said "I feel it is important these stories and testimonies continue to be told, lest the atrocities of this appalling period in Jewish history be lost in the mists of time. The AJR has played an important role for me in providing practical help and support from the time my mother suffered a major stroke in 2005, until she passed away three years later. I will always be very grateful to the AJR for this."

## Our Story – The Beckhardt Family

It's mid-November 1918 and wartime hostilities have finally ceased, but for a moment it appears as though neutral Switzerland is under attack from a squadron of German fighter pilots. For there in a field close to Zurich, out of his fighter plane steps Fritz Beckhardt, the most highly decorated German-Jewish NCO pilot of the First World War, his plane intriguingly and unmistakably adorned with a set of swastikas.



Kurt as a child

Fast forward a century to 2016 and in Bonn, Germany, Fritz Beckhardt's son Kurt, who had last been in London for the 75th reunion anniversary of the Kindertransport, breathed his last.

For sheer drama, the Beckhardt family history during those intervening decades is hard to beat. Fritz Beckhardt, German patriot and acclaimed war hero, later became a member of the national executive committee of the Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten (the national organisation of Jewish, ex-WW1, front-line combat soldiers). He fearlessly engaged with the recently risen to power Nazis whenever the need arose, although his small business in the outer suburbs of Wiesbaden was being boycotted and his family was driven to seek refuge.

Forward to 1938 and Fritz was arrested under the Nuremberg Laws



Kurt revisiting his former home on Finchley Road

for the supposed Nazi 'crime' of Rassenschande (racial defilement) and sent to the stone quarries of Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

Normally this would have been a death sentence, but during World War One Fritz had flown in the same elite fighter squadron as Hitler's anointed successor, Hermann Göring. A Jewish lawyer Berthold Guthmann (himself to be later murdered in Auschwitz) interceded on Fritz's

behalf with Göring, obtaining an order that the camp's commander, Karl-Otto Koch, release Beckhardt for his exceptional war service.

A nail-biting journey of escape from Germany followed, taking Fritz and his wife Rosa Emma through occupied France, Spain and Portugal, from where in May 1941 they were able to fly to England, the sanctuary where in 1939 their children Kurt and Sue had been sent as part of the Kindertransport. Their escape was exceptional: they may have been the only two Jews, of the tens of thousands who passed through Portugal in search of sanctuary, who were still in Germany at outbreak

of war and were subsequently allowed entry into Britain. After a relatively brief period of interrogation and then internment on the Isle of Man, in 1942 the family was reunited in Golders Green.

From then until 1950 the Beckhardts lived in a flat on Finchley Road, in accommodation provided by kosher butchers, the Frohweins. Fritz had saved the lives of two of the Frohwein brothers in 1936 when he drove them through the night to the Belgian border to escape the Gestapo.

However Fritz was unable to integrate himself into life in England, so in 1950 he once again packed his bags and returned with his wife and son to Germany. Daughter Sue refused to return; becoming a British citizen and marrying a policeman.

Fritz' son Kurt, then 23, later

recalled their return to Germany as "the biggest mistake of my life". His father had believed that through sheer strength of will and effort they could pick up where they had left off back in 1933. Instead, the family experienced the full horror of post-war Germany's reconstruction; humiliation at the hands of the judiciary in pursuit of their groundbreaking claims for compensation, and rejection by their erstwhile neighbours who had no wish to deal with the complex psychological and political issues returning Jews brought in their wake. The Brownshirts still survived in the minds of many, even if their outward behaviour appeared tamed.

It was only in 2007 when the Beckhardt's story was featured in a documentary on German television that Kurt's own life story, punctuated throughout by his secret, ongoing love affair with London, finally gained public recognition. German schools, community associations, museums



Kurt in London during the filming of the German documentary

and libraries began to invite him to tell his story.

Finally in 2014 a book, "Der Jude mit dem Hakenkreuz" (The Jew with the Swastika) was published in German. Its brisk sales led to it being reprinted several times. At its heart lies a family history so exciting, tragic and extraordinary that it could be the plot of a novel. Translated into several other languages – but amazingly not yet English – it also touches on such complementary themes as the Kindertransport, and the lives of German-Jewish refugees in English exile."

*This article was written for the AJR by Kurt's son Lorenz Beckhardt, who would be delighted to hear from any English publisher who might be interested in their story.*  
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## OPINION: BEYOND THE HOLOCAUST

As well as excelling in its portrayal of the Holocaust, the National Holocaust Centre's vision goes far further. Learning about the Holocaust and commemorating the enormous loss to humanity it caused is vital and must continue, but it is insufficient without action. An annual Holocaust Memorial Day and a required minimum time for Holocaust education in the national curriculum (academies and private schools are not required to follow the national curriculum) is a good start but woefully insufficient.

The Holocaust is unique, insofar as it was the most calculated and brutal genocide executed on a meticulous and industrial scale, but that does not mean it will remain unique. So many genocides have been allowed to happen since and the Holocaust's uniqueness will likely be overtaken unless we develop the courage to take determined preventative action. There are many positive signs of progress: the Nuremberg Trials were a flawed but nevertheless pivotal advance in creating new international laws to bring perpetrators of crimes that had never been named before, Crimes against Humanity and Genocide, to justice. They are not yet being put to use to an acceptable extent, but they are there. Also they gave rise to Universal Human Rights and Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

It is only 72 years since the end of WWII, so this is indeed progress, but rather slow. Too many innocent people are still suffering as victims of all the elements of greed and violence that lead to war and genocide. Brexit and Trump have exposed and brought to the surface the seething frustrated rage and hatred that has been suppressed, repressed and building up over the decades. Now that we can see it on the surface it is ripe for us to tackle it, but with new and better thought out ways. Violence can never be cured by more violence; we need to see beyond this – beyond focusing on the Holocaust to including it in a much wider vision: a world in which hatred is contained, processed and re-channelled into constructive use of energy. A future in which the difficulties with 'difference'

and 'othering' are mastered and all people are genuinely accepted as equal human beings in the one human race; a future in which every decision-making committee at every level consists of equal numbers of women and men.

The Stop Hate Crime seminars run



Holocaust Exhibition © The National Holocaust Centre and Museum

by the National Holocaust Centre spend a whole day exploring hate crime and ways of addressing it. They bring to light how little you really know and energise you to get involved in action towards understanding and mastering the hate that leads to uncontrollable violence.

The day starts with an introduction to the Centre, which was set up by a Christian family using their own home to create the first Holocaust commemoration and learning centre in Britain. All genocide and a very wide vision is embodied in the 20 years' of the Centre's action. Participants are given guided tours of the two magnificent exhibitions in the Centre: the static display of detailed information about the Holocaust and other genocide, and 'The Journey': a walk through the experience of a Jewish child during the increasingly menacing Nazi persecution leading up to the rescue of 10,000 children on the Kindertransport.

The seminar includes a combination of speakers, short films and some challenging audience participation. Speakers have included very powerful personal experiences of finding and using help to move from victim to survivor and beyond, to engaging the understanding, good will and support of others in helping other victims. So far the seminars have included a mother, whose daughter was killed in a hate crime just because of the way she looked. This mother went on to form a charity to disseminate knowledge of alternative sub-cultures and challenge

the lack of protective measures.

Also included was a bullied victim who became a perpetrator by being radicalised into a violent group. A white man himself, he was able to use the help of a black mentor (who also told his side of this remarkable story) to extricate himself, despite inadequate support systems for vulnerable people in the community. Thirdly, a survivor presented her work as an activist arising from having been rescued on the Kindertransport.

A Police Hate Crime Manager then presents current initiatives for understanding and containing hate crime, followed by a workshop based on an actual case. Other presentations include successes with Restorative Justice and injunctions and initiatives against 'mate-crime' (fraudsters preying on vulnerable lonely individuals).

These seminars have been attended mainly by members of local Police Forces and Local Authority employees working with individuals and groups that are vulnerable to being victimised or radicalised. Hopefully they will inspire similar events at the National Holocaust Centre and elsewhere in the country. They offer participants in depth understanding of the 'tools' and successes of present projects and also the opportunity for networking to share and develop further initiatives.

Like all the multifaceted work of the National Holocaust Centre, it represents to me a pebble cast in a pond that makes far-reaching ripples which eventually reach distant shores. I was struck by the number of people who had not heard of the work of Winnicott and Bowlby and other developers of early attachment theory. Containing and controlling hate crime and other violence in the community seems to me essential but insufficient without asking the vital question, "how is all this hate generated and where is it coming from?" The capacity to develop hate is there in all of us, so why do some of us commit hate crimes and not others? Why do some people have so much hate? Where does it begin? The capacity for love is also in all of us. No baby is born hating, so how and when does hate develop?

Ruth Barnett, December 2016



# Letters to the Editor

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

## TRIP DOWN WILLESDEN LANE

Sir – With reference to the letter of Frank Beck – ‘Fiction dressed as Fact’ – in your December issue, I too attended ‘The Pianist of Willesden Lane’ and have also read ‘The Children of Willesden Lane’. This is because I WAS one of the children of Willesden Lane, having previously left Germany on the Kindertransport. My parents and brother were lost in the Holocaust. I lived in Willesden Lane from May 1941 for some three years and knew Lisa Jura – ‘the pianist’ from when she was 19 years of age. I was a good friend of her sister Sonya too at the hostel during that time – in fact, she taught me to do the tango.

In this regard I am well able to comment on the authenticity of the account put forward by her daughter, Mona Golabek. Like many children Lisa and her sister emigrated to America where her daughter was born. Surely it is most natural and truthful to write the book in American English with this history?

The performance gave an accurate description of life in Willesden Lane. I was touched to be transported back by the memories presented. Historical truth takes many forms but the kind that evokes atmosphere and recollection for people who lived through the experience has great validity. I can guarantee that this performance was a wonderful representation of historical fact.

*Henry Glanz, London E1*

## KEEP SHARING THE STORIES

Sir – I read with great interest Jacqueline Steele’s article in the December issue. It happens that I was born in Magdeburg a few years earlier than Irma Mayer, ie in July 1922. I went to London on a “pre-Kindertransport” in January 1935, staying at a boarding school for Jewish refugees in Swiss Cottage. Despite much trying I was unable to get my parents out of Germany and they were murdered by the Nazis, probably at Treblinka.

After internment in the Isle of Man, I served first in the Pioneer Corps and later in Intelligence, listening to and evaluating information from German prisoners, first at CSDIC in Buckinghamshire and post-

war at Bad Nenndorf near Hannover.

Just like Irma, I felt that the Holocaust story needed to be told to children and so I did on visits to the UK (Sevenoaks School where my two grandsons are pupils) and at events staged by the Jewish Council. I then did much the same at British and International Schools in the area where we live here in Belgium.

When the Russians left Magdeburg, some of my family and I went there and talked to my former school from which I was thrown out a b.... Jew. I was made very welcome and indeed many of the pupils came to a Stolperstein ceremony outside the house in the Otto von Guerickestrasse in which we lived together with a favourite aunt who had been sent to Theresienstadt and died of malnutrition. On that occasion I received quite a bit of information from the Magdeburg Burgomaster about the wartime treatment of my parents before they were deported.

Incidentally my wife and I also attended an AJR Kindertransport event in London graced by HRH Prince Charles.

It is of interest, I think, to preserve and publicise this Holocaust history at a time when anti-Semitism appears to be reviving.

*Eric Marsh, Kraainem, Belgium*

## PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

Sir – Every time I see my name in print my heart misses a beat, partly in expectation and partly in panic. This time – in the December issue of AJR Journal – was no exception.

I found one error which could have been a slip of the pen on my part but which could have been very misleading. It says that “6s was the maximum charged for any item at Woolworth Stores” in 1938, when in fact it was “6d”. Six pence not six shillings! I do apologise but would be honestly grateful if it could be put right.

There are a number of other things, nothing to do with me, which I’d still like to point out:

In Ruth Renfield’s obituary, written by Helen Grunberg, it mentions her “heimlich” cooking. I don’t want to seem too pedantic but that is a really funny

mistake. The German word “heimlich” has the meaning of “stealthy”. What she obviously meant was “heimisch” which in German means where you’re from, native; “sich heimisch fühlen” is to feel at home. In Yiddish it is, as is so often the case, somewhat different and means Jewish as “der heim”, in the old east European tradition.

Anthony Grenville’s leading article is very informative and highly entertaining. I was somewhat surprised that he omitted to state that Madagascar had been suggested by Hitler at one time as an appropriate destination for the Jewish people.

Yet one more thing: It concerns John Farago’s letter “Refugees and the schmatter business”. He mentions the family Bunst. It may be of interest to him that I used to be friendly with Mrs Ursula Bunst as she used to live in one of the flats in our block. She came from Berlin but told me her ex-husband came from Vienna. They were in the paper business and had lived in Argentina before coming to London. They had two sons, the older of whom sadly drowned as a young boy. The younger – I’m afraid I can’t recall his name – was married to a née Strauss and had two daughters, Jessica and Geraldine. Jessica often visited her grandmother who would then beg me to send Sarah (my daughter, the same age) to play. Ursula later moved to a large flat in Shenley Mansions in Canfield Gardens. She passed away many years ago. Her daughter-in-law used to drive a small car that looked like a basket. She could be seen on TV giving cookery demonstrations. Jessica married in 1982, moved to Scotland and got divorced.

*Margarete Stern, London NW3*

## REFUGEES AND THE SCHMATTER BUSINESS

Sir – In Sheffield I was friendly with the prominent Valance family who supplied markets in Derbyshire and Yorkshire with wholesale textiles.

Mr Valance, formerly Valenski, was a tiny Russian Jew who had escaped the Czar shortly before WW1. When the war broke out he joined the local Yorkshire regiment. When asked for his civilian occupation he told them he was a lifelong trained tailor, upon which he was assigned to the cookhouse. The regiment was posted to the Middle East and played an important part in Lord Allenby’s campaign against the Ottoman Turks. The general visited the regiment weekly, always stayed for lunch and took a great liking to Valenski’s suet pudding despite the prevailing heat. Before each visit an ordnance officer would telephone to say that Allenby would like the suet pudding for lunch. After the meal the general always had Valenski, hot and smelly, brought from the cookhouse to receive thanks and a glass of port, much to the

embarrassment of the officers mess.

When the advance reached Damascus, the Turks collapsed and the war neared its end. Allenby came for a last lunch and had the usual glass and chat with the cook. "Well Valenski, the good times will soon be over and we will all be going home. I will be retiring to Cheltenham with nothing to do. Lady Allenby is unfortunately hopeless with suet puddings. Do you think you could tell me the secret of your outstanding success?"

"Easy," said Valenski. "I always boil them in my underpants."

Every customer at Valances Sheffield Wholesalers knew this story by heart.

*Hans L Eirew, Manchester.*

### HARD TO COMPARE

Sir – My sister and I were invited by the University of Jerusalem to a conference on refugees in November.

In 1939 we were on *The SS St. Louis* to Cuba with valid visas but were not allowed to land. We were at sea for over five weeks to find a haven but no country was willing to take us. We were the only passengers from England, five joined from America and one from Palestine.

The Jerusalem conference likened our story to the present day situation. The interesting and moving gathering was reported in the *Daily Mail* and *Washington Post* which quoted myself – a 93 year old woman from Manchester – as saying that we cannot compare the present situation with the 1930s as back then you could only get a visa if you had a job or a guarantor. Few people were aware that a Kindertransport child needed a sponsor to put down £50 so it would not be a burden on the state, a fortune back then.

The constant worry about refugees has already given us Trump and Brexit.

*Gisela Feldman Manchester*

### AVID READER

Sir – With reference to Margarete Stern's letter in your December issue, I lived

in London from 1943-1951 at Marble Arch and often visited Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park. On many occasions I saw Prince Monolulu shouting "I've got a horse, I've got a horse." He was a black gentleman with an American Indian feather headdress and, yes, he was a bookie. He was a real character.

I am an avid reader of your journal, having left Vienna in April 1939 on the Kindertransport and reaching Liverpool Street Station via Hook of Holland. An English-Jewish taxi driver paid £50 to take care of me and just before the war broke out I was sent to a Jewish orphanage in Glasgow funded by the Gertrude Jacobsen Foundation.

In 1951 I went to the States and was later drafted during the Korean conflict. After being demobbed I went to Mexico City College and upon graduation had a number of managerial jobs with first the Gillette Co. and later Johnson & Johnson, staying some 28 years in Latin America. On account of the political situation in Venezuela we moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, a few years ago.

Congratulations on your incredible journal!

*Henry Herner, Florida*

### IN FAVOUR OF ERUVS

Sir – Peter Phillips (The Jewish Bubble, January 2017) is mistaken about the eruv. The eruv concept preceded the *shtetls* by a long way, going back to Talmudic times. My home town, Fürth, Bavaria, was no *shtetl* and had one for some centuries.

Opposition to an eruv comes in various forms: 'It makes me more Jewish when I don't want to be! The wires and the poles are almost invisible and will kill birds (no massacre of birds has been recorded!) Some rabbinic authorities and followers object on halachic points. The demand for an eruv comes long after the establishment of a general Jewish community. Once one is up, no one raises further objections and life goes on as it did before, and nothing more is heard about it. It is wonderful to see

so many buggies bring children to shul and people in wheelchairs likewise attending; that was not possible before the eruv. It makes the Shabbat more complete and enjoyable. Lastly, one can choose to use the facility or reject it.

Furthermore Peter Phillips confuses the issue of the Jewish school. Indeed

among the Charedi community, their schools may teach in Yiddish and cover the national curriculum minimally as the law requires. Otherwise, pupils from Jewish schools ultimately make their way to University, their Judaism often strengthened by attending a Jewish school and then making their way in the world at large.

*Bernd Koschland*

Sir – I see Peter Phillips has returned to one of his favourite pastimes of eruv and orthodox bashing, with a letter that amounts to unsubstantiated hyperbole.

As usual his assertions are rhetorical and contain no substance.

Eruvs do not recreate shtetls: they simply liberate observant families to enjoy a more complete Shabbat experience.

Eruvs do not cause any friction with non-Jewish Neighbours other than the ignorant or anti-Semitic amongst them. The Pinner eruv planning process passed with virtually no opposition whose points were insubstantial.

Not all Modern Jewish communities send their children to Jewish schools and those that go are well educated on being British, understand and promulgate British values and contribute significantly the economic and social welfare of this country.

My own modern orthodox, Shomer Shabbat, eruv engaged, wig wearing, kosher keeping children are good examples: one is an oncology nurse in a general hospital, one is a teacher of modern languages in a co-educational non faith based school, and the other is a chef. My family experience is typical of those in the modern orthodox community in which I live.

It is Mr Phillips' bubble that needs bursting: not ours.

*David Kaye, Pinner*

### GREAT DOCUMENTARIES

Sir – In the excellent documentary film about Vienna by Sebag Montefiore on BBC 4 on 22 December he several times pronounced the name of the anti-semitic mayor Lueger as Lüger. Orthographically 'ue' is used when there is no Umlaut available but I believe the name was actually Lueger and pronounced as such, possibly to avoid association with the German word 'lie' (tell an untruth). Sebag followed grammatical rules but came to the wrong conclusion.

By coincidence the following programme was about King Ludwig II's castles in Bavaria. One marvels again at the sheer logistics of having thought out, designed and given precise instructions for building them. I had not realised that the names Hohenschwangau and Neuschwanstein incorporated the word 'Schwan' because of his fascination with



The producer of BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* has written to thank the AJR and our members for all our help with their Holocaust Memorial programme, which was broadcast on 15 January. In case you missed it, it can be viewed on [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08bbqqk](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08bbqqk)

# ART NOTES

GLORIA TESSLER

**O**dreaming trees sunk in a swoon of sleep/What have ye seen in these mysterious places? The poem was written in 1909 by the Symbolist painter **Paul Nash**, one of Britain's best known official war artists of both world wars, now being shown in **Tate Britain's** largest exhibition of his work for a generation.

Nash's mystical imagination and sensitivity to nature led him to equate all life forms with spiritual identity. Broken trees represent human tragedy; they are the bones of fallen soldiers.

A symbolist painter who embraced surrealism and helped put together a major surrealist exhibition including such artists as Salvador Dali, Giacometti, Max Ernst and Joan Miro, Nash had a very detached, English style which distinguished him from the emotionalism of his European contemporaries. But his tightly constructed, geometry of trees huddled together, or his *Totes Meer* (Dead Sea) 1940, a "landscape" of broken aircraft under the light of a sickle moon, his metallic seas, his blending of dream and reality are more moving for his detached style.

Nash became an official war artist in 1917, and his enduring war metaphor is the ravaging of nature. He found it easier to depict broken trees or shot down aircraft as metaphors for humanity. For instance *The Shore* (1923), on loan from Leeds Art Gallery, resembles the long body of a fallen aircraft as it dissects the landscape.

Occasionally he strays from shorelines which emulate a fallen aircraft or a nocturnal landscape resembling bird shapes to deliver the "mudscape" of Flanders, or a platoon carrying the wounded at Passchendaele.

An itinerant painter, born in Southern England, living in Hampstead and then

in Oxford, between the wars he stayed for a while in Dymchurch in Kent, to recover from a breakdown. His *Rye Marshes*, painted in 1932, are rigid slices of land, dissected beneath equally rigid rectangular clouds. His *Battle of Germany* (1944), on loan alongside others from the Imperial War Museum, shows his surrealism at its most intense; there is colour, and the mushrooming shapes of bombs exploding, which resemble parachutes. *Landscape from a Dream* (1936) portrays a hawk staring at itself in the mirror unsure whether he or the image in the mirror is the true reality. Poignancy is added by a strip of land to its right which perfectly mirrors its hawk-shape.

One surprise at the exhibition was his 1937 *Moon Aviary*, a small rectangular sculpture made of found materials, egg crates, wood, stone and ivory which had

been missing, believed lost for 70 years. Some paintings are deceptive, for instance *Equivalents for the Megaliths* shows a pastoral scene with what look like bales of hay, one standing, one fallen – a metaphor for isolation, for being cut down in one's prime.

Nash was also fascinated by the Avebury prehistoric stone circle. His late 1930s painting *Circle of the Monoliths* was painted on the back of another work, *Two Serpents*, and both are ingeniously shown here for the first time.

Perhaps the standout work is *The Menin Road* (1919), commissioned by the Ministry of Information for a heroic hall of remembrance that was never built. The geometry of this painting encapsulates the artist's imagery – the

erect tree stumps, the menacing clouds, glassy water and the distant sense of a downed aircraft.

*Tate Britain, until 5 March*



Paul Nash *Battle of Germany*  
© Tate Britain



Paul Nash *Landscape from a Dream*  
© Tate Britain



Paul Nash *Totes Meer (Dead Sea)*  
© Tate Britain

## REVIEWS

### Good luck and judgement I ONLY WANTED TO LIVE; THE STRUGGLE OF A BOY TO SURVIVE THE HOLOCAUST

by Arie Tamir

Published by Arie Tamir, 2015;

translated from the Hebrew by Batya Jerenberg

**S**ome kind of morbid fascination, possibly even masochism, impelled me to download and read yet another Holocaust memoir. This one is a faithful member of its genre – not always well-written but a genuine and authentic account of living through that period and emerging more or less intact.

The author was a boy of seven living a comfortable life in Cracow when the Germans invaded. He and his parents and two sisters, as well as grandparents and various uncles, aunts and cousins, were part of a warm family with a rich social and cultural life. Arie's parents had met at university in Vienna and were perfectly at home in the German language and culture. His father was part owner of a wholesale textile business, supplying fabrics to many stores and factories in and around Cracow.

Initially the Jews of Cracow were not oppressed by the German invaders, and Arie's father was able to continue in his business, and even supply fabrics to the Germans. With the introduction of anti-Semitic laws and restrictions the business was nominally assigned to his non-Jewish partner. The family's ability to speak German helped protect them from the worst Nazi brutality, at least initially. For some time their neighbours were German military personnel, and a German woman even rented a room in their apartment. Arie writes about his friendship with a German boy, the son of a neighbour who was an officer in the Wehrmacht.

Eventually, however, all the Jews were obliged to move to the Cracow ghetto. Arie's family lived in relative comfort, and his description of Jewish children attending improvised schools and playing together makes it sound almost idyllic. But little by little their property and possessions were appropriated by the Germans, food supplies were restricted, and the deportations to concentration camps began.

Arie's father managed to stave off the family's deportation for some considerable time, during which young Arie witnessed many 'actions' in which Jews were rounded up and deported, often accompanied by sadistic brutality by the German soldiers and their eastern European henchmen. Arie describes how he and other children

### Annely Juda Fine Art

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

snuck out of the ghetto to steal and scrounge food outside, then smuggle it back into the ghetto. Gangs of street urchins were a common sight on the streets, so the Jewish children did not arouse undue suspicion.

Eventually, Arie escaped from the ghetto and was taken in by a non-Jewish Polish family, who treated him well, especially as his father had provided him with money. However, he was either discovered or betrayed and sent to the Plaszow forced labour camp, where he was reunited with his parents and older sister. His three-year-old younger sister had been handed to relatives who had emigration documents for South America, but instead were deported to an extermination camp and murdered.

It is amazing to read the details of young Arie's experiences in the camp, the way he was able to evade execution and even find paid work. Luck was obviously with him, but he was clearly an intelligent child with a strong sense of danger and the ability to arouse people's interest, even affection, including the occasional German soldier. He managed to survive Plaszow as well as several concentration camps. His account of the camps is both harrowing and instructive, and constitutes important evidence for the records.

Arie was the only member of his family to survive the camps. He was liberated by American troops and he and other Jewish youngsters roamed the Austrian countryside, demanding money and valuables from the local population as compensation. He then encountered emissaries from pre-state Israel and was persuaded to go there. He landed at Haifa, aged sixteen, just in time to participate in Israel's War of Independence. He subsequently joined a kibbutz, married and established a family of his own.

The book concludes with notes about the Jews of Cracow, aspects of Jewish community life under Nazi rule and various historical events concerning deportations, 'actions,' and resistance. It constitutes another important plank in the history of the Holocaust as experienced by someone whose eye-witness testimony is invaluable for dismissing the lies of those who seek to deny what happened.

Dorothea Weber

## The Long Road to Freedom

THE LIBERATION OF THE CAMPS:  
THE END OF THE HOLOCAUST  
AND ITS AFTERMATH

by Dan Stone

Seventy years after the war ended it is still almost impossible to think of the horrors and atrocities experienced in the Nazi death camps.

For those who did not live through it, it is easy to think that once the camps were liberated, life could eventually

return to normal for the victims who had suffered. But historian Dan Stone proves otherwise, using his impressive scholarship to focus on the survivors and the long, difficult and gruelling years that followed.

Some were the sole members of their families to remain alive. They had to contend with grief, guilt, exhaustion, loneliness and disease. Liberation freed them from Nazi rule but not from its effects and they suffered lifelong psychological scarring.

Stone takes us on a journey involving liberation by the Russians and western allies. Medical relief was the most urgent problem and efforts were aided by the Red Cross, Quakers and Jewish organisations. Tragically, not all of those who were alive when the camps were liberated lived; some were just too weak and died of the effects of starvation, tuberculosis and typhus.

Vast numbers had no homes left and remained in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps longer than could possibly have been foreseen, sometimes for years. Between 1945-48, some 250,000 – 330,000 Jews passed through such camps in the American and British zones of occupied Germany.

Rising from the ashes, people made the best of things even in DP camps, and formed committees, schools, sports clubs, theatre groups and newspapers. These were the self-styled "she'erit hapleitah", or saving remnant, the last survivors of a destroyed culture giving dignity to their struggle to cling to their Jewish identity.

Contrary to Nazi intentions, the Jewish DP camps in Germany had the highest birth rates in post-war Europe. Known as 'Messiah children' or maschiaschkinder, they represented Jewish salvation. Zionism flourished, hundreds of kibbutzim grew up and many members set up a new life in Palestine. Entry was difficult and some resorted to illegal means and were interned in camps in Cyprus. But very quickly after the State of Israel was established in 1948, the number of Jews in camps plummeted.

Dan Stone has tried supremely hard to convey both the sorrows and the joys of liberation and the resettlement difficulties for those whose homes and families were destroyed. The research is extensive, with over 50 pages of notes, bibliography and index, although sometimes it is too dry and the emotion is hidden in the detail. It would be good to know more about the people involved in the source material.

A very good overview is given of DP camps – which some readers may not know much about – and longer-term issues shaping the post war world and Cold War's start. The book was not nearly as difficult to read as I imagined and whets the appetite to know more about survivors' lives as time went on.

Janet Weston

## A reassuring end

THE ONE I WAS

by Eliza Graham

Lake Union Publishing 2015,

ISBN: 9781477829318

The book is written in the first person, alternating between two characters from two very different decades – Benjy Goldman, now Gault, a 92-year-old German who arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport and years later is now dying of cancer, and his palliative care nurse Rosamond, a nurse with a troubled background who wasn't even born when Benny arrived in England.

It quickly becomes apparent that there is a lot more to both their stories, including a historical thread that binds them together. As their stories unfold we discover that both of them are using an alias, and both of them are filled with guilt, for very different reasons. Through a remarkable series of coincidences, they achieve a mutual understanding which brings them both peace, albeit with very differing outcomes.

Their lives have come together mainly because of an old house – Fairfleet. With vivid descriptions of the rooms, the gardens, and the atmosphere, the author takes us through Fairfleet's journey as it stumbles from pre-war splendour to a debt-riddled, crumbling mess, only to rise again in the hands of a mysterious owner who has a compelling reason to rescue this particular house and all its memories.

Benny's story gives the reader lots of interesting, realistic background into life in Nazi Germany in 1939, as well as life in England both during and after WWII. Graham has done her research on both early time periods and so there is an authentic blending together of events that keeps the continuity of the storyline going nicely, and framed by the present time.

There's excellent attention to detail: Benny's benefactress Lady Dorner was an Air Transport Auxiliary in the war – moving aircraft to where they were needed for the war effort. There's a real feel for the pressures of the work – and the joy of flying a Spitfire. Similarly with the Kindertransport, the atmosphere in Nazi Germany comes off the page, but these are details and it's the people who matter. There are some characters you won't warm to, but you'll feel that you know every one of them – even the relatively minor ones – and you'll find yourself thinking about them after you've finished the book.

This is not a book for academics. There are massive holes in the stories and clear faults in some of the reasoning. But it's an easy book to read and very thought provoking on many ways.

I also particularly liked its treatment of the process of dying. There was

continued on page 10

## SAVE THE DATES

## JOIN US THIS YEAR IN LIVERPOOL

Sunday 21st May – Thursday  
25th May 2017

Accompanied travel by train from London to Liverpool, plus four nights' accommodation in Liverpool. We will also help arrange travel from other parts of England to Liverpool.

Highlights of this trip will include The Albert Dock and the museums of Liverpool based there; Southport with a Fish & Chip lunch; Port Sunlight; Lady Lever Art Gallery; a ferry across The Mersey; The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour; Speke Hall Tudor House; Princes Road Synagogue and much more.

All meals and travel will be included.  
Places are limited.

Please call Susan Harrod on  
020 8385 3070 for full information and  
booking forms or email  
susan@ajr.org.uk

EASTBOURNE  
LANSDOWNE HOTEL

Sunday 11th June to Sunday  
18th June 2017

Carol Rossen will be among those  
accompanying the trip.

Make new friends and  
meet up with old friends

## AJR ANNUAL LUNCH

Sunday 10th September 2017

Holiday Inn, Borehamwood  
Further details to follow



## AJR FILM CLUB

Please join us at our next Film Club.

Our film showing will be at  
Sha'arei Tsedek North London Reform  
Synagogue, 120 Oakleigh Road North,  
Whetstone N20 9EZ  
on **Monday 13 February 2017**  
at **12.30pm**

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

A DOUBLE BILL OF VIEWING

## CHURCHILL'S GERMAN ARMY

This is the unknown story of the Germans who fought for Britain. Now, after seventy years, a handful of brave men and women have decided to break their silence. All volunteered to give up their family names and fight the Nazis on the soil that was once their home against the people who were once their neighbours. They were labelled suicide soldiers but they would become Churchill's German Army.

## ALICE HERZ-SOMMER

*Everything is a Present*

Until 106 Alice lived alone in her flat and practiced the piano for two and a half hours every day. She tells her incredible story of survival and forgiveness in this uplifting documentary.

£7.00 per person

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

Please call Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070  
or email susan@ajr.org.uk

## AJR GROUPS EVENT

MONDAY 27th FEBRUARY 2017

Victoria & Albert Museum Archives  
Jewish Emigre designers' archives  
project at the V&A



We have been invited by the V&A Archives to help them improve the visibility of the archives of 30 Jewish émigré designers held by the V&A's Archive of Art and Design – see article to the left of this advert.

The visit will take place at the V&A's building in West Kensington, Blythe House, which is where the collections of the Archive of Art and Design are stored. The visit will last approximately 2 hours, followed by refreshments. Staff from the Archives will talk about the project itself, and how they are delivering catalogues, images and articles online.

We will arrange travel by minibus, arriving at 10.30am and leaving by 12.30pm. We will then have lunch in a local restaurant before returning home.

Places are limited due to space. For details and booking please contact Susan Harrod on susan@ajr.org.uk or 020 8385 3070

## Reviews continued from pg 9

something very reassuring about the honest and empathetic description of palliative care during Benny's final weeks – something that is often glossed over in literature. In a genre where so often we inevitably read tales of mass murder and horrific decline, it is strangely uplifting to read a frank account of someone being helped to end a long and full life with a 'good' death.

Jo Briggs

## Lots of letters

IF ONLY I COULD HAVE NEWS FROM YOU

by Irene Black

Goldenford Publishers Ltd, 2016

Paperback, £11.99,

ISBN 978-0-9559415-8-0

The author and her sister have translated their parents' letters and diary entries into English, which is why the book is subtitled: "Two refugees of the Nazi era share their extraordinary lives through letters and documents." However, to fellow-ex-refugees like me (and probably most

of the readers of this journal) their lives do not seem all that "extraordinary", but people who are totally ignorant of the problems encountered by continental refugees in the late 1930s may find it interesting.

The author's father Hans Behrendt was university-trained as an engineer and was managing his father's iron foundry in Pasewalk, a small town in North-East Pomerania, when it was closed by the Nazis in 1935, and subsequently demolished. Hans then became Head Teacher and then Headmaster of a new British-owned school in Berlin for Jewish industrial trainees, part of the Organisation for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT). The school was intended to prepare boys aged 15 – 17 years for emigration.

Meanwhile Hans had become friendly with a non-Jewish woman, Klara Noack, who worked in the Imperial Patent Office in Berlin. Aware of the impending Nuremberg Laws Hans and Klara got married in June 1935, before the legislation prohibiting their relationship became law. The

newspaper of the SS, "Das Schwarze Corps", condemned the marriage, accusing Klara of "Rassenschande" (racial defilement). The following December their first child (the author's older sister) was born.

Kristallnacht prompted Hans to move his school out of Germany, and 106 boys and six staff with wives and children (including the author's family) departed for England on what was probably the last train to Holland.

On arrival in England the boys and their teachers were accommodated in the Kitchener Camp in Sandwich (Kent), while the wives were taken to Leeds to re-establish the ORT School. For several months Hans and Klara wrote to each other practically every day.

The letters and diary entries translated in the book, together with later writings and interviews, describe the family's fate. However, in my opinion the authors should have done more editing – the heavy detail is rather repetitive and boring to people outside the family.

Fritz Lustig

**LOOKING FOR:**

The AJR regularly receives messages from our members and other people looking for help in particular subjects. Here are some of the most recent requests – please get in touch directly with the person concerned if you think you can help.

**St. Pölten Jewry**

Edward Holub would dearly like to get in touch with some of the St. Pölten Jewry, who may have known his father or remember his barmitzvah on 13 September 1938, which he believes to be Nieder Austria's last until recent times. He has a very interesting letter written by his father which describes how SA Nazis surrounded the synagogue during the ceremony, but how the bomb that they had planted in the temple had been mistimed, meaning that all the Jews had already left and were at least 500 yards away when the explosion occurred.

[holubfilm@gmail.com](mailto:holubfilm@gmail.com)

**David & Tibor Skrek**

Matus Zelieska from Slovakia is seeking any information about his grandfather's childhood friend Tibor Skrek (born 1935) and his older brother David (1923) from the Slovak village Velke Vozokany. Matus is writing a book about his grandfather Stefan Menhert who suffered a stroke nine years ago. Apparently despite his body being feeble, Stefan's memory is in order and he cannot forget his Jewish friend.

[matus.zelieska@gmail.com](mailto:matus.zelieska@gmail.com)

**Transfer & visa information**

Anita Grosz is seeking information about what happened to the £50 immigration deposits or guarantee s that were paid to British Government for Kindertransport children. She is researching what happened to the funds at the end of the war; any records of discussions or transfers of these funds; was any repaid to the individuals; who benefitted from these monies? Are documents available in any of the existing archives? Do any individuals have relevant records? Also, as the Kinder were on transient visas, what discussions took place that allowed them to naturalize after the war? Are there any documents supporting this?

[anita@patrol.i-way.co.uk](mailto:anita@patrol.i-way.co.uk)

**Erich Herbert Salinger**

Alexander Watson is trying to trace members of the families of his grandparents, Ernst Hailbronner and Erika Sternberg, who found refuge in Great Britain from Nazi persecution in 1939. He is looking for information about Erich Herbert Salinger and his descendants. Salinger was born on 25/6/1885 in Berlin and died in 1959 in England. It is known from the *Evening Gazette* of 25/6/1947 that at the time of being granted British nationality he was living at 75 Prince's Court, Queensway, London W2. His wife, Grete Ettliger, is believed to have died at a great age in 1996.

[a.watson.genas@gmail.com](mailto:a.watson.genas@gmail.com)

**Robert (Emmanuel) Herrmann**

Hans Soetaert is a researcher from Belgium working on a part of the Czechoslovak Holocaust. He would love to hear from any relatives of a lawyer from Brno (Czechoslovakia) named Robert (Emanuel) Herrmann (28/02/1899-03/07/1995) who apparently emigrated to England.

[hanssoetaert@hotmail.com](mailto:hanssoetaert@hotmail.com)

*If you would like to place a search in a future issue of the AJR Journal then please email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk), including the words SEARCH REQUEST in the title of your email.*

**KT LUNCH**

**Wednesday 8th February 2017  
At Alyth Gardens Synagogue  
12.30pm**

**Lunch followed by Film Showing:  
The Sturgeon Queen**

Four generations of a Jewish immigrant family create Russ and Daughters, a Lower East Side lox and herring emporium that survives and thrives. Produced to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the store, this documentary features an extensive interview with two of the original daughters for whom the store was named, now 100 and 92 years old.

*Booking is essential  
for catering purposes*

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

**£7.00 per person**

**Possible Trip to Israel**

Carol Rossen would like to know if you are interested in a trip to Israel in the autumn

If you are interested in this trip, please let Lorna Moss know at Head Office on 020 8385 3070

**ONLINE ARCHIVES**

AJR members seeking to research their history and property may be interested in two online resources.

The International Tracing Service has published its complete inventory on the internet. The inventory comprise some 30 million documents on National Socialist persecution and forced labour as well as the fates of the survivors. Former victims of Nazism and their families can use it to find information regarding their incarceration, forced labour and post-war Allied assistance. The archive can be viewed on <https://www.its-arolsen.org/en/archives/overview-of-the-archival-holdings/general-inventory/>.

Meanwhile the World Jewish Restitution Organization has published some very helpful guidance for Holocaust survivors and their families seeking to reclaim property in Warsaw. It includes a myriad of information and resources, including a searchable property database. [www.wjro.org.il](http://www.wjro.org.il).

**FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Klein, Julius**, born Düsseldorf 1925, died London 27 Dec 2016. Past warden of Portsmouth & Southsea Hebrew Congregation. A very private man. Mourned by his nephew Robert and niece Marion.

**Marcelle and Jeff Black** are delighted to announce the birth of their first grandchild, Leo Henry Solomon on 7th December 2016, a son for Jacqueline and Rich Luck.

**JO SOVIN  
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Do you need help with de-cluttering, preparing for downsizing and moving, or finding organising and storage solutions?

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*Impeccable references provided*



### **BRIGHTON & HOVE Local Celebs**

Godfrey Gould talked about well-known Jewish personalities who were born or lived in Brighton. They include David Lionel Goldsmith Sullivan, engineer, architect and MP, and his society daughters. Other names were Eugene Zoltan, who famously joined the French Resistance in WWII, and former Mayors Lewis Cohen and Arthur Marks. Some Brighton buses bear the names of former respected Jewish citizens.

*Ceska Abrahams*

### **CAMBRIDGE Arab Shock**

We showed a short film about the mass exodus of Jews from Arab countries and Iran in the 20th century – a real eye opener for most of our members. We also discussed recent news, including the rare applause in the Commons to honour Holocaust survivor Kitty Hart-Moxon on her 90th birthday. We ended with doughnuts.

*Eva Stellman*

### **CHESHIRE Convivial Time**

Great lunch meeting at the home of Judith & Ben Brettler, discussing topics ranging from Donald Trump to the best place to buy a cashmere jumper!

*Wendy Bott*

### **DIDSBURY Meet Me On St Louis**

Our discussion focused on a recent trip sisters Gisela Feldman and Sonja Sternberg had made to Israel as guests at a conference on refugees. They contributed as two of the passengers on the SS St Louis in 1939. We then discussed why some survivors wish to visit their place of birth and some won't – a most interesting conversation that continued even on the journeys home.

*Wendy Bott*

### **EALING & WEMBLEY Great Year End**

Our most enjoyable joint Chanukah party on 6 December featured a stimulating quiz on landmarks, US Presidents and food, followed by a really delicious tea.

*Leslie Sommer*

### **EDINBURGH Chanukah Lunch**

Many thanks to Vivian Andersen who hosted our lovely afternoon at her home. We were delighted to welcome a new member along who contributed to our

lively discussion on Jewish Food, followed by a superb tea to finish our delightful meeting.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### **GLASGOW Deli Delights**

Over 20 people attended our end of year gathering at Mark's Deli where salt beef & latkes were just a few of the delicacies on offer. It was a lovely social occasion and a great way to finish off 2016.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### **ILFORD In Great Voice**

Our Chanukah party was a cheerful event with Nick Dobson and his Chapel End Players entertaining us from various operettas. The singers were in good voice and we all had a very happy morning helped along by the usual seasonal goodies. Lovely end to the year!

*Meta Roseneil*

### **KENT Fish & Chips**

Our last meet of the year included lots of chat and catching up, plus a quiz on US presidents and typical British grub – followed by a fish & chips lunch.

*Esther Rinkoff*

### **KINGSTON & SURREY Dreidels For All**

Thanks to Susan Zisman for hosting our Chanukah tea – a convivial afternoon of chatter & delicious food, on a table beautifully decorated with chocolate coins and dreidels.

*June Wertheim*

### **CHANUKAH LUNCH A Highlight Of The Year**

Over 100 people joined us at Alyth for the AJR-KT Annual Chanukah Lunch, described by AJR CEO Michael Newman in his welcome speech as one of the highlights of the year.

Rev Bernd Koschland then talked about the miracle of the oil – a perfect introduction to a delicious lunch with oily foods, accompanied by a very clever magician. This was followed by presentations to the volunteers who do such good work helping out at the various AJR Groups.

The final entertainment of the day was a selection of opera and musical songs performed by Bronwen Stephens. Everyone went home with a lovely Chanukah gift – a notebook and pen emblazoned with the new AJR logo.

*David Lang*

### **LEEDS Out With A Bang**

Feet tapped, hands clapped and some people even danced to the well known band 'Hot Rhythm and Dynamite', who entertained us with a variety of instruments including a skiffle board, violin and ukulele. Fabulous singing by

Alan Harris and delicious tea and latkes topped off a great afternoon.

*Wendy Bott*

### **LIVERPOOL Klezmer Delight**

The wonderful tones of Eastern European Klezmer music filled the room as our Liverpool members were treated to entertainment from 'The Manchester Klezmer Collective'. It was a delight completed by a fabulous afternoon tea.

*Wendy Bott*

### **MANCHESTER Sticky Notes**

Our very early Chanukah party went wonderfully well as members tapped their feet and danced to the amazing Klezmer band 'Hard Times Kapelye' led by Dr Richard Fay. Afternoon tea followed with delicious but very sticky jam doughnuts.

*Wendy Bott*

### **NEWCASTLE Great Crowd**

A big turnout for our Chanukah lunch, with entertainment provided by the Klein Klezmer Band from Edinburgh. Brenda's lunch was superb and we were delighted to have our Newcastle volunteers present.

*Agnes Isaacs*

### **OUTING TO NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY**

An enthusiastic crowd from London and the Home Counties assembled on 12 December to follow Rachel Kosky on her tour of Your Loyal Subjects. Rachel was full of anecdotes on David Ricardo, Disraeli, Harriet Cohen and Amy Winehouse, and we learned a lot about social and Jewish history. We completed our great day out with a delicious lunch at St Martin's Crypt.

*Meta Roseneil*

### **PINNER The Plonkers**

I was told that 'The Plonkers' chose their name to manage expectations of their musical abilities. But the three plucked 16 strings fabulously between them, and added fine voices which got us foot-tapping and singing. A very enjoyable pre-Chanukah celebration, with extra special nosh!

*Henri Obstfeld*

### **WESSEX Picture**

Wessex members were privileged to hear a very interesting talk by Rabbi Jesner, followed by a picture quiz (congratulations Susy Ellis for winning the tie-break) and a traditional Chanukah tea.

*Kathryn Prevezer*

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### WESTCLIFF Poignant End



Our final meeting of the year included a lovely rendition of ma'atzor by Gyula Vari, a former singer from the Budapest Opera House. Leslie then read a beautiful piece on antisemitism and the need to teach children to love not hate. Finally Otto Deutsch, our long standing chairman, gave a warm welcome to newcomer Angela.

Very sadly since this report Otto has passed away. He was our devoted Chairman of 18 years, rarely missing a meeting.

He always said we were his family, since his had been so cruelly taken, an event he would never ever forget. G-d bless his dear soul, he will be sorely missed.

*Esther Rinkoff*

## JANUARY GROUP EVENTS

<b>Book Club</b>	1st February	Discussion and Tea
<b>Iford</b>	1st February	Harvey Bratt of UJIA
<b>Pinner</b>	2nd February	Dr John Matline – 'American Jewish Gangsters'
<b>Ealing</b>	7th February	Frances Long – 'The History of Opera'
<b>Bradford</b>	7th February	Social get-together!
<b>Didsbury</b>	8th February	Social get-together
<b>Bromley CF</b>	9th February	David Barnett 'The story of Joseph Nathan'
<b>Cambridge</b>	9th February	'Major Ginsburg: tales of a post-war Jewish Army Chaplain' – Dr Rob Ginsburg
<b>Glasgow CF</b>	19th February	An afternoon with Rabbi Wittenberg
<b>Hull</b>	12th February	Social get-together
<b>Kensington</b>	13th February	Social get-together at Ruth Kraus
<b>Essex (Westcliff)</b>	14th February	Dean Lloyd-Graham – AJR Social Worker
<b>Radlett</b>	15th February	Alf Kieles Winter Jazz
<b>Welwyn Garden City</b>	16th February	Social get-together
<b>Edinburgh</b>	16th February	Social get-together
<b>Kingston/Surrey</b>	16th February	Colin Davey – Stories of the Law
<b>Brighton</b>	20th February	David Barnett – The Story of Joseph Nathan
<b>Edgware</b>	21st February	Police Officer Diane Trimmer – 'How to avoid being scammed or fall victim to crime'
<b>Birmingham</b>	22nd February	Concert and Lunch
<b>Wembley</b>	22nd February	Hedy Orchudsch – 'A life changing incident'
<b>North London</b>	23rd February	Colin Davey – 'Stories of the Law'
<b>Glasgow Book Club</b>	23rd February	Social and discussion
<b>North West London</b>	28th February	Tamir Oren – 'Stand With Us'
<b>Book Club</b>	1st March	Discussion and tea
<b>Iford</b>	1st March	Kathryn Prevezer and Colin Davey – 'A Virtual Tour of Jewish Soho'
<b>Pinner</b>	2nd March	Please bring along a possession that has a story behind and tell us the story

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**OBITUARIES****Dr Arnold Paucker OBE**

**Born 6 January 1921, died 13 October 2016**

With the death of Arnold Paucker at the age of 95, the generation of German-Jewish émigrés who played such a significant role in British intellectual life suffered a further sad diminution. He was a pioneer of research on – and international dissemination of – German-Jewish history, largely thanks to his almost 50 years' association with the Leo Baeck Institute.

Arno (as he then was) was eldest son of a comfortably-off family in Berlin-Charlottenburg. His father Wilhelm owned a leather goods business, his mother Minna (née Wolf) had inherited a tobacco firm. His early political commitments interrupted his education at the Kaiser-Friedrich-Realschule. At the end of the Weimar Republic he joined the Iron Front, a militia for defending the democratic state against totalitarian onslaughts; when this was banned by the Nazis he joined the Zionist-Socialist Werkleute and the illegal Young Communists. This dangerous life induced his parents to send him abroad: he was enrolled in the 'progressive' Ben Shemen establishment in Palestine, whose alumni include the later president of Israel, Shimon Peres.

The experience did not suit Arno. The programme was designed to train pioneers with practical skills. Arno's ambitions, then as later, were academic. His application to attend a school in Britain was rejected. Instead he joined the British Army, serving from

1941 to 1946. He took part in the liberation of Italy, an odyssey that culminated in a happy rendezvous with Italian partisans in Bologna. 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive', he later reminisced. Following his demobilisation he took a course at the University of Florence, where he met and later married an English art student, Pauline Pond. They moved to England and Arno became a British citizen, which gave him great satisfaction and offered the opportunity to resume his education. He graduated from the University of Birmingham with First Class Honours in German, and from the University of Nottingham with a thesis on Western Yiddish versions of German popular literature.

He was now a scholar, but not yet a historian. He owed this transformation to his chance appointment in 1959 as director of the London Leo Baeck Institute, under the wing of its then chairman, the Prague-born writer Robert Weltsch. On Weltsch's retirement in 1970 Arnold took over editorship of the Institute's Year Book, a position he held until 1992. He changed it from a compendium of interesting reminiscences into a scholarly journal of international standing, now published by Oxford University Press. He also helped organise the Institute's international conferences and co-edit the symposium volumes that resulted. Many have become indispensable works, eg *Entscheidungsjahr 1932, Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution* and *Jews in the Weimar Republic*. He widened the agenda of German-Jewish studies, working in close collaboration with mainly younger colleagues.

He also revised the public's perceptions of the Jewish community's anti-Nazi activities, whether before 1933 through the activities of the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, or after 1933 in the form of active resistance. One need only mention his monograph *Der jüdische Abwehrkampf gegen Antisemitismus und Nationalsozialismus in den letzten Jahren der Weimarer Republik* and his numerous articles and lectures on Jewish resistance to realise his impact on these long neglected – and even denied – topics.

A survey of his writings and of the conferences with which he was associated reveal much about Arnold as a human being. He was an unrepentant child of the Enlightenment. He occupied, as his colleague and friend Reinhard Rürup put it, an 'old-fashioned Progressive position, which remains indispensable'.



**Peter Pulzer**

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## OBITUARIES

**Pat McCubbin**

**Born Bremen 3 April 1921,  
died Oxford 10 May 2016**

As a young girl growing up in Weimar Germany, Inge Adele Patricia McCubbin (née Rosenberg), saw close up how a country can slide into fascism. At school in Berlin, she and her predominantly Jewish classmates had to run past a portrait of Hitler, saluting it as they went by. Travelling home on a bus from a music lesson, nine-year old Pat was so terrified when she saw an SS officer get on that she got off a few stops early and walked the rest of the way. On the day of Hitler's election victory in 1933, Pat counted the results on the radio. It was a seismic moment for Germany and her family.



Pat's parents, Albert and Käthe Rosenberg, had already separated. Full of foreboding about the Nazis, her mother left Germany for Palestine in 1933, taking 12-year-old Pat and her grandmother with her. Pat's father, a British citizen, had also escaped Germany. A metallurgist, he worked in munitions in Oxford during the war and afterwards ran a hotel in Knaresborough, Yorkshire.

Pat's strong convictions, her sense of justice, her fear of war and the horrors and misery it unleashes, her sympathy for the plight of refugees, and her distrust of manipulative politicians came from those formative years. Her strength of will and soft centre also emerged. She was the most warm-hearted and hospitable person you could ever wish to meet, bubbling with energy and humour – a real *mensch*.

After a comfortable middle-class life in Germany, Palestine under the British mandate was quite a culture shock. Pat's schooling effectively ended in her mid-teens when she helped her mother run a boarding house in Tel Aviv. Pat and her best friend Käthe then joined the British Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), serving in Cairo. There Pat met Glasgow-born Lieutenant Hugh McCubbin. Romance blossomed by the Nile. They were married in 1946 and the wedding reception was held at her father's hotel.

Hugh came from a large family based around Glasgow. The couple lived first in Scotland (Auchinloch), then London, then Leicester. Käthe also came to live in England, initially working as a matron at Carmel College in Oxfordshire.

Norman was born in 1948, Richard in 1952, and Stephen in 1955. In 1958 the family moved to Kenya when Hugh became finance director of the Kenya Farmers' Association. In 1966 Hugh joined the UN World Food Programme in Lesotho.

With the boys all at boarding school in the UK, Pat frequently came back for their holidays. They would stay with Käthe, who was now living in Swiss Cottage. Many of Käthe's friends were fellow refugees from Germany and Pat felt very at home there. The family remembers fondly the Finchley Road, the Dorice and Cosmo restaurants, the 'Toys, Toys, Toys' shop and John Barnes.

Hugh was posted to Taiwan in 1969, but died suddenly, in October 1970, aged 60. Pat bore this tragedy with great fortitude and set her heart on rebuilding her family's life. She moved to Oxford, where Richard and Norman were at university, and volunteered for over 20 years in the OXFAM shop in Summertown.

Until her stroke in early 2016, Pat enjoyed exceptionally good health, was mentally razor sharp (a dab hand at crosswords and jigsaw puzzles) and interested in sport (tennis, cricket, golf), politics, family and friends. She was celebrated for her hospitality, particularly her apple cakes. A much-loved mother and grandmother to her own family, and to an extended family of relatives and friends, she is sorely missed.

**Norman, Richard and Stephen McCubbin**

**Colin and Alice Anson**

**Colin Anson, born Berlin 13 February 1922, died London 27 June 2016  
Alice Anson, born Vienna 22 September 1924, died London 16 June 2016**

Colin and Alice met in London just after the Second World War. Colin – born as Claus Ascher – came to England via the *Kindertransport* in 1939. Alice was the daughter of a Viennese banker, who had sent her unaccompanied to England in 1938.

Alice joined the WAAF in 1943 where she played a vital role studying aerial photographs of enemy installations. Meanwhile Colin, who served in the Pioneer Corps and the Commandos, suffered life threatening injuries during a dive bombing attack in Italy before becoming a sergeant with the Field Security Service.

The couple married in 1951 and while Alice pursued a career as a society photographer, Colin initially began selling Encyclopaedia Britannica before moving into the travel industry. Once children came along Alice managed a laundrette and helped with various charities over 50 years.

In his early 50s Colin became interested in gliding, eventually becoming the president of the London Gliding Club. Alice supported him in this as she did in everything, selling gliding merchandise, managing the membership and making teas.

Alice and Colin died just days apart, leaving children Barbara, Diana and Edward.

**Henry Heinz Chary**

**Born Vienna April 9, 1922, died California October 21, 2016**

Son of Leo Chary and Grete Chary, 16 year old Henry arrived via the *Kindertransport* in 1938. In spring 1939, sister Lilly joined him, but their parents and most of their extended family eventually perished in Auschwitz.

When WWII broke out, Henry was classed as an enemy alien and interned outside Liverpool, before being shipped on the *SS Ettrick* to camps in Canada. Though food and facilities were adequate, labour was hard and the camp administration was very strict. Fortunately the British government realized its mistake and started releasing the internees, and in April 1942 Henry returned to Liverpool. In November 1943 he voluntarily enlisted in the British Army and was assigned to the Royal Army Service Corps as a dispatch rider.

That winter Henry met Erika Magda Weiner, a fellow *Kindertransportee* from Vienna, at a piano recital in London. As he walked her home the air raid siren went off, and they had to stay in a bomb shelter till 3am, where they fell in love.

Shortly after D-Day, Henry landed in Normandy. His unit supported the 21st Army Group headquarters under Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery. During the Battle of the Bulge, Henry was stationed in the town of Aalst, Belgium, from where he transported secret documents by motorcycle to and from Lille.

After the war, Henry and Erika married on 3 November 1945, in a civil ceremony in Hampstead. As a married serviceman, Henry received an extra £2.10 in his weekly pay. They liked to joke that: "She married him for his money." They built a house in Radlett. Henry stayed in the army until 1947, stationed in Germany where his work involved de-nazification and political assessment of the emerging German administration. In one incident they discovered a secretary was an ex-guard from the Ravensbrück concentration camp, who was promptly arrested.

Henry was awarded the British medals, 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, and War Medal 1939-45. In 2007 the French government honored Henry for his contribution to the liberation of France.

In 1966 they emigrated to southern California where Henry worked as an aircraft engineer and inventor at the AiResearch Company. They built their house in Rancho Palos Verdes and Erika – a prominent piano teacher – established the International Young Artists Peninsula Music Festival. The 30th and final festival was held in 2006 and Erika passed away in 2012 (*AJR Journal*, Vol. 12, 2012).

Henry was a modest, kind, and generous gentleman. He was very skillful with his hands, and loved spending time on his work bench. He built a harpischord from scratch, and fashioned many useful and artistic metal objects. He is greatly missed by all his family and friends.

**Robin Chiang**



## LETTER FROM ISRAEL

Dorothea Shefer-Vanson

### Uses and Abuses of Facebook

For the last few years I have been participating in the Facebook experience and find that it is taking over my life to an ever-increasing extent. As well as sending and receiving notifications about events of varying importance in my own and other people's lives, I also belong to several groups of people who share areas of common interest.

I must admit that part of this activity derives from idle curiosity about the lives of others, and part from the purely commercial self-interest associated with seeking a wider audience for my books, my blog, and my writing in general. Thus, for example, I belong to the group known as Review Seekers, where (mainly self-published) authors try to get readers to write reviews and post them on Amazon. This helps to generate interest, and greater interest means more sales. There are other groups devoted to writers and translators, and being a member of these gives one an insight into the trials and tribulations of those very special populations.

After the vote in the Brexit referendum a new group was created, RIFT (REMAIN IN FRANCE TOGETHER), and through its highly articulate and well-informed members I get to learn what's

going on in the sphere surrounding this very contentious issue. Of course, there's a fair amount of Theresa May-bashing, not to mention the insults and scorn directed at other members of her cabinet, but it all seems to be in line with the good old British tradition of laughing at adversity and mocking your enemies. The impending departure of the UK from the EU has caused many British people, and expats living abroad in particular, to regard that segment of the population that voted to leave with a hostility that seems to be reciprocated by those in the opposing camp.

Among the more significant groups for me is the one known as YEKKES, a forum for individuals who originated, or whose parents originated, from Germany and central Europe. In some cases people seek information about relatives, share knowledge about their forebears or places of origin, or ask for help in deciphering ancient handwritten documents. From the comments posted on this site I gather that help is often forthcoming. Another similar group is JEWS, JEKKES ENGAGED WORLDWIDE IN SOCIAL NETWORKING, run by the ever-energetic Vera Meyer from Boston. And of course, there's also HOPPE HOPPE

REITER, a group of descendants of Yekkes living in Israel.

Then there is the CHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS, which conducts a lively discussion about issues concerning these individuals and their families. This group is not limited to individuals from any one specific country or area, so its members are able to address any of the various concerns that are peculiar to this group.

But for me, the best discovery was finding BRITS LIVING IN ISRAEL. Though I've been living in Israel for most of my adult life, I still feel 'British through and through,' and there are some aspects of British life that I find difficult to relinquish. It's good to know that I'm not alone in this. And so, to my great joy, I gained the information that there is a shop in Tel Aviv where it is possible to buy McVities Digestive biscuits, and even Hob-Nobs. It was not long after gaining this information that I braved the elements (a bit of rain in Israel brings traffic to a virtual standstill) and ventured to the address I had been given. My heart leaped with joy when I saw the array of McVities biscuits on the shelf of the veritable Aladdin's Cave of delicacies that the shop constituted.

This may mean that I won't be going back to England periodically to stock up on biscuits, as I have been doing in the past. It will certainly make my suitcase lighter on the return journey. Still, as long as there's no M&S in Israel, my journey will still be worthwhile.

### Letters continued from pg 7

the swan in Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*. The story is told of the time that in the opera *Lohengrin* was supposed to sit in a boat pulled by a swan. The stagehands pulled the rope too soon whereupon the singer whispered into the wings 'when does the next swan leave?'

*Rudi Leavor, Bradford*

Sir – I consider Mr Frank Bright, whose letter 'Leopards and Spots' you published (January 2017), to be a good friend although I have not actually had the pleasure of meeting him personally.

Mr Bright writes that he does not extend the hand of friendship to anti-Semites still to be found in Germany,

in view of his past, which is perfectly understandable. However there is another side to this coin.

I have for the past 29 years attended a remembrance ceremony at the *Mahnmal* (monument) in the city of my birth, Wesel am Rhein in North Rhine-Westphalia, where I have spoken (in German) to numerous schoolchildren, students and adults there and in other local towns.

This year I was made an Ehrenbürger (Honorary Citizen). The honour is the highest the city can bestow and was given me for the remembrance of the Holocaust and for extending my hand in friendship.

At the ceremony I was invited to tour the northern part of the Black Forest, where I spoke at six schools, two churches and various assemblies of adults. An uncle of mine had been the local doctor and spa physician.

I am now 90 years of age and still feel it my duty as the last Jewish male survivor of Wesel to represent the former community with much local support and the help of the local press.

No, Nazis have not disappeared in Germany, or here for that matter, and we must all do what we can to fight this scourge. Writing letters to the Editor of the AJR is the easy option...

*Ernest Kolman, Middlesex*

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