



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

1967 and All That



Ah, the summer of love! Can it really be fifty years ago that most of the western world broke out into long hair and flower power, underground rock music and images of psychedelia, happenings and love-ins? For those of us who were young at the time, it appeared as the moment when the social conventions that had governed the gently but firmly regimented society of post-war Britain gave way to a new spirit of individualism and experimentation; revolt and non-conformity became the new norms of behaviour. The counter-culture reigned supreme amongst the young; the old orthodoxies never regained their former sway, despite the backlash of the 1980s.

The spirit of youthful revolt had been gathering strength at least since the later 1950s. The humiliating failure of the British government's military intervention on the Suez Canal in 1956 undermined the authority of the ruling élites; this was further weakened by the Profumo scandal (1963) and the wave of satire, epitomised by BBC TV's *That Was the Week That Was*, directed at a political establishment that appeared increasingly ineffectual and out of touch. The demonstrations sparked off by Suez led on to the public protests organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. CND's annual Aldermaston Marches brought together thousands of high-minded young people clad in duffle coats in a spirit of non-violent opposition to 'the Bomb', the military-industrial

complex and capitalism itself. In America, writers of the Beat Generation like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg rejected the materialism and suburban conformity of the 1950s in favour of eastern mysticism and a new hedonism; that gave rise to the beatniks of the late 1950s, 'cool' hipsters sometimes seen as forerunners of the hippies of the 1960s. The icon of this generation of rebels without a cause was James Dean, star of the 1955 film of that name.

But the beatniks, unlike the hippies, were a serious bunch who espoused high culture. Their preference was for art films and modern jazz, art forms accessible only to an intellectual élite. The hippies on the other

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PACKED AUTUMN

After an extremely busy September, during which we held our annual members' lunch and our quarterly all-staff meeting as well as taking time off for the Yamim Noraim, the AJR team is looking ahead to an equally busy winter. Highlights will include a November trip to Israel, outings on 19 October and 22 November, as well as our annual Chanukah Party on 14 December at Alyth Gardens Synagogue.

One of the key updates at our staff meeting was that the number of Homecare hours that we are delivering this year is 40% higher than in 2016. This is largely due to increased funding from the Claims Conference to support this increasingly important area of our services.

We hope you enjoy reading the October issue and wish you Chag Sameach for Succoth and Simchat Torah (please note that the AJR office will be closed over the chagim).

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1967 and All That cont.

hand embraced rock and roll, the new form of popular music that had emerged in the mid-1950s and then swept across the youth of the western world. While the Beats were lost in adulation of Charlie Parker and Thelonius Monk, the teenage generation that followed them had grown up with Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry. The most famous rock group of the 1960s was of course the Beatles, whose first record, 'Love Me Do', was issued in autumn 1962; they became a nationwide sensation in Britain in 1963 and then a worldwide phenomenon on their American tour of 1964. With their hit record 'All You Need Is Love', somewhat incongruously opening to the strains of 'La Marseillaise', the Beatles provided one anthem of the summer of love. In May 1967, the release of their album Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band marked a turning point in the history of popular music.

The epicentre of the summer of love was the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, where the hippies congregated and where the hippie movement, if such it can be called, took on something approaching organised form. The youth movement in America was also heavily influenced by the opposition to the war in Vietnam, where large numbers of young conscripts began to be sent in 1965. In California, the youth movement that styled itself the underground consisted of an uneasy coalition between left-wing, anti-war, anti-establishment politics on the one hand and exponents of sexual emancipation, drug culture and rock concerts on the other, whose conception of liberation was rooted in a brand of anarchic individualism; as John Lennon put it, when rejecting organised political violence in the Beatles' 'Revolution 9' on their *White Album* (1968), 'You'd better free your mind instead'. 'Turn on, tune in, drop out' (Timothy Leary, the LSD guru) was the watchword of the day.

1967 was the year of flower power, of tie-dye shirts and floral dresses, as a wave of youthful energy and idealism emanated from the American West Coast. Scott McKenzie's tribute to the summer of 1967 in San Francisco, with its opening lines 'If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair', sometimes celebrated as an anthem of that time, remains mired in mawkish sentimentality. For many of my generation, the defining

soundtrack to that summer was provided by Procol Harum's enormously successful number one hit single, 'A Whiter Shade of Pale'. Whenever I hear the opening chords of this song, I am transported back half a century. A Hammond electric organ (Matthew Fisher) sounds out the haunting, Bach-derived instrumental melody; that is taken up by Gary Brooker's soulfully smoke-filled vocals, inspired by the title phrase, which forms the song's chorus: 'And so it was that later/ As the miller told his tale/ That her face, at first just ghostly,/ Turned a whiter shade of pale.'

The reference to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* shows this song had intellectual pretensions higher than the rock 'n roll standards of the mid-1960s; the same goes for the group's name, which sounds Latin (but isn't). The allusive, referential style of the song's lyrics, expressed in a series of alluringly mysterious images, adds considerably to the song's popularity, giving it an aura of occult profundity that appealed to its 'alternative' audience. Its opening line, 'We skipped the light fandango', plays on the phrase 'trip the light fantastic', which can be traced back to Milton's poem *L'Allegro* (1645); however, I must admit that I cannot make much of the 'sixteen vestal virgins who are leaving for the coast'.

In West Germany, the year 1967 took on very different overtones from the gentle hippy rhythms of British popular music. The political violence that shook West Germany in the 1970s was triggered by the shooting by a policeman of a 26-year-old student, Benno Ohnesorg, on 2 June 1967, amidst the rioting that broke out during the Shah of Iran's visit to Berlin. This was one of the events that led the Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction), the radical left-wing organisation led by Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, to initiate its campaign of terror. It also caused Rudi Dutschke, the leading spokesman for the student activists, to launch his 'long march through the institutions'. Dutschke himself was shot by a right-wing activist in 1968. Though he suffered brain damage, he survived and came to live with his family in Britain, where he secured a place to study at Cambridge; when the British government expelled him in 1971, he moved to Denmark, where he died in 1979.

At the same time, support for the far right in West Germany reached a peak

in the period 1967/68. It was widely expected that at the elections of 1969 the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD), a party of the far right, would poll more than the 5% of the vote needed to gain representation in the Bundestag, the federal parliament. The NPD, founded in November 1964 as a merger of right-wing splinter groups, gained representation in the parliament of the *Land* of Hesse in 1966, in Lower Saxony and three smaller *Länder* in 1967, and in the two large southern states, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, in 1968. The success of the NPD under its chairman Adolf von Thadden can be explained in part as a reaction to the emergence of the left-radical student movement, in part by dissatisfaction with the ruling coalition of the two major parties, Christian Democrats and Social Democrats. But the NPD polled only 4.3% at the federal elections of 1969. The Christian Democrats, who had governed West Germany since 1949, were defeated, and power passed to a coalition of Social Democrats and Free Democrats, under Chancellor Willy Brandt.

The summer of love of 1967 gave way the following year to the events of May '68 in Paris. A wave of revolutionary activism, of student uprisings and mass demonstrations, spread across the western world, seeming to herald the dawn of a new historical era; in France, workers and students united to challenge the established order. In political terms, however, the 'revolution' of 1968 proved short-lived; by June 1968, the left-radical movement in France had evaporated and President de Gaulle was back in power. As Tony Judt puts it in *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*: 'The workers returned to their factories; the students went on holiday.' But the changes in social attitudes triggered by the upheavals of 1967/68 proved both profound and lasting. Jeremy Adler's novel *A Night at the Troubadour* (London: Alphabox Press, 2017), the sequel to *The Magus of Portobello Road* (reviewed in our August 2017 issue), gives a vivid picture of life in west London in the eventful year 1968. Seen from the perspective of the young Johnny Prince, it records both the almost boundless optimism of the left-leaning youth of 1968 and the crushing disillusionment brought about by the entry of Soviet tanks into Prague in August 1968.

Anthony Grenville

September Serenade



If this sample of photos from the AJR Annual Lunch on 10 September is anything to go by, it certainly seems a good time was had by all.

Described by AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman in his welcome speech as "a highlight of the AJR's calendar", the event included a delicious three-course lunch and wonderful operatic entertainment.

Mr Kaufman spoke about some of the AJR's recent activities as well as plans to mark the forthcoming 80th anniversaries of the Kristallnacht and the creation of the Kindertransport. He stressed the importance of perpetuating our forebears' legacy in the face of continued bigotry and racism. "It is the AJR's great honour to now be the leading benefactor in the fields of Holocaust education and memorialisation programmes and

projects," Andrew told AJR members. "We see this area of our work developing greatly in the future but we are equally not distracted from our primary task: to deliver transformative social and welfare services to you."

Formalities over, guests had plenty of time to enjoy lunch and the 'September Serenade' programme performed by Jonathan Fisher (Baritone), Glenys Groves (Soprano), Alexandra Naoumeno (Tenor/Piano) and Scilla Stewart (Mezzo/Piano). There was much laughter during

'Habanera' from Carmen, when Scilla roamed the audience to find possible 'amours', even sitting on one or two gentlemen's knees. This was followed by the entire quartet dancing with members of the audience during the finale.

Writing afterwards to the many AJR staff and volunteers who gave up their Sunday to help with the event, Chief Executive Michael Newman said "Although the numbers were inevitably lower than in previous years, we created a warm and welcoming atmosphere that members hugely appreciated. I'm just glad Glenys didn't pick on me to dance!"

A special well done to Carol Rossen and Lorna Moss for all their planning and for selecting the new venue – the Holiday Inn in Elstree – which got a thumbs-up all round.



The full gallery of photographs from the event are available to view and download at www.ajr-summer-serenade.adamsoller.com

A Case of Borrowed Identity

My mother Ursula Rhodes (née Michel, born Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein 1923) came to England in August 1939 on a Kindertransport. Her parents and younger sister were unable to leave Germany, and were believed to have perished in the Holocaust. Or so I thought.

In late 2015, I applied to the International Tracing Service at Bad Arolsen. There was no trace of my grandparents beyond 1942, and given their ages then were 58 and 50, their survival was an impossibility. But I was told that Lilli, my young aunt aged 14 at the time of her deportation, had survived. She lived in Displaced Persons Camps from December 1945, married in 1948, and emigrated to the USA in 1949. This was staggering news.

I have many friends in Germany, including a team in my mother's home town who do much promotion of Holocaust education and remembrance. They were as stunned as I was: they are well versed in the research which backs up Holocaust memorial work and knew what an astounding revelation this was. We all found it hard to understand why Lilli would not have contacted any of her surviving family or friends, and I asked if we could be sure that this was Lilli. Could somebody else have used her identity? I was told that this wouldn't have happened.

Then scans of documents arrived. There was Lilli: or rather, Elisabeth – her full name was Elisabeth Gerda Lilli Michel, but on some documents just "Elisabeth" was used. Her religion was given as Jewish, despite the fact that both Lilli and my mother were baptised Christians. There she was in DP camps, there she was establishing her eligibility to emigrate, there she was on two passenger lists, but now under her married name Elisabeth D.

One of my German friends tracked her address via her husband's obituary. I didn't feel I could just pick up the phone if Lilli (now Elisabeth D.) did not want contact with her family, so I approached a local rabbi who agreed to make contact on my



The last photograph of Lilli Michel, September 1941, aged 13.

behalf; at which point we discovered her apartment had recently been sold.

The apartment manager and another local synagogue both told me she had died, but gave differing dates. Although very sad, I was puzzled by the discrepancy, so continued searching. I found an Elisabeth D. with a different maiden name who had lived in the same area and had been born the day before Lilli. The surname D. is unusual, so this was surely not a coincidence.

Then I found her name in some land records. This time I phoned and the woman who answered told me Elisabeth D. was her late mother, but was not Lilli Michel. She was Romanian, not German.

Researching the DP camps I discovered that by the end of the 1940s the occupying American army virtually encouraged the use of false papers, in order to empty the camps. I wondered whether Lilli's identity had been used by someone else – Elisabeth S. who married to become Elisabeth D – but was told this couldn't have happened.

And then: breakthrough. A friend in Germany obtained a copy of the marriage certificate. It had all the correct details for Lilli, and the details for her parents,

Ida Maria Gertrud Michel and Heinrich Michel, but their birthplaces, instead of Berlin and Oberlustadt respectively, were both given as L., Romania – the very town which Elisabeth D.'s daughter had told me her mother came from. My suspicions were vindicated. I contacted the daughter in America again who admitted that her mother had used Lilli's identity, but provided no further information.

Some of my German friends suggested the two girls had met and exchanged personal details in a concentration camp, but I felt this was unlikely. There is no evidence of their paths ever crossing and my own belief is that this was not a one-off event. There is no photo-ID card in the files for either Elisabeth or Lilli, and only somebody on the inside of the bureaucracy could cause documents to vanish.

We have now all come to the conclusion that Lilli Michel did die in 1942, aged 14. Her identity was 'borrowed' by a young Romanian Jewish couple, who stood at risk of being repatriated to Romania. Presenting one of the couple as German allowed them to emigrate to America, on a journey via two ships. On the passenger list for the first ship, from München to Bremerhaven, Elisabeth D.'s nationality is given as German; and on the second, from Bremerhaven to New York, away from German shores, it is Romanian. She was free and resumed her own personality.

The use of false documents was demonstrably very widespread, sometimes for nefarious purposes, but very, very often in a desperate attempt to move to a free country and a better life. Indeed one of the educational materials produced by the International Tracing Service at Bad Arolsen is entitled "Claimed Nationality, Desired Destination" – there is much to be read into those four words.

If Lilli was murdered in 1942, there can be no better outcome than that her name and identity helped another girl to a better life. But I would be very interested if anybody knows any more about the use of documents and identities in this way.

Judith Rhodes
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LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



COPING WITH THE HIGH HOLYDAYS



In Israel coping with the recent High Holydays meant different things to different people.

For those of a more spiritual bent it doubtless involved some deep internal probing of their actions and activities over the past year. For those who adhere to the tenets of orthodox Judaism such preparation consisted of offering up the appropriate prayers at the set days and times, attending numerous synagogue services and ensuring that all the appurtenances required for fulfilling the various commandments were in place.

However, for those of us who do not fall into either of those categories the arrival of Rosh Hashanah meant something quite different. The autumn festival serves as a counterweight to the spring festival of Pesach, both of which are occasions for families to get together and eat an enormous meal. Therefore, the first prerequisite of any such event required making extensive enquiries as to who would be attending, whose 'turn' it was to host (and therefore cook) the meal, and how many extra places would have to be set at the dining table. Would the in-laws from out of town be coming? Were they intending to stay overnight? Where would their offspring be? And all the adjuncts of all the answers inevitably required additional questions and answers.

And while the meal itself certainly contains some ritual elements, especially at Pesach, I observed that Rosh Hashanah also unearthed certain deep-seated tribal or ethnic sensibilities that would otherwise remain dormant. In my Yekke parents' home gefillte fish

was completely unknown, and it was something of a culture shock for me to realize that in my husband's eastern European family gefillte fish was – and still is – considered an essential part of the festival ritual for both spring and autumn festivals. Oh, and don't forget the sharp beetroot chrayne that has to accompany it (as a wise man once said, my husband and I are poles apart).

Matza and kneidlech are an essential at the Seder, on that there is agreement right across the proverbial board, and at Rosh Hashanah there must be apples and honey, but beyond that there seemed to be much left to the imagination, enterprise and devotion of whoever was hosting the meal. That's when the bargaining tends to begin. One of our relatives always insists on bringing the fish while another swears that only she knows how to bake that special festive cake to end the meal. Woe betide any hostess who declines offers of help – families have been known to develop long-lasting feuds over such niceties.

There were also differences of opinion with regard to how much food, and which dishes, could be bought ready-made. Another subject of eternal debate is if one should use china or disposable dishes and cutlery. For some of us it

is unthinkable to eat a festive meal from disposable dishes, however elegant, but there's no denying that it makes life easier for whoever has to deal with clearing away the aftermath of the meal. Luckily, mainly because everyone generally tries to accommodate all the various requirements and wishes, the festival was celebrated without any major set-backs and no-one seems to have taken offence at any real or imagined slight.

This may all seem trivial to some readers, but in a small country where tension is part of daily life and family loyalty is regarded as one of the highest moral imperatives, the concept of the family meal at the High Holydays takes on a significance that transcends by far the mere physical event itself. It goes beyond the here and now, it unites the generations, including those that are no longer with us, and serves to bring together a nation that in everyday life is divided politically, ethnically and in many other respects.

Now all that remains is to get through what is left of the protracted yet less intense festive season without murder and mayhem breaking out within or between families.

G2 EVENTS

The Second Generation Network has three events coming up:

SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER – Being Second Generation facilitated by Gaby Glassman, at JW3

TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER – Discussion Group: Kristallnacht at the Wiener Library

SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER – Third Generation: The Holocaust and Me facilitated by David Polak at JW3

Timings and booking details for all events are on www.secondgeneration.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 22nd November at 2.30pm

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS THE DOMINION THEATRE

An American in Paris, the beautiful new Broadway musical about love, hope and living your dreams.



Showing at the restored Dominion Theatre to standing ovations we have been able to secure a limited amount of tickets in the stalls at a price of £39.50 (reduced from £69.50).

**For details and application
Please contact Susan Harrod on
020 8385 3070 or susan@ajr.org.uk**

Letters to the Editor

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

WE WERE ALSO IMMIGRANTS

Everybody has a right to their opinions, but it is surprising to see opinions such as Janet Clarke's and Anthony Portner's in these pages (Sep 2017). The reason why Brexit beat Remain (by a small majority) is mainly concern about immigration. I assume your correspondents and/or their forebears are/were immigrants.

We should remember that there has been no century without wars between various European tribes or communities or countries or nations. The European Union is most likely to prevent such armed conflicts in the future.

The evidence so far produced is that Britain will find it more, rather than less difficult to thrive outside the EU.

Marc Schatzberger, York

The opinions shown by Janet Clarke and Anthony Portner would not be out of place in the Daily Mail or Daily Express. But in the AJR Journal – really? Surely something that all refugees share is a long view of history. Back in July 1938, it was not the Mail or Express but the Observer that wrote, "Britain now has more Jews than Germany ever had. If a further accretion of, say, 100,000 of them come into the country, how could the danger be averted of an anti-Jewish feeling here?" Are Janet Clarke and Anthony Portner not themselves descendants of that dangerous accretion?

It was Rabbi Hugo Gryn who said, "How you are with the one to whom you owe nothing is a grave test."

Mike Joseph, Wales

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Tony Grenville (August issue) need not be shy of having been seen wearing Lederhosen as a child. My mother used to love dressing me as a Bavarian peasant-boy when I was little (see photograph).

One day on holiday, when I was playing by the paddling-pool in my Lederhosen, I was the only child with a swimming doll that

could actually do the crawl when wound up by its arms. I bent down too low and fell in the water. I was so stunned that I just stayed sitting in there until some lady told my older sister (who, as usual, was engrossed in a book) that her "little brother" had fallen in the water. "Little brother?" my sister was thinking, "Could she mean my little sister?" I shall never forget the squelching sounds my leather boots made at each step as I was walked back to the hotel and put to bed.

Margarete Stern, London NW3



ROMA EXCLUDED

There was a small notice about Roma Memorial Day in the August edition (very important and great that the AJR promotes it). However, I would like to draw your attention to the sentence "Roma murdered in the Holocaust..." No Roma (or any group other than Jews) were murdered in the Holocaust. Roma were murdered by the Nazis because they were Roma but not as a component of the Nazi plan to exterminate the 11m+ Jews of greater Europe. There is a movement to incorporate all those murdered by the Nazis into the Holocaust which diminishes the meaning of the term itself

as well as the Jewish aspect of it. The HET describes the Holocaust as a "Jewish event" and then continues to teach that the Nazi also murdered Roma, homosexuals etc.

Michael Hilsenrath

'Britain has the political will to fight antisemitism and strong laws with which to do it, but those responsible for tackling the rapidly growing racist targeting of British Jews are failing to enforce the law. There is a very real danger of Jewish citizens emigrating as has happened elsewhere in Europe, unless there is radical change' These are not my words but those of Gideon Falter, the Chairman of Campaign against Antisemitism in the UK.

Peter Phillips declares (August letters) that his country is more important to him than anything, including his religion. My parents also came from Vienna as refugees to Britain in 1939, so Peter and I have something in common but I happen to be a few years younger than he is. Both our families made the same mistake of believing that somehow being Austrian or German would override their being Jewish. The difference between us is that evidently Peter Phillips continues to believe that and I simply do not.

Peter Simpson (Schweitzer), Jerusalem

LIKE FAMILY

May I join Michael Newman's appreciation of our recently-retired editor: I never met Howard Spier in person but we enjoyed a good relationship by phone. If ever a letter took his particular interest he would ring and a long and humourful conversation would ensue. He gave the impression that we compulsive letter-writers were his close family.

My very best wishes to him for a long and comfortable retirement.

Dr. Hans L. Eirew, Manchester

SUITCASE SURPRISE

I always enjoy reading the Journal's full accounts about the fate of families in the Shoah. It therefore came as a bit of a disappointment that the June issue devoted fewer than 100 words to the remarkable

FRAN GOES TO MERSEYSIDE

AJR's Northern volunteers' co-ordinator Fran Horwich (centre) recently visited Merseyside Jewish Community Care's newly refurbished Shifrin House. MJCC and AJR work closely together, supporting clients to help improve their quality of life.



discovery in Amsterdam of a 'suitcase' containing papers of the Redlich family of Hamburg – the subject of a recent exhibition at the Amsterdam Jewish Museum. The museum's website describes the find as a cash box, not a suitcase, which is more plausible for an object hidden in a crawl space.

I can also add information which the museum did not have: Fritz and Thekla Redlich and their sons Peter and Günther were related to me. Thekla née Harth was the niece of my maternal grandfather, Alfred Rosenbaum, and the two young men my second cousins.

Not until 1944 were the parents and younger son deported to Westerbork and then Auschwitz, but in 1941 they had received news that Peter – who in June had been arrested in a razzia of over 300 young men in reprisal for a bomb attack on a German officers' house – had been shot by guards at Mauthausen.

Apart from applications for the family for visas to the USA and coins, the contents of the cash box were mostly documents shedding light on the last three years of Peter's life. In Amsterdam he attended classes on interior design and was then employed by Asscher Interiors, which paid the family three months of his salary after his deportation.

The most interesting find was a ledger containing details of Peter's expenses and income from after-school work and allowances. They included the purchase of a small boat which, with his brother, was paid for in instalments (perhaps they hoped to flee in it to the UK).

I never knew any of my twenty relatives murdered in the Holocaust, but now I can feel an affinity with and empathy for the doomed Peter and his grieving parents and brother who hid his belongings, probably in

the never-realised hope that they would one day return to collect them.

Henry Cohn, London

SHOAH YAHRZEIT

I read somewhere that for those who do not know the date their relatives were murdered in the Shoah there is a special date on which to say Yahrzeit. Please could you advise on this date?

Mrs J Lipman

NOTE FROM EDITOR: It is the Fast of Tevet, which this year falls on 28 December.

SEPTEMBER SERENADE

On Sunday 10th September, my husband and I attended the AJR's Annual September Serenade lunch, as we have for many years. An event like this takes a lot of planning, time and effort. I would like to congratulate the staff of AJR responsible for organising this wonderful event. They always do a good job but this year they excelled themselves. We chose the vegetarian meal and it was very good, as were the desserts which were so beautifully arranged. The fruit plate was splendid and plates of chocolates far too tempting. The service was excellent too.

ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at 3pm on Monday 6 November 2017 at Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.

The following serving Trustees are being proposed for re-election: Eleanor Angel, Andrew Kaufman and Gaby Glassman.

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

The deadline to submit nominations is midday on Friday 27 October 2017, duly received at the AJR's offices: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF.

It almost goes without saying that the entertainment was perfect. As always, the singers entertained us again in their jolly, friendly manner. They've become almost like old friends. The music was just lovely, simply a delight. The change of venue was also a great success.

A very special event, not to be missed. Well done, AJR.
Susie Barnett



AJR CARD AND GAMES CLUB



Please join us at our Card and Games Club

Monday 23 October 2017 at 1.00pm

at North Western Reform Synagogue,
Alyth Gardens, Temple Fortune, London NW11 7EN

Open to all levels Bridge players – come and join us

We also offer card games, backgammon, scrabble. You decide.

Games are dependent on numbers being sufficient – the more the merrier

A sandwich lunch will be served upon arrival with tea, coffee and Danish pastries.

£7.00 per person

Booking is essential – when you book please let us know your choice of game.

Please either call Esther Rinkoff on 07966 631 778 or email esther@ajr.org.uk

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

We all know them, the objects we love that we can't throw away no matter how old. For Henri Matisse these objects included a baroque chair, a chocolate pot wedding present, an Andalusian glass vase, a Thai statue and an intricate Arab frieze. They were all fellow travellers with which he dotted his atelier, and now they are being brought to life in **Matisse in the Studio at the Royal Academy** – an exhibition which clearly shows how these treasured objects inspired and even developed his work.



Henri Matisse, *Interior with Etruscan Vase*

A clue is Matisse's own comment in 1951: "I have worked all my life before the same objects...the object is an actor. A good actor can have a part in ten different plays; an object can play a role in ten different pictures."

The objects were the collectibles of his life, but they also peopled his paintings; his odalisques reclined against the latticework of his friezes or sank into a Turkish chair. People who entered the studio thought they were inside one of his paintings, and they were not wrong. And yet, absorbed as he was by the shapes of his objects, they became stronger statements than the models themselves, who might casually fade into all the other forms in the background.

One way in which an object changed his style was his interest in African sculpture, notably masks. His striking portrait of *The Italian Woman*, although representational, owes much of its definitive style to its mask-like character. In this painting, my favourite in the exhibition, the face, executed

in almost *art naïf* style, is a series of oblong shapes bounded by long black hair; her posture is decisive yet vulnerable and one could say there is a sense of the robotic about her. Even the arresting hair, fallen over one shoulder, is rigid as black glass.

The suggestive poses of the African sculptures have the same innocent, pared down quality. Their crude sexuality would be beyond the vocabulary of a French Impressionist. Nevertheless these objects led Matisse to emulate the simplicity of their shapes, conveyed in simple colour forms and leading inexorably to the paper cut-out maquettes for the Vence Chapel; images which he or his assistants in his later life (when he was rendered immobile through intestinal cancer) could place on the walls around him. It was a complete synthesis of a life lived among beloved objects which could then be reduced to the essential spirit which had given them life.

"Cutting directly into vivid colour"
Matisse wrote in his artist book *Jazz*

(1947), meaning the paper cut-outs reminded him of the direct carving of sculptors. They represented memories of the circus, travels, popular tales and – in their simplicity – freed him from the constraints of space and time. But as a completely new art form they were not necessarily accepted in the post-war period, unlike Picasso's *Guernica* which seemed to have caught the mood of the time. But Matisse, the eternal optimist, preferred to convey hope and joy.

Until November 12.

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PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

AT YOUR SERVICE: Audio Editions

Not many people know that the AJR Journal is also available in an audio format for people with registered impairments. Here we meet the team that produced the audio version.

On the first Tuesday of every month a small team gathers at Jewish Care's professional recording centre in Golders Green, the KC Shasha Centre for Talking News & Books. The team is led by Rita Rosenbaum – a full-time volunteer at the centre – and sound engineer Adam Bradley.

Rita first started volunteering for the AJR 20 years ago, taking over from the late Irene White. As well as the monthly AJR Journal Rita now presents and records the weekly Jewish News and, occasionally, the Jewish Chronicle, and also records talking books for Jewish Care.

The recording session for the Journal lasts just two hours and requires two additional volunteer readers alongside Rita herself. Hours of meticulous planning are put in beforehand, as Rita

decides exactly which bits of the Journal to include and then cuts out and sorts copies of the respective articles for every member of the recording team.

"We always start with the lead article, followed by other features and personal stories. The letters to the editor come next, then the Art Notes, reviews and any obituaries. We always finish with announcements about forthcoming events and the Letter from Israel," explains Rita.

Anita Boston and Annette Woolfson have both helped Rita to record the Journal for over 10 years. They are just two from a small group of regular volunteers that Rita draws on for her various recording projects, including 'stalwart' Leonard Levy, who has been involved since almost the beginning.

"I particularly enjoy recording the AJR Journal, although some of the stories are sometimes heartbreaking," says Anita. "But they are also very inspiring and I feel proud to be playing a small part in sharing them."

Annette, who despite having a German

father occasionally struggles with pronouncing the German words that regularly crop up in the AJR Journal, says she learns something from every issue that she helps with.

None of the readers have been professionally trained so are required to do a voice test beforehand, to ensure that their pace is both slow and clear enough.

Recording over, the finished audio track is then copied onto CDs and memory sticks and mailed out to the recipients. Most people now prefer memory sticks, which can be played on a number of devices, and Jewish Care can supply a special, extremely simple to use audio player at very little cost.

The service is completely free for AJR members with an appropriate registered disability. For more information contact karin@ajr.org.uk.



Anita, Rita and Annette in the studio



AJR FILM CLUB

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

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

DENIAL

When university professor Deborah E. Lipstadt includes World War II historian David Irving in a book about Holocaust deniers, Irving accuses her of libel and sparks a legal battle for historical truth. With the burden of proof placed on the accused, Lipstadt and her legal team fight to prove the essential truth that the Holocaust occurred. Based on the book "History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier."

£8.00 per person

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL

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

REVIEWS

SOMEWHERE THERE IS STILL A SUN A Memoir of the Holocaust by Michael Gruenbaum with Todd Hasak-Lowy

Aladdin paperback 2017,
ISBN 978-1-4424-8487-0

Michael Gruenbaum was in his mother's words "saved by a miracle" after being collected for a transport four times in Terezin concentration camp.

Incarcerated at 12, he survived for two-and-a-half years with his mother Margarete and older sister Marietta until the war ended.

He tells his own moving story seen through a child's eyes and the book is dedicated to the 1.5 million Jewish children killed in the Holocaust including those with whom he lived.

Before the German invasion of Czechoslovakia Michael (Misha) enjoyed a carefree life in a prosperous home in Prague. This all changed once the Germans occupied the capital. Things rapidly deteriorated with increasingly punitive restrictions affecting Jews who were soon forced into a Ghetto, and Michael was attacked when he ventured out.

A long, cold dark shadow was cast over the family when tragedy struck and Michael's lawyer father Karl was killed at the Small Fortress at Terezin in 1941. But a difficult, drab and impoverished life continued until they themselves were sent to the camp in November of the next year.

The "tickets" for their transport there were kept by Mrs Gruenbaum. They are reproduced together with a summons from Terezin to "the east" and family photos of much happier times both before and after the war.

At Terezin Michael was assigned to L417, the school building where he stayed in Room 7 lined with bunk beds for 40 boys. They were known as "Nesharim" meaning eagles, under

the inspired leadership of 20-year-old "madrich" Franta and benefitted from a "program" of unofficial lessons and activities.

They wore their own clothes and SS officers were seldom seen. Games were played and they had relative freedom of movement in the camp, where opera and drama of an extremely high standard flourished. As Michael observes: "They let us put on plays one day and stick us on trains to who knows where the next."

Scarce food could be supplemented when he worked for the bakery and the Nazis treacherously pulled out all stops with window dressing to impress Red Cross visitors.

A total of 80 boys lived in Room 7 at some point but only 11 survived including Franta who entered Auschwitz, but survived. Michael was saved at Terezin largely by the skills of his formidable mother pleading for her immediate family to be spared. Sadly other family members and friends perished.

Writing to relatives soon after liberation she said: "We do not yet know how the future will shape up for us. None of our old friends are alive any more... But somewhere in this world there is still a sun, mountains, the ocean, books ...and perhaps again the rebuilding of a new life." Her son shared this indomitable spirit and this optimism and resilience shines through every page of the book.

The award-winning volume is written for children but is equally interesting for adults. I couldn't put it down.

Janet Weston

AN IRISH SANCTUARY: GERMAN- SPEAKING REFUGEES IN IRELAND 1933-1945

**Gisela Holfter and Horst Dickel
Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg,
2017, ISBN: 978-3-13-035144-6**

This book, by two pre-eminent scholars of Irish-German relations, will no doubt be seen in future as the seminal work on the subject of German-speaking refugees in Ireland. Admittedly the numbers are small: 1,500 applications

for entry to Ireland of whom 426 actually arrived (with a number of others not included in the official figures). However Holfter's and Dickel's research into the life and work of this small band of refugees draws on an impressive array of archival and other sources and their book is meticulously researched and footnoted. Indeed some of the footnotes are so interesting that one might wish that the authors had integrated the material into the main text rather than side-lined it.

An Irish Sanctuary is divided chronologically into three parts: Passage to Ireland, Exiled in Wartime Ireland, and After the War. The book as a whole poses the question of the extent to which Ireland offered the refugees sanctuary. Incoming refugees had only a limited idea of what awaited them: typically the Viennese refugee Hans Motz, asked years later what he had known about the country to which he was emigrating, replied 'Nothing'.

Life in Ireland did not prove particularly easy for them: the authors contend 'The country itself displayed signs (albeit in comparatively mild form) of intolerance'. The Irish government maintained a rather negative stance towards the refugees and in particular towards Jewish refugees (though this was offset to a degree by the efforts of the Irish aid organisations).

Yet some of the refugees prospered well. For example Western Hats was set up in Co. Mayo, Les Modes Modernes in Galway. Other businesses, such as the Tipperary Glove Factory, recruited German-speaking refugees as key staff. By the end of the 1930s the Irish textile industry contained 'significant foreign presence'.

After the war at least 107 former refugees remained in Ireland while around 120 left for the UK, Israel or the United States or, in 23 cases, returned to Germany or Austria. Life in Ireland continued to be difficult financially, though eventually restitution and compensation from

Germany was forthcoming. One of the best known German-speaking refugees in Ireland, the renowned physicist Erwin Schrödinger, returned to Austria in 1956 in order to secure a pension. Yet "my Long Exile", so he wrote in his autobiographical notes, had been "a wonderful time. I would never have got to know this remote and beautiful island otherwise". So deep was Schrödinger's affinity with Ireland that his wife returned to their country of exile after his death to collect Irish soil to put on his Austrian grave.
Charmian Brinson

WHAT PRICE JUSTICE?

Review of a play reading:

It was a momentous occasion: the world premiere of Ruth Barnett's play "What Price Justice?" arranged by Second Generation Network. The play gives an account of Ruth's parents' story, from the time of their marriage, her father's successful career as a judge in Berlin, the increasing hardships as the Nazi regime grew ever more sinister and threatening, erupting with Kristallnacht, and the decision to send the two children to safety in England on the Kindertransport.

Ruth has already published what happened to her and her brother in her memoir, *A Person of no Nationality*, in which she describes coming to terms with her adopted country. The play delves in more detail into what happened after the war, with Ruth's father returning to Germany, having fled to Shanghai during the Holocaust, and now seeking to reunite his family



John King (Network member), Laura Pradelska (Network member), Ruth's son, Ruth's husband and Gina Winning, who edited the script and arranged the event

and to reclaim his career as a judge in Germany. Yet he is faced with a country still in denial of what happened, with a civil service and bureaucracy largely still run by the same people and the same mentality as before. He faced an uphill struggle, and in the end had to give up his career due to the stress it caused him. (Ruth was prompted to write the play as an accurate account after a fictionalised version appeared recently in a German novel and television film 'Landgericht'.)

The play's script was specially revised for the occasion, with the help of Tracy Elster, who had the inspired idea of introducing a narrator, and our own Gina Burgess Winning, from the Second Generation Network committee, who was able to edit the script down to a one-hour running time. The play was brilliantly read by the cast, which

included members of Ruth's family, her husband, son, two daughters, a granddaughter, other family and friends, as well as Gina, members of Second and Third Generation (including Laura Pradelska from *Game of Thrones*), and Tracy as the narrator. Ruth's son's performance and portrayal of Ruth's father was very convincing and moving; the whole cast worked brilliantly together, with so many gripping and moving moments.

The closeness of Ruth's family and their love for her shone through, especially in the question and answer session; the whole experience was something very special. For those who missed it, a full-scale staged production is being planned, possibly for the autumn; so watch this space.
David Clark

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SALOMON CENTENNIAL

To mark the Centennial anniversary of the birth of the German-Jewish artist Charlotte Salomon, who perished in the Holocaust, Go2Films have produced a documentary portraying her turbulent life story, entitled "Death and the Maiden".

Discovering personal family stories



Jerry Springer receives his records from Linda Rosenblatt (WJR vice chair) and Jame Libson (WJR chair)

In July 1939 Margot and Richard Springer arrived in England. They were among the last Jews to escape the clutches of the Nazis just weeks before Germany invaded Poland. Margot, 35, and Richard, 33, were yet to have children. They spent the war years in London. Baby Evelyn came along first and in 1943 Margot fell pregnant again. Although the Blitz was over, they still had to make their way to air raid shelters regularly and Evelyn almost gave birth on East Finchley station. Their little boy grew up to become Jerry Springer, TV host and politician.

Jerry lost 27 members of his family in the Holocaust. As for many refugees, the Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF) – the precursor to WJR – was their lifeline and Jerry attributes his parents' survival to the organisation.

Today WJR helps Jews in need, predominantly in Eastern Europe. The organisation was originally founded in 1933 when prominent members of the Jewish community – including Robert Waley Cohen, Dr Chaim Weizmann, Rabbi Hertz and Lionel and Anthony de Rothschild – raised large sums of money and lobbied the British government to help Jews escape Nazi Europe.

Establishing the CBF, they raised £250,000 in its first year of operations, equivalent to £16.8 million today. This enabled it to rescue approximately 65,000 people from Nazi Europe before, during and after the Holocaust, including 10,000 children on the Kindertransports and 732 orphaned 'Boys'.

Each new arrival was registered and meticulous records detailed the financial and social support they received from the CBF. These files tell their amazing stories and the difficulties they had adjusting to life in the UK. Many also contain birth certificates, immigration papers, medical histories and school reports.

The AJR is a longstanding friend of WJR and used to handle requests from people searching for their family documents. Lilian Levy – who now assists with the AJR Journal – volunteered countless hours of her time churning through the huge microfilmed archive to reunite people with their family records.

Thanks to an enormous two year project, hundreds of thousands of these documents have now been digitised, allowing today's volunteers to search them at the touch of a button.

Family members can request to view their case files for free on our website, and we have unearthed some amazing stories.

Jacqueline Feldman, Rebbetzin at Bushey United Synagogue, discovered documents relating to her grandmother, Rosa Feingold, and 10 other family members which brought to life the experience of a young teenage girl arriving in a foreign country with just her two older sisters.

Jacqueline says, "I was touched to read how hard life was for these young sisters and how they looked after and looked out for each other, and how the CBF supported them. I'd urge anyone with family who came over in the 1930s and 40s to get in touch with WJR. It's been a truly amazing and emotional experience for us."



Jacqueline Feldman with WJR volunteer Debbie Cantor

Jayne Hantman also discovered information about her mother, Eve Kushin (née Feilchenfeld), a long time AJR member, in our archives. She says "It's a real social history that my mother never spoke about. The notes are incredibly detailed and show how hard it was for her. She spoke very little English, was with a family she didn't know and wasn't sure if she'd see her parents again. You can understand why her behaviour might have been difficult – although she always insisted she was very well behaved. It has been fascinating reading about her experience."

To find out if World Jewish Relief has your family story, go to www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives or call 020 8736 1250.

LILIAN LEVY WRITES:

Today the archive of the JRC is recognised worldwide as an important historical resource but after WWII, when people hoped to forget the horrors of war, dozens of boxes of documents were left to fester in a garage, largely unseen and unresearched.

In the event, this proved to be the saving of the archive. Many organisations did excellent humanitarian work in the '30s and '40s but, owing to lack of storage space, most destroyed their records post-war.

The importance of the JRC archive emerged when war reparations and restitution were first mooted in the 1950s. The German government recognised it as a true record of the former refugees' histories where no other documentary proof existed.

Decades later, the wider historical significance of these files is understood. In the intervening years, just a few enlightened volunteers preserved the archive for posterity until Simone Prendergast, a trustee of the CBF, ensured its survival by depositing the many storage boxes at the London Metropolitan Archives and financing the microfilming of the records. The current leadership of World Jewish Relief is to be commended on having understood the value of the archive and investing in its digitisation.

JEWISH MUSEUM VISIT AND TALK ON JFS

OUTING
THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER 2017



Please join us for a visit to the Jewish Museum, based in Camden

As well as the opportunity to visit the various Galleries and Exhibitions at the Museum, we will then have a talk by David Harris, former Deputy Head teacher of JFS, about the history of JFS, together with various artefacts from the school. This may be of particular interest to those of you who have had children, grandchildren or even great-grandchildren who were pupils.

After the talk we will have lunch at the Museum.

For details please speak to Susan Harrod on 020 8385 3070 or email susan@ajr.org

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Around the AJR

LEEDS SUMMER PARTY



What a wonderful afternoon the summer party was. A new venue, so pretty and welcoming, with the bonus of a bowling lawn right outside the window. This venue may become a habit!

We were treated to a delightful tea, which Wendy had organised with a favoured caterer (all the way from Liverpool!), over-generous platters of delicious open sandwiches, and equally generous plates of mouthful-sized pastries.

When it came to our entertainment, Wendy had surpassed herself. We were introduced to a Reverend Roger Quick, who, we quickly learned, had had a varied and erudite life to date, including much involvement with Judaism, and using words like 'Hashem', and 'shul' with accustomed ease. Latterly, he discovered to his astonishment that a grandmother had been Jewish! He peppered his story with piano pieces, and displayed an amazing facility, skill and art on the subject of music, able to turn his piano – (and accordion-) hand to anything. A special man.

And a special Summer Party, one which, I'm sure, we'll all remember.

Judy Harrison

HOOP LANE TALK INSPIRES

Blue Badge guide Rachel Kosky gave a most inspired and informative talk as she led us round Hoop Lane Cemetery, Golders Green. We saw the graves of many distinguished Jewish philanthropists and also those of the cellist Jacqueline du Pré, author Erich Segal and agony aunt Marjorie Proops – members remembered her advice very well! Afterwards we enjoyed some delicious tea at Café Also and browsing next door at Joseph's Bookstore.

Janet Weston

BRIGHTON: 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF BRIGHTON JEWRY

Godfrey Gould outlined events to celebrate this auspicious date – talks at Sussex University, an exhibition of local Jewish artists and a plaque at the home of the first Jew in Brighton in 1766.

Ceska Abrahams

BRISTOL: ASSIMILATING SYRIAN REFUGEES

Alan Cook spoke on the successful assimilation of Vietnamese boat people in Canada, a model we should emulate for Syrians in Britain.

Hazel Rank-Broadley

BOOK CLUB: "JUDAS" BY AMOS OZ

A lovely crowd of 10 people discussed this book at Costa Coffee, and there were many suggestions for future books. Our next read

EX-KITCHENERS RETURN TO SANDWICH



In April 2017 the AJR Journal published a search notice inviting interest in commemorating the Kitchener camp – a former WW1 army camp in Kent that became a sanctuary and first home to 4,000 German and Austrian Jewish refugees (mainly single men) over the age of 17 who escaped the threat of Nazi persecution in 1939. Largely as a result of the AJR's appeal and support, a group of 40 people visited the camp on 16 July. Here Stephen Nelken – whose late father left Germany in July 1939 to stay in the Kitchener camp – reports on the visit.

The town of Sandwich recently received funding from the Heritage lottery for its Sandwich Guildhall museum which contains an exhibition regarding the Kitchener camp. Our visit – organised by Clare Ungerson, a resident of the town and the author of "4,000 lives: the

rescue of German Jewish men to Britain in 1939" – comprised mainly the children and a few grandchildren of survivors.

The day started with an informal lunch at the Bell Hotel where members of the group could learn about each other's family experiences. It was undoubtedly an emotional experience to think that we were in the same place as members of our families nearly 80 years later.

After lunch we went to the Museum where we were welcomed by staff and the town's Mayor who told us how proud he was of the support and help given to the refugees by the town. Some members of the group had brought photographs to be scanned for the museum's archive and the permanent exhibition which is due to open next January.

Then we were taken on a walking tour of Sandwich, to all the places our family members would have seen or gone to.

If anyone else is interested in the Kitchener camp please contact Stephen Nelken at sn.kitchenercamp@gmail.com.

will be "East West Street" by Philippe Sands.
Susan Harrod

CAMBRIDGE: "PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE"

This excellent film by Maurice Kanareck consisted of 'interviews' with refuseniks (played by British actors) – a very difficult era in Russian Jewish life.
Eva Stellman

CARDS & GAMES CLUB: LUNCH MEETING

After lunch, tea and coffee we adjourned to play Bridge and other games. Numbers of players have recently increased so to be sure of a place book as soon as you see the advert in this paper.
David Lang

EDGWARE: PHOTOGRAPHING SIMCHAS

Paul Lang gave a delightful illustrated account of his life as a professional photographer – a successful career which started as a childhood hobby.
Eva Stellman

FILM CLUB: "THE BUTLER"

This film tells the story of Eugene Allen, a black butler who served eight presidents in the White

House from Eisenhower to Reagan.
Eva Stellman

ILFORD: QUIZ TIME

A contemporary quiz on a variety of topics gave us food for thought and taxed our brains.
Meta Roseuil

KINDERTRANSPORT GROUP SOCIAL

No speaker this month, just a nice chance to chat and catch up with each others' news.
David Lang

MARLOW: FIRST MEETING IN THE REFURBISHED SYNAGOGUE

In our new, pleasant surroundings we exchanged family experiences including those of a former Kindertransport lady from Austria. She spoke interestingly on the Anschluss and her arrival in the U.K.
Dennis Dell

N. W. LONDON : THE JEWS OF JAMAICA

Henry Cohn fled to Jamaica prior to WW2. He gave an interesting, illustrated talk about the small Jewish community in Jamaica, with a large Shul which is still in regular use.
David Lang

PINNER: ANNUAL TEA PARTY

We were entertained with songs, charmingly performed by Vivien and Rose, before tucking into Vera Gellman's excellent Scones and Strawberry tea.
Robert Gellman

RADLETT: DINING AT THE COSMO AND THE DORICE

These two restaurants, popular with many German refugees, were recalled by Charlotte and Tony Balazs which, in turn, inevitably led to an enjoyable series of audience reminiscences
Fritz & Elfriede Starer

OCTOBER GROUP EVENTS

As the exact timings of these events are often subject to last minute changes we do not include them in the AJR Journal and suggest you contact the relevant regional contact for full details.

Ealing	3 October	Charlotte Balazs and Tony Balazs "Dining at The Cosmo and The Dorice"
Kensington	3 October	Social get-together
Ilford	4 October	Kathryn Prevezer and Colin Davey – "The Jews of London's East End"
Harrogate/York	4 October	Social get-together
Dundee	8 October	Social get-together
Glasgow CF	9 October	Let's talk
Cheshire	9 October	Social get-together
Bristol	9 October	DVD – "Churchill's German Army"
Nottingham	10 October	Social get-together
Leeds CF	12 October	Social get-together
Brighton	16 October	Desert Island Discs – Members' favourite songs
Edgware	17 October	Nick Dobson – A musical extravaganza: A Short Variety Concert
Essex (Westcliff)	17 October	(Please note change of date) Speaker to be confirmed
Radlett	18 October	Nick Dobson – A musical extravaganza: A short Variety Concert
Edinburgh	19 October	The Way Forward
Glasgow CF	22 October	Antiques Road Show
Prestwich	23 October	Social get-together
Welwyn Garden City	24 October	Social get-together
Liverpool	24 October	Author Michael Brown
North London	26 October	Pam Fox: "The History of the Jews of Golders Green"
Muswell Hill	26 October	Social get-together
Glasgow Book Club	26 October	Social get-together
North West London	31 October	Dr Robert Ginsberg – "My father's career as a Chaplain"

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

PROGRESS ON THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL



Holocaust Memorial – Anish Kapoor and Zaha Hadid Architects

The possibility of some type of national Holocaust memorial was originally “the baby” of former Prime Minister David Cameron. In 2015 the Trust responsible for its development began to consult Holocaust survivors on an appropriate format, after which it was decided that a major national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre should be created on a prominent site in inner London.

The site has now been agreed, subject to planning permission, in the Victoria Tower Gardens adjoining the Palace of Westminster. It is hard to think of a more suitable site.

The Trust has established a jury of 14, including the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, the Rt. Hon. Sajiv Javid, Minister of Communities and Local Government, Sir Peter Bazalgette, chairman of the Trust, Ben Helfgott, survivor, and Natasha Kaplinsky, broadcaster. Having solicited proposals from prominent international architects, 10 designs were shortlisted earlier this year and on 4 September approximately 100 survivors and roughly an equal number of younger

people were invited to the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre to discuss them.

The models had already been displayed elsewhere, so participants – all seated at round tables – were given a presentation and booklet, and asked to discuss these. After feedback and general discussion a show of hands indicated that Anish Kapoor & Associates’ proposal was the most favoured by survivors. It was undoubtedly the most dramatic, arresting and cataclysmic although there was little detail of the commemorative space and learning

centre underground – but this criticism applied to most of the submissions.

The winning team will be announced later this year and completion will not be until 2022 – probably too late for those of us who are in their 90s! But the Memorial should be a lasting and moving reminder of the crimes committed in the Holocaust and, hopefully, also in others that have since taken place.

Leslie Baruch Brent



Holocaust Memorial survivor consultation session on 4 September

LOOKING FOR?

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

FRANKFURT KINDERTRANSPORTS

The City of Frankfurt is creating a Kindertransport memorial and place of learning close to the Central Station. A new book about the Kindertransport will mark its launch and the organisers would be pleased to hear from any former Kindertransport 'children' from Frankfurt, with ideas and suggestions.
till.lieberz-gross@unitybox.de

SUFFOLK HOSTELS

Harry Stevens – then known as Heinz Georg Steiner – stayed as a teenager in Felixstowe until April 1939 and at Barham House from April to October 1939. He would love to hear from anyone who still remembers life at either or both.
VGreen@dsl.pipex.com

BLOOMSBURY HOUSE

Mike Levy has sent us the below photo of the mailroom staff at Bloomsbury House c1940, Robert Acker Holt is on the right with glasses – can anyone identify the other people in the photo?
mike.levy82@gmail.com



BELSEN 1945

The above picture, taken in Belsen 1945, includes a lady called Wanda Gustaw Forcher (at the front, kneeling next to a dog) who was born near Krakow and imprisoned in Auschwitz then Belsen. Her son would love to hear from anyone who might recognise other people in the photo, or remember his mother, who married a British medic but never spoke of her background.
Chrislock1@mac.com

COSMO & DORICE

Etan Smallman is researching his grandparents, and hopes our readers may have some memories or even photos to share. His grandfather, Sigmund (Sigi) Balsam, was the manager of The Cosmo on Finchley Road in the 1940s and went on to run Cafe Balsam which later became the Dorice, before setting up Balsam's Restaurant in Down Street, Mayfair. His grandmother, Ilse Balsam (née Manasse) also worked in restaurants in Swiss Cottage during this period.
etansmallman@gmail.com

THE FINAL MONTHS

Oxford Films, the BAFTA-winning team

behind Simon Schama's *The Story of the Jews* (BBC), *Our Queen at 90* (ITV) and, most recently, *Diana: Our Mother* (ITV), is currently making a film for the BBC called *Auschwitz: The Final Months* [working title]. The film is looking at the time period of April to November 1944, starting with the escape of prisoners Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler and following the events leading up to the camp's disbandment.

The producers are keen to hear from any survivors of Auschwitz and/or the Hungarian deportation who are prepared to share their testimonies.
hilla.abramov@oftv.co.uk or 020 7483 8841

1930s RENTAL COSTS

Sasha Bolot is researching the cost of rented accommodation for the refugees and exiles of the 1930s, especially in the areas of Hampstead and Belsize Park.
sashabolot@icloud.com

ELLY LOEWINGER

Mrs. Florence Toft (formerly Florence Brown) is seeking her erstwhile Austrian penfriend, Elly Loewinger. The girls corresponded before WW2 and, as Elly was Jewish, Florence persuaded her school's German teacher and Head Mistress to secure a place for Elly on the Kindertransport.

Florence is now 93 years old and would love to know what happened to Elly. She has no email address so please send any info to the AJR office and we will forward it.

If you would like to place a search notice in a future issue of the AJR Journal, please email editorial@ajr.org.uk including the words SEARCH REQUEST in the title of your email.

Setting the Record Straight



A recent book about Rudolf Kasztner – a Zionist activist in Budapest during World War II – has prompted the nephew of fellow activist Otto Komoly to share his uncle's version of events from that time.

My uncle Otto was chairman of Jewish Aid and Rescue Committee (JARC) in Budapest and of the Hungarian Zionist Federation. Together with Rudolf Kasztner he tried to negotiate with Nazi officials to release Hungarian Jews in exchange for money and equipment.

Having been conditioned to consider themselves assimilated, the Hungarian Jews naturally trusted the goodwill of governments. Stripped of men between the ages of 16-60 and women aged 18-50, there was little appetite or possibility for resistance, nor any likelihood of hiding in hills or forests or in villages where there were hugely anti-Semitic populations supported by a gendarmerie (22,000) and the 300,000 strong fascist Arrow Cross. The Jewish civilians also had no arms worth mentioning at their disposal.

I lived in Budapest myself at the time and cannot give a more telling picture of conditions and mindsets of those sad

days, than when my mother was one of 200 Jewish women rounded up by four Arrow Cross men, and marched towards a collection camp. She made a run for it, and they tried to shoot her. In the ensuing confusion most of the others could have escaped – but instead they just stood and waited for their fate.

The old Jewish leadership were out of their depth in the face of these developments. The new JARC, a largely Zionist group of activists, also had little experience in the face of unprecedented circumstances. The situation became desperate; every day 12,000 Jews were being deported. They had an impossible choice: accept that all were to be lost to the camps OR support a hopeless resistance leading to a Warsaw-like massacre? An alternative occurred to them: try to negotiate to rescue SOME and slow down deportations, knowing that the Allies had landed in Normandy, and the Russians were advancing.

By agreement, my uncle Otto dealt with the Hungarians and Kasztner with the Germans. It was like a very high stake poker game: they had to look death in the face every day. They knew full well they could never access high enough Allied government sources to bring forth the supplies demanded, even using whatever connections they could create through international Jewish/Zionist links.

Ultimately their activities not only saved over 1,000 passengers on the so-called

'Kasztner train', they also helped to place over 5000 children in safe embassy houses, and about 30,000 people in 'internationally protected' buildings. Most historians have concluded that Kasztner's negotiations saved another 20,000 by diverting them to an Austrian labour camp instead of Auschwitz.

Neither Komoly nor Kasztner was on the train (nor was I) and very sadly Otto was subsequently murdered by Hungarian fascists. He has since been honoured by the post-war Hungarian and Israeli governments and by B'nai Brith for his bravery and achievements. Kasztner – who was vilified for putting his own family on the train and co-operating with senior Nazis – was assassinated in Israel in 1957 but was honoured earlier this year in Haifa.

Theodore Roosevelt said at the Sorbonne in April 1910:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Or in our terms:

ואל תדין את חברך עד שתגיע למקומו
Do not judge your fellow until you come to his place. (Mishna, Pirke Avot 2:4).

In my view, the only criminals in this story of the Shoah in Hungary were the Germans and the Hungarian Nazis.

Tomi Komoly

OBITUARIES

Edith Argy

Born Vienna 16 October 1919, died London 16 July 2017

Edith Argy's joyous spirit lit up the lives of everyone she touched. She was born in Vienna in 1919, the younger of two children. Her father's only ambition was to write plays, her mother had a business brain and – Edith was frequently told – was both beautiful and intelligent.

Disaster struck when aged 5, Edith was deprived of her mother who, in seeking to protect her children from an out of control motor car, sacrificed her own life. Edith's father remarried but whilst he and the two children escaped the Nazis, his second wife, Claire, did not. This was a source of unending sadness and guilt for Edith until the day she died.

Edith was a bright child and flourished at school, but in common with so many of her Central European contemporaries, her education was 'interrupted' by the Nazis. In March 1938 she left Vienna for Britain on a domestic visa, well versed in Latin and Greek proverbs and able to recite Goethe and Schiller but, in her words, "having never so much as held a broom."

At the end of the war, Edith found herself in Germany working, in a civilian capacity, for the US Army. Her closest friend Stella persuaded her to follow her to Australia. On arrival Edith knew it was not for her and a year later she returned to Europe. Having left Europe as a stateless refugee, she returned with a British passport, having married a shipping clerk in Sydney who found her a berth home.

At the age of 52 and alongside a full time job as a company secretary, she studied humanities at the fledgling Open University, graduating in 1978. In her 80s she learned to use a computer and then proceeded to self-publish her autobiography. She regularly contributed to the AJR Journal (her last article appeared a few months before her death), was an assiduous county standard bridge player and an enthusiastic, generous "lady who lunched"!

She had no children but enjoyed a close relationship with Marianne and Serge, her brother's youngest grandchildren. They visited her regularly from Paris and kept in contact by Skype. Well into her 90s, she continued to travel to Australia and Europe and enjoy visits from friends and relatives



from all over the world. A particular thrill was discovering that her "little cousin Robert" was alive and living in Texas. They last seen each other 80 years before the reunion on Skype was a joy to witness.

It was impossible not to succumb to Edith's natural charm. Despite the hardships she had endured she was never negative and relished everything life threw her way. Apart from not having children, her greatest sadness was her serious hearing loss which in later life prevented her from listening to her beloved Mozart and which made many social activities a trial.

She lived life to the full and recognised the humour in every experience. How can we ever forget her!

Marion Koebner

John Robertson (formerly Hans Mayer)

Born Munich 8 February 1923, died London 16 August 2017

John was born in Munich. His father was a journalist and author, his mother a social worker. They moved to Berlin but in 1933 had to flee. John's mother had worked as a courier for one of the Bulgarians accused of setting fire to the Reichstag. She took her children first to Amsterdam and later to Paris, where she worked for L'Organisation de Secours aux Enfants

John was not happy at school in France – he was called a "sale boche", a dirty German – and so came to England. He was interned and sent to the Isle of Man,

but since he was only 16 years old he was released after six months. As soon as he could he joined the British Army.

John's mother, Hilda, made a marriage of convenience to a sympathetic postal worker so that she could come to London. John chose his mother's new surname, becoming John Robertson,

At the end of the war he became one of the interpreters who went into Bergen – Belsen. He learned only later that his uncle and aunt had perished in Auschwitz although their daughter Kaethe had been hidden by friends in Holland and survived.

After the war John read law at University College London, but also helped his mother



to set up Robertson Exchange Travel Service – arranging educational holiday exchanges between English and French youngsters.

John was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1961. He chose to lecture in law, specialising in business and company law. We married in 1961 and had two children, Anne and Marc. They are both social workers – they and our grandchildren Zak, Paige and Callum were a great joy to John.

Jean Robertson

EDINBURGH HONOURS SIR RUDOLF BING

The “tartan army” turned out in force to meet a 21-strong AJR delegation at The Hub, headquarters of the Edinburgh Festival, on Sunday 27 August, the penultimate day of the Festival which this year celebrated its 70th anniversary.

The delegation – which included AJR members from Glasgow as well vice-chairman David Rothenberg, Chair of Kindertransport Sir Erich Reich and AJR Trustee Frank Harding – was welcomed by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Frank Ross, and Festival Director, Fergus Linehan. Making sure everything ran smoothly were Susan Harrod and Agnes Isaacs from the Outreach and Events Department of AJR.

Perched at the top of the Royal Mile, The Hub is now also the dramatic setting for a blue plaque honouring the Festival’s founder, Vienna-born Sir Rudolf Bing, widely acknowledged for placing Edinburgh on the international map. The plaque was unveiled by Frank Harding, who leads the AJR’s programme



to honour refugees who have made a significant contribution to Britain.

Rudolf Bing came to Britain in 1936 at the invitation of Glyndebourne owner John Christie to help set up his own opera festival season. When war ended, Bing and Mildmay discussed the idea of creating a city arts festival which, after being turned down by various English cities, ended up in Edinburgh. Although Bing only organised two festivals before becoming manager of New York’s Metropolitan Opera, where he retired in 1972 aged 70, he remained a British citizen and was knighted in 1971. He died in 1997.

After the unveiling, the AJR delegation – whose guests included the Austrian Ambassador, Dr Martin Eichtinger, and Sir Eric

Pickles, UK Envoy on Post-Holocaust Issues – enjoyed an intimate dinner at The Hub and then went on to a separate reception to commemorate the bicentenary of Edinburgh’s Jewish community. Scotland’s First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, unveiled another plaque combining the bicentenary with a tribute to Sir Rudolf Bing.

The concert marking the end of the 70th season was a joyous occasion, interspersing a pot-pourri of flamboyant and reflective musical pieces with historic film clips. It was particularly enjoyed by Glasgow AJR members, Henry and Ingrid Wuga, who came on a Kindertransport, and were actually present at that first 1947 concert.

Ruth Rothenberg

GRANT APPLICATIONS

The AJR is pleased to invite applications from charities and institutions requiring financial support for Holocaust remembrance and educational projects.

As the UK’s largest dedicated funder of such programmes the AJR now offers two types of grants: Catalyst Grants up to £10,000 to support initiatives in very early stages and with a limited target audience and Project Support Grants for exceptional, larger-scale projects over £10,000 which have the potential for significant impact.

Michael Newman, AJR Chief Executive said “Our over-riding priority is to provide social, welfare and care services to Holocaust refugees and survivors, but we also aim to foster innovation in Holocaust education and remembrance. We are committed to preserving the memory of those who perished and ensuring that history does not get distorted.”

Application deadlines fall on 13 December 2017, 14 March and 13 June 2018. For more information please contact Alex Maws, Educational Grants Advisor, at alex.maws@gmail.com

HIGHEST HONNEURS

Two AJR members have been awarded French orders of merit to thank them for risking their lives to secure France’s liberation during WW2.

Walter Kraus, who was born in Vienna and now lives in a care home in Edgware, added the Chevalier (Knight) de l’Ordre National de la Légion d’Honneur to his collection. After the war Walter worked for the British military government in Aachen, assisting in the denazification of police officers and public workers.

Peter Wayne has also received the Légion d’honneur. The medal was presented to him by the French military attaché in a ceremony at Peter’s flat in Kensington.

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