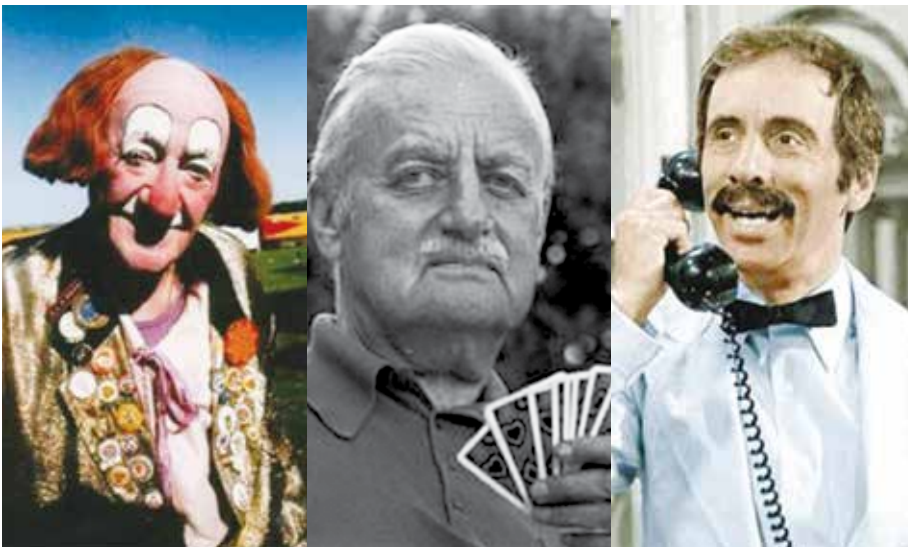




## The strange careers of some refugees

Many Jewish refugees during the 1930s and '40s had distinguished careers as intellectuals, cultural figures, businessmen and industrialists. An extraordinary number became household names. But there are a fascinating group who had more quirky careers and they have too often been overlooked.



From left: Coco the Clown, Boris Shapiro bridge expert, Andrew Sachs aka Manuel

For example, there's Victor Barna (1911-72), born Gyözö Viktor Braun, a Jewish-Hungarian table tennis player. Born into a Jewish family in Budapest in 1911, he became the table tennis singles world champion five times in the early 1930s and won the men's doubles seven times in a row between 1929-35 and again in 1939. In 1932 and 1935 he added two mixed doubles titles to his collection. He also helped Hungary to victory in the men's world team championship, the Swaythling cup, seven times. In 1932 he

fled from Hungary to France and then settled in Britain. Barna won a record twenty English open titles; five singles, seven men's doubles, and eight mixed doubles.

Laszlo Biro (1899-1985) was another Hungarian refugee. He and his brother George invented the ball-point pen in 1938. He emigrated to Argentina in 1940, and in 1943 took out a new patent with the European Patent office and received  
*Continued on page 2*

### IMPORTANCE OF WELFARE

This month's issue contains a range of fascinating articles as well as reports of AJR's own extensive activities around Holocaust Memorial Day. We hope you enjoy reading them.

Meanwhile we are particularly keen to be connected with refugees and survivors – whether they are AJR members or not – who might need welfare support, as we are able to provide life-changing help. So, if you know of anyone who might now need some assistance, such as Homecare, please do let us know. All referrals and enquiries are always dealt with in a confidential manner.

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

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## The strange careers of some refugees (cont.)

backing from a financier, Henry Martin who later set up a factory in England to produce pens for the RAF that would not leak at high altitude. The French company Bic then acquired the firm and popularised the disposable pen.

Nicolai Poliakov (1900?-74) was a Latvian clown, better known as 'Coco'. Born near Riga he trained as a clown in Russia and after the First World War he worked for various Russian circuses. In 1929 he came to Britain and joined the Bertram Mills circus for the next 37 years. He remained in Britain for the rest of his life. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'Coco became Britain's most famous and best-loved clown,' appeared on *This is Your Life* and was awarded the OBE for visiting sick children and lecturing schools on road safety. He died in 1974 and a memorial service was held in his honour at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Dora Diamant (1898-1952) was a Polish-Jewish refugee, but is best known as Kafka's last love. Hounded as a Jew and a Communist by the Nazis and as a foreigner in the Soviet Union, she lost most of her family to the Nazis before fleeing to Britain in 1939, where she devoted her final years to working in the East End to preserve Yiddish language and culture. She helped co-found the Friends of Yiddish, and wrote theatre reviews and articles for Stencil's Yiddish journal, *Loshn un Lebn* (Language and Life). Dora died at the age of 54 in August 1952, and was buried in an unmarked grave at East Ham Jewish Cemetery.

Elisabeth Furse (1910-2002), was a Jewish-German wartime agent and restaurateur. Born in Königsberg to wealthy Jewish parents she spent her teens in Berlin. In 1933 she smuggled reports of torture at Dachau to *The Times* and *The Manchester Guardian* but they were not published. She escaped to Britain and during the war helped run an escape route for British servicemen trapped in occupied France. She was later caught but her release was negotiated and she reached London in 1942. After the war she ran the fashionable Bistrot in Chelsea.

Max Geldray (1916-2004) was a Jewish-Dutch harmonica player who escaped

to Britain early in the war. In 1945 he returned to Amsterdam and discovered that his parents and sister were killed by the Nazis. He returned to London and in 1951 joined the cast of a new BBC radio series, *Crazy People* (which in 1952 became *The Goon Show*). The musical interludes came from Geldray and the Ray Ellington Quartet and Geldray's 'Crazy Rhythm' was the play-out music. In 1957 Geldray released an LP record of jazz standards, 'Goon with the Wind'. He left for America in the 1960s but returned briefly to the UK in 1972 for *The Last Goon Show of All*.

Ilya Gershevitch (1914-2001) was a Russian scholar of Iranian languages whose parents were stranded in Germany when war broke out in 1914 and fled to Switzerland. In 1938 he came to Britain, wrote a thesis on Sogdian, the language of pre-Islamic Samarkand and went on to teach Iranian studies at Cambridge from 1948 until his retirement in 2001. His books include *Grammar of Manichean Sogdian* (1954), *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* (1959) and *Philologia Iranica* (1985). He mastered seven Iranian languages.

Tutte Lemkow, (1918-91), a Norwegian-Jewish dancer and choreographer was born in Oslo and fled Norway on skis. He came to Britain and became a film actor in the early 1950s and is best known today for playing the fiddler in the film, *Fiddler on the Roof*. He married the actress Mai Zetterling.

Erna Low (1909-2002) was an Austrian-born tour operator and pioneer of package travel. She helped establish the popularity of the ski holiday, introducing a wider, less privileged clientele to winter-sports. Born in Vienna, her father was Jewish. She left Vienna in 1938. During the war she monitored German radio broadcasts for British intelligence and after the war set up Erna Low Travel Services. She was also responsible for the introduction, in the mid-1950s, of the chalet holiday and when she died her estate was valued at over £4 million.

Eva von Sacher-Masoch, Baroness Erisso (1911-91) was a Jewish-Austrian aristocrat and dancer. She was the grand-niece of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-95), who gave his name to the term 'masochism' and was the mother of Marianne Faithfull. Born in Budapest,

when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, her mother was Jewish. She moved to Vienna and then Berlin where she worked as a ballerina and danced for productions of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill. At the outbreak of the war, she returned to her parents' home in Vienna and lived there for the duration of the war. When the British arrived to occupy part of the liberated city, Sacher-Masoch fell in love with Major Robert Glynn Faithfull, a British Army officer and spy and in 1946 they had their only child, daughter Marianne Faithfull and lived together in Oxfordshire, before separating six years later. She later moved to Reading, and worked as a waitress at Sally's Café in Friar Street.

Andrew Sachs (1930-2016) was born in Berlin as Andreas Siegfried Sachs. His father was Jewish and he lost almost fifty relatives in the Holocaust. In 1938 his family escaped to Britain and in a long acting career Andrew became best known for playing the luckless Spanish waiter Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*.

Boris Schapiro (1909-2002) was a Jewish-Latvian bridge player and gambler. He was born in Riga to a wealthy Jewish family of horse-traders who escaped to St. Petersburg in 1914 and then left Russia after the Revolution and came to Britain in 1918. He later worked for his father in Hamburg but left for the UK in 1935 after a fight with two Brownshirts. He served in the Army Intelligence Corps during the war and later became one of Britain's most famous bridge players. In 1946 he won the first of his ten Gold Cups and from 1966-2002 he was the bridge correspondent of *The Sunday Times*.

These extraordinary lives offer a fascinating glimpse into the world of Jewish refugees and the many ways they enriched British life, from clowns and bridge players to actors and harmonica players.

**David Herman**

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# A LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR COMPENSATION

**Business Minister Paul Scully explains why the government is this month consulting on a final date for those who faced the horrors of Nazi persecution to claim compensation.**

More than eight decades may have passed since the beginning of WW2, but the impact it had on millions of people is still felt today.

For the past two decades, the Enemy Property Claims Assessment Panel (EPCAP) has been compensating individuals from enemy nations whose assets in British territories were confiscated during the war. EPCAP's role has been to identify when those assets belonged to people who suffered Nazi persecution, and to make sure that these individuals were either compensated or had their property returned.

Over that time, the Panel has heard some amazing claims, including from the son of a Hungarian art collector who perished in the Holocaust, a German factory owner who smuggled a Jewish worker out of

France and various church groups who gave shelter to Jewish people and other minorities.

These schemes, universally recognised as among the most generous to operate worldwide, have offered these individuals and hundreds of other people rightful compensation for the horrors they faced during WW2, at the hands of Nazis and other totalitarian oppressors.

I am so proud to be one of many Ministers who have supported the Panel's tireless members over the years, and I would like to thank them for all the brilliant work they have done evaluating claims and ensuring justice is served.

Over the time they have been operating, the Panel has handled a staggering 1,200 claims, handing out more than £25 million in compensation to families across the world, but I believe that now is the time that we start drawing these excellent schemes to a conclusion, with new claims becoming increasingly rare.

The government is now consulting on a final date for claims to be submitted, with a provisional date set for **9 September 2022**.



Paul Scully MP

This is of course open to the views of stakeholders, so I would urge anyone with an interest in this scheme to respond to our consultation **by 31 March** via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/enemy-property-and-baltic-states-schemes-date-for-final-claims>

Our main concern is to make sure that no one misses out on the compensation they deserve, so I would urge anyone who feels that they or someone in their family are eligible to make sure they claim as soon as possible.

While we will never forget what happened in those dark days, I sincerely hope that these schemes have given individuals a measure of closure for the horrors they and their families faced during WW2.

**Paul Scully is the Conservative MP for Sutton and Cheam and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets).**

## #Don'tBeABystander

**The Claims Conference has launched a social media campaign to honour Righteous Rescuers, the individuals who risked everything, even their own lives, to save Jews during the Holocaust.**

The #DontBeABystander campaign uses a series of two-minute videos to highlight the heroic actions of non-Jewish individuals from all walks of life, including the dangers they faced to save Jewish men, women and children

in German-occupied Europe.

Developed in partnership with Yad Vashem, #DontBeABystander offers a unique perspective in Holocaust education – highlighting those individuals who put morality and humanity ahead of personal preservation. This lens has not been widely explored in the context of Holocaust education or on social media for a mainstream audience. As is the case with Holocaust survivors, the Righteous Among the Nations population is waning, and time is of the essence to hear their first-hand accounts.

To find out more please follow the campaign at #DontBeABystander or visit [www.dontbeabystander.org](http://www.dontbeabystander.org)



AJR member Ellen Davis (née Karry Wertheim) was recently presented with her MBE by HM Lord Lieutenant for West Glamorgan, Louise Fleet. Ellen, who arrived via Kindertransport and was fostered by a childless couple from Swansea, has spoken extensively about her own life and the fate of her family in Riga.

# CROWN OR SWASTIKA: WHEN SOUTH AFRICA HAD TO CHOOSE

**Thousands of refugees from Hitler prospered in racially-segregated South Africa. But in 1940 they faced a new threat: a hotbed of local Nazi sympathisers, mostly descendants of the original Dutch settlers, looked to the swastika to help them displace the British crown. Some were secret agents, working with Berlin to destabilise the country and undermine Britain's war effort. These anti British groups tended to be antisemitic as well; they had successfully campaigned in the 1930s to curb Jewish immigration severely.**

Using archives long closed to the public, the South African military historian, Evert Kleynhans, has now detailed the activities of some of these pro-Nazis. In his recently published *Hitler's South African Spies*, Dr Kleynhans describes how they informed Berlin about Allied merchant vessels sailing around the Cape of Good Hope – while Nazi submarines patrolled the strategically vital route. Backed by the Third Reich's intelligence network, the far-right 'fifth column' also spread sedition among die-hard white supremacists; they dreamed of a victorious Germany backing them in setting up an apartheid republic, after severing the Union's links with the British Empire.

The prospect of violent rebellion led the prime minister, the Britain-friendly Afrikaner, General Jan Smuts, to enact emergency measures, enabling the government to neutralise anti-war agitators and possible saboteurs. Smuts' main target was the largest of these pro-Berlin organisations – the Ossewa-Brandwag (ox-wagon sentinel). It had an estimated 300,000 members in 1942,

including two future apartheid prime ministers, John Vorster and Pieter Willem Botha. Set up to protect the Afrikaners' language and cultural identity, the OB turned political after the swift Nazi conquest of much of Europe. It created a militant branch – the *Stormjaers*, 'stormtroopers,' modelled on Hitler's *Sturmabteilung* or 'Brownshirts'. Its insignia resembled Nazi symbols.

Smuts interned OB members and banned civil servants from joining the belligerent OB; he prohibited the wearing of military style uniforms and instituted the death sentence for convicted saboteurs. That did not halt the pro-Nazi activities of the OB's charismatic leader, Hans van Rensburg. He had in 1936 visited Germany, where he met Hitler and other Nazi notables. He returned home 'radicalised': praising the Nazi ideology, he dismissed democratic elections as a futile British exercise. His paramilitary *Stormjaers*, in their bid to create unrest in the country and force the government to keep troops at home, now attacked soldiers on leave, dynamited power pylons and cut telephone lines. Van Rensburg contacted Berlin secretly, via the German consulate in the capital of neighbouring Mozambique, Lourenço Marques (Maputo today). There, Berlin's deputy consul, Luitpold Werz, built up a network in South Africa to provide him with intelligence for transmission to Germany.

Werz's link with the OB leader was a German immigrant, Lothar Sittig – code name 'Felix'. He had been interned twice as an 'enemy alien', and had escaped twice – with the OB's help and the connivance of his guards. He eventually reached Van Rensburg's farm, south-west of Johannesburg. From there, the couple sent coded messages via Werz to Berlin. Werz then asked Sittig and Van Rensburg to build a more powerful radio transmitter that could communicate directly with Germany, 9,000 miles away. Sourcing parts locally, including material stolen from a hospital, they achieved this considerable technical feat with the help of anti-British experts. Van Rensburg's agents, such as railway and harbour workers, provided details about South African troop movements or passing



ships. He evaluated the information, and passed it to Sittig, who transmitted it to Berlin. While the Allies intercepted and deciphered these communications, they failed to close down the transmitters or arrest Van Rensburg and Sittig. The OB had infiltrated the police, responsible for arresting suspected spies.

Although official post-war investigations offered enough incriminating evidence to prosecute Van Rensburg, Smuts had not charged him by the time the anti-British National Party won the general election in 1948. The new apartheid prime minister, Dr Daniel Malan, quashed the investigations, the damaging dossier disappeared. For years it was assumed that all copies of a key report had been lost to posterity, but Kleynhans located one, in the archives of Malan's justice minister, Charles R. Swart. It reinforced the case for the prosecution of Van Rensburg. Yet he was never put on trial, although he had carried out acts of wartime sabotage and conspired with Berlin to overthrow the government. Instead, after he died in 1966, he was given a state funeral: the alleged traitor became a patriot.

Two years earlier, in 1964, Nelson Mandela was found guilty of carrying out acts of sabotage and conspiring to overthrow the government. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour, and released after he had served 27 years.

*Hitler's South African Spies* is published by Jonathan Ball Publishers.

**Martin Mauthner**

# LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## THE CORONA EFFECT



When it all started, just about two years ago, everyone thought that the nasty bug known as Corona, or

Covid 19, would soon come to an end. When it didn't, precautionary measures were put into effect, with lockdowns, quarantine and the wearing of masks. People had to keep a certain distance from one another, and social mixing was either discouraged or actually forbidden.

Keeping apart from one another became a natural way of life. Physical proximity to anyone other than one's immediate family was suddenly seen as a threat to life and limb. No one wanted to end up in hospital on a life-support machine, cut off from virtually all human contact. Horror stories of children unable to bid farewell to a dying parent or, worse still, husbands and wives unable to do the same for one another, abounded.

Our lives, our whole way of living, changed. Doing the weekly supermarket shop became an almost insurmountable challenge. Deliveries by masked strangers who left packages of groceries outside the front door and departed without a word became almost the norm. One refrained from opening

one's front door until the delivery person had left.

Sometimes going to a shop or store was inevitable, and the experience was well-nigh traumatic. The other people there were regarded as a threat. You inspected the other customers to see if they were masked, and if so, whether the mask was properly over their mouth and nose. Going round a store was more like a law-enforcement operation than a normal daily activity. Everyone was regarded with suspicion. Everyone was a potential threat.

And so, either little by little or in one fell swoop, our social and cultural life came to an end. Travel abroad was more or less impossible. There were no more concerts, theatre performances or public lectures, and their replacement by Zoom or other screen-based interaction constituted a poor substitute for the things that had formerly made our lives more meaningful and interesting. Almost everything that had improved the quality of life disappeared. I feel particularly sorry for young people, who should be able to go out and enjoy life, but instead are being restricted to minimal contact with others.

And then, a year ago, the vaccinations appeared, and there was hope that our normal way of life could be resumed once more. The roll-out of vaccines went at different rates in different countries, with Israel managing to be at the forefront of this operation, and essentially the Western world seemed to be on the brink of a return to normality.

That, however, was not to be. The swell of people opposing vaccination for a variety of genuine or spurious reasons has remained steady and is still a threat to those of us – the majority – who have been vaccinated. It's a case of people who accept science and those who oppose it, and for the moment the minority that adheres to prejudice, superstition and/or delusion is able to restrict the freedom of everyone else.

It has become natural to avoid normal human contact. It has become customary to regard anyone who doesn't wear a mask as an anti-social being. And so, from living fairly gregarious lives, we find ourselves turning into misanthropic, distrustful people, shunning human contact, preferring to remain alone inside our homes rather than venturing out and mingling with other human beings. To a greater or lesser extent, we have all become paranoid.

The problem is, I don't know if we can ever go back to being the people we once were.



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# Letters to the Editor

To submit a letter please email [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk). Please note that the Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

## 'NITPICKING!'

Reading Meriel Schindler's comment (February) that she had not hitherto realised she might have been eligible for AJR membership, and combined with receiving a recent email announcing a new category of membership as 'Friends of the AJR' has caught me by surprise! I am not a refugee in the sense that led to the foundation of the AJR but I have been a member/supporter continuously of the AJR since 1980 out of interest in its activities and a wish to be associated with it. I regard myself as an 'imposter' member but my regular membership subscription and occasional financial donations to projects have never been refused! I have kept a complete set of the monthly *Journal* issues since I joined and I cannot recall ever seeing a mistake in the numerology until the January 2022 issue which is numbered Volume 22, No 11 when surely it should, be Volume 22, No 1?

It is mentioned too in the February 2022 issue that Geoffrey Weisgard's article on Jewish life in Buxton has also appeared in an issue of *Shemot* (the Journal of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain [JGSGB]). This is so, in Volume 29, No 1, but this issue is dated April 2021 and not March that year. Accuracy of sources being so important for genealogical research perhaps you can understand my "nitpicking" attitude at the *AJR Journal's* numerology error!  
*Dr Anthony Joseph, Emeritus President JGSGB, Smethwick*

## HOLOCAUST TALKS

I joined the Holocaust Education Outreach programme about four years ago, not last year as stated in the February *AJR Journal*. I was reluctant to do it for some time because it was not easy to talk about what had happened to me as a small child. I was persuaded to do so by Debra Barnes and Lisa Bayfield of AJR who, helped publish the *My Story* book.

Two reasons made me change my mind. The number of survivors is diminishing and we are living in a period of increasing hatred, intolerance and antisemitism.  
*Ivan Shaw, London*

## BELLIGERENT PHILOSOPHERS

David Herman entertainingly asks *Why did refugee intellectuals fight so much?* (February). The answer is obvious. His chosen quintet (Arendt, Berlin, Deutscher, Popper, Wittgenstein) were all philosophers and, Wittgenstein apart, political philosophers to boot. That is what philosophers do. There were no such shenanigans among, say, Bernard Katz, Hans Krebs, Rudolf Peierls and Max Perutz, to name but four. But then, they were scientists.  
*Peter Oppenheimer, Oxford*

## JEWISH LIFE IN BUXTON

It was interesting to read about the Jewish community in Buxton (February). I am in touch with a nephew of Shim Oster who served as chairman. Shim hosted the family when Norman had his barmitzvah there in August 1944 during the buzz bomb period. Rabbi Lopian revised the Sedra with him in the last few weeks before.  
*Rosalind Josephs, London NW11*

## 80 TREES FOR 80 YEARS

I, and indeed the 40 members of my family who were present, thank the AJR for giving us the opportunity to participate in the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations by sponsoring the oak tree in Cassiobury Park.

You did an excellent job in organising this memorable event which gave all branches of my family the chance to get together. My congratulations to the AJR for the 80 years of helping and serving our refugees and best wishes to all who work with you.  
*Victor Garston, London NW11*

We were happy and proud to attend the planting of one of the AJR's 80 Oaks at Russell Park in Bedford in December. The weather was beautiful (if cold!) and we were pleased that the Deputy Mayor of Bedford and a local Councillor were able to attend and that a representative of the Bedford Jewish Community recited the memorial prayer *El Mole Rachamim* so beautifully.

We hope that 'our' tree will thrive. We shall return from time to time to witness its development, and we also hope that our daughters and their families will visit it as the years go by, to witness this link to the first generation of my family to have been given refuge in England, and to the AJR.

With thanks again to the AJR for this excellent enterprise, and with good wishes to all.  
*David Horwell, Harpenden, Herts*

I owe my life to my parents. On Kristallnacht the Nazis smashed up our apartment in Leopoldstadt, and also destroyed my father's surgery. He was a doctor. It was then, and not till then, that my father decided he had to flee Vienna in order to save our lives. He had thought the Nazis had looked kindly upon him when he was one of the very few Jewish doctors allowed to continue his practice. Kristallnacht changed his mind, as did a patient who told him that she saw his name on a list for deportation to Dachau. Daily he went from Embassy to Embassy begging for an exit permit. Many times he was beaten up in the queues. The visas arrived in January 1939. In February we arrived in England.

Last month, through the auspices of the AJR, I dedicated a tree to my parents, Dr Marcus and Betti Pfeffer. It stands in Reveley Lodge, Bushey Heath. I was honoured to have present Robert Voss, Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, the only Jew to hold such a position, and whose parents had also been refugees. Other guests included Emeritus Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein of the Ark synagogue, the Mayor of Bushey, Anne Swerling, Jo Briggs, Editor of the *AJR Journal*, my wife Davida, three of my children, Caroline, Amanda and Richard, and granddaughter, Lottie. I am delighted to say that some survivors who lived locally also joined us, as did local friends.

The tree and plaque, dear parents, are for you. Mum and Dad, Mutti und Papa, you saved my life when I was just three years old. Now I am 86. Thank you.  
*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts*

A very impressive, well organised and deeply poignant tree planting ceremony took place in Radlett attended by Lord Lieutenant Robert Voss CBE, IP Deputy Lord Lieutenant Stuart Nagler, Chairman and members of Aldenham Parish Council, Rabbi Paul Freeman of Radlett Reform Synagogue, The Reverend Oliver Blease of Christ Church and St. John's Radlett, representatives from AJR, local interest groups and friends and family of the tree's sponsor, Dr. Peter Brent.

The sapling was planted and there were several moving speeches. Rabbi Freeman led the Remembrance prayer for those who perished in the Holocaust and this was followed by a prayer for all refugees by the Reverend Blease.

Congratulations AJR for yet another milestone in a major achievement.  
*Peter Brent, Aldenham, Herts*

### THE MUSIC PUBLISHERS OF LEIPZIG

Your article (February) brought back memories. The owner of the British offshoot of C F Peters, Max Hinrichsen, was my first ever employer. I worked for him for some months in 1957 while waiting for National Service call up. I parcelled up music scores, ran errands and made tea for the small team he employed in a distinctly cramped office in Shoreditch. This was well before gentrification took hold and I was introduced to a bustling working-class world, its particular argot and its numerous greasy spoon cafés. I acquired a lifelong skill in parcel wrapping and, at cost, piano scores of the greats as well as many of those miniature Eulenburg orchestral scores.

What I didn't know at the time were the tribulations, in common with so many others, he experienced in establishing the company after the war. In particular, he and his company had been taken to Court in 1950 by a major UK music publishing company over copyright issues, the complexity of which went back to the "arianisation" of C F Peters 10 years or so before. Max and his company were fully vindicated in the case (but at considerable expense) and at the subsequent appeal. I am not a lawyer but the

# LOOKING FOR?

### FRITZI MARK/FRIEDERIKE BURSTEIN

Carsten Wilhelm-Nixdorf seeks descendants, relatives or acquaintances of Friederike Burstein, born Vienna on 24 January 1888. She was an actress and author who emigrated to London in 1938/39. In the 1950s, under the name Fritzi Mark, she published the novel *The Endless Peril*.  
[cwinix@gmx.de](mailto:cwinix@gmx.de)

### AUSTRIAN DP CAMPS RESEARCH

Dr. Rachel Blumenthal of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem is researching the lives of Jewish refugees in Austria after WW2 and would especially like to hear about any Holocaust survivors who lived in displaced persons' camps in Upper Austria or Salzburg in the years 1945-1950.  
[rachelblumenthal@gmail.com](mailto:rachelblumenthal@gmail.com)

### "THE SCHLESINGER HOSTEL"

In 1938 the mother of Dr. David Goldmeier brought 12 children from Berlin to London at the instigation of Dr. Bernard Schlesinger, a paediatrician at Great Ormond Street who rented a large house in Hornsey. One of the children wrote an unpublished book entitled *The Schlesinger Hostel*. Dr. Goldmeier would like to hear from any former residents or their descendants.  
[david.goldmeier@outlook.com](mailto:david.goldmeier@outlook.com)

### RELATIVES SOUGHT

Kevin Markey is seeking contact with relatives of the following refugees: Marga Forester (Levy), Paula Bennett (lived in Kings Heath, Birmingham), Gisela Seligman Wolf. Marga & Gisela moved to the USA.  
[kevmarkey08@aol.com](mailto:kevmarkey08@aol.com)

### BYDOWN HOUSE, FARM SCHOOL, WILTSHIRE

Jane Irving's father-in-law, Kurt Eining, who escaped Germany in 1939, was sent to Bydown House, Swinbridge, Nr Barnstable, Devon, in 1940 to work on the farm. This may have been a training farm/school. She would very much like to hear from anyone who knows anything about Bydown House.  
[irwingjane@gmail.com](mailto:irwingjane@gmail.com)

### SPYING ON HITLER'S ARMY

A recent BBC4 film focused on the role played by German Jewish refugees in the British army where they listened to bugged conversations between the captured German army officers at Trent Park. Michael Heppner wonders whether anyone recognises someone in this photograph (below) of the team of "listeners" whose work helped shape military operations? Their exposure of the flying bomb factories at Peenemunde led to their destruction by our bombers.  
[mheppner@btinternet.com](mailto:mheppner@btinternet.com)



case report can be found on line and makes for interesting reading.

One of the piano scores in dispute was Sinding's very popular "Rustle of Spring". All very ironic because eight weeks before his death in 1941, Sinding joined the Norwegian Nazi party! (It has to be said that there was evidence of long term dementia and it has been suggested that he was not aware of his action in joining).

Of course, I also didn't know that Max would have been brought up as a child in Leipzig with the original, iconic painting by J K Stieler of Beethoven waiting for inspiration as he composes the *Missa Solemnis*. Henri Hinrichsen bought the painting in 1909. Max's brother, Walter, was able to retrieve it after the war. There are a number of copies but the original now hangs in the Beethovenhaus in Bonn.  
*Steven Dorner, London*

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

He may not be the artist you most want to hang on your lounge wall. But without doubt **Francis Bacon** is one of the greatest and most fearless painters of the 20th Century. From the biomorphic creatures of his earliest work he develops his concept of the beast within man and doesn't flinch one jot from daubing it onto our consciousness.

The **Royal Academy's** exhibition **Francis Bacon: Man and Beast** reveals his familiar screaming popes, those garlanded individuals who reach the top of the religious tree only to be reduced in Bacon's vision to screaming primates beneath the protective layers of ermine and purple.

He challenges religious symbolism. In *Fragment of a Crucifixion* (1950) the cross is a thick black shadow to which two screaming creatures cling in their blooded pain. Unlike any other artist Bacon shrinks the crucifixion to simple animal barbarism. Elsewhere there are undefined animal shapes with upturned jowls and bad teeth, adding the metaphor of a human ear and head and shoulders. Yes, it is grisly and it makes you wonder at the tortured mind which created it. Bacon transforms a human figure into a four-legged creature (*Paralytic Child Walking on All Fours*, derived from a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century photographic series by Eadweard Muybridge, and in Bacon's painting, this pallid, pathetic creature seems to be either literally aping the animal within or searching for its animal soul.

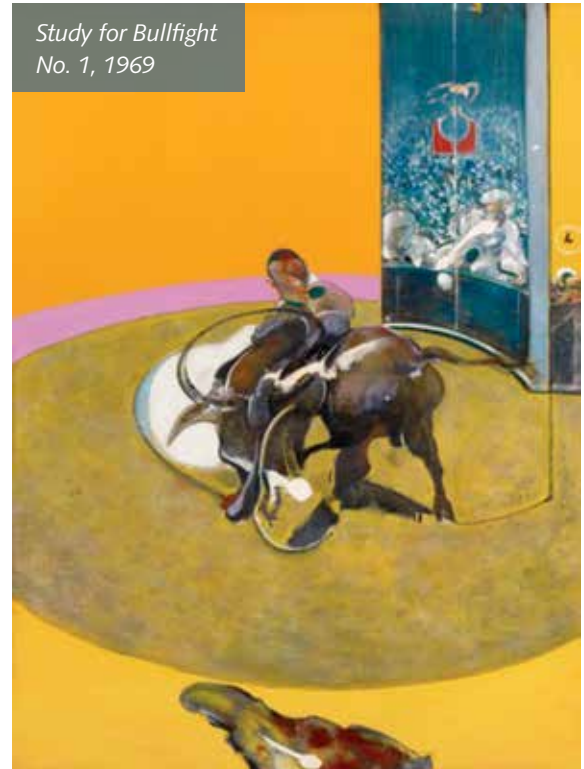
In *Two Studies from the Human Body* (1974-5) again we are looking at simian creatures, one with swinging arm movements, the other squat and defensive. Muybridge's studies of wrestlers enabled Bacon to paint erotica, like *Two Figures in the Grass*, which was investigated by the police before the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality

in 1967. In fact his own sexuality is never blatant, always furtive.

The exhibition opens with *Head 1*, the creature with the human ear and the fangs, which leaves you in no doubt that you will be treated to an animal-fest of flesh and blood. Yet, returning to his crucifixion scene, its jagged paint and tiny motets of people walking or travelling to their worldly destinations, you realise that difficult though his work is, he is the painter brave enough to portray in his oeuvre the demonic beings which he suggests lie deep within us all. To quote TS Eliot's poem, *Whispers of Immortality*: "Webster was much possessed by death/And saw the skull beneath the skin;/And breastless creatures underground /Leaned backward with a lipless grin".

Bacon's early life was a tough one. He grew up on a stud farm in Ireland where his perceptions of animal life would gradually inform the way he perceived mankind. Bacon lost his younger brother, Edward, at boarding school when he was 12 in 1927. Two years later his older brother Harley died in former Northern Rhodesia. He achieved early success in 1933 with his *Crucifixion*, but a year later an exhibition of his work won scathing reviews and was rejected by the International Surrealist Exhibition in London, causing him to destroy most of his paintings. Nothing produced between 1937 and 1943 survives. There is no doubt that the impact of the war years darkened Bacon's view of humanity. It all lay before him in his consciousness: Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the entire tumult of man's inhumanity to man. Ecce Homo, he is saying, but not in the way it is usually interpreted.

More tragedy would haunt his romantic life; his two lovers die on the eve of his shows; Peter Lacy in 1962, and George Dyer in 1971 from drug and alcohol



Study for Bullfight  
No. 1, 1969

overdoses two days before the opening of his major Paris retrospective. *Dyer triptych*, (August 1972), brutally conveys his lover's dying, but his earlier *Study for a Portrait of PL No 1* (1957), or *Portrait of George Dyer Crouching* (1966) are the closest we get here to see Bacon's tenderness.

What shapes his mind, we still ask: is it man or animal staring out at us through the striations of paint? Or both – or are they the same? It is not just the animal shriek within Bacon's work; it is the grim, grey-whiteness of the flesh itself, the sense that both man and animal are conceived merely as raw meat. When Bacon does show you a human portrait it is filtered through the lines of a curtain, as in *Study of the Human Head*, (1953) but even here you can glimpse the bared teeth of an animal in search of prey. As with his lover paintings, Bacon's 1969 bullfight series show a sensitivity to the stricken bull. The matador is a murky, indistinct figure – and perhaps here is the true apotheosis of man's intrusion into the animal world.

*Royal Academy until 17 April*

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CONTEMPORARY  
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

# Life and fiction

The remains of the women's prison on Goli Otok island, Croatia

**Vesna Domany Hardy, born in Croatia, survived the war as a Hidden Child. In her powerful testimony she recounts her family's experiences during the war, as well as postwar imprisonment in Tito's 'gulag'. Here she discusses whether it is appropriate that such experiences be made into works of fiction.**

David Grossman's novel *More Than I Love My Life*, even if a brilliant work of literature, has caused me psychological tumult on several levels. It also confronted me with a dilemma: should I judge it on its literary merit – on which it is faultless – or should I consider it as the documentary evidence of the experiences suffered by my mother, Eva, and a dozen others I knew (who underwent the horrors of the Goli Otok imprisonment) and my own experiences as a child of eight, separated from my mother who was taken away for several years.

Grossman, as is a novelist's prerogative, fictionalised the story of the Goli Otok survivor who inspired him. Her unjustified and horrific imprisonment enabled him to focus on the main theme: how the trauma is passed on through the second and third generations, and probably further.

My dilemma is already a much debated question regarding presentation of the Holocaust, for example in the book and film *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* or the film *Life is Beautiful*. Must the full atrocity be presented, as established by facts and the testimony of the survivors, or is it acceptable to romanticise it, to make it accessible for a wider audience? Those who have suffered as victims, or their children, are in no doubt. My family, nearly all obliterated by the Holocaust, in addition suffered the trauma of the lesser known horrors of political imprisonment on Goli Otok.

In 1942, when I was ten months old, in order to save us both from deportation and certain death in Auschwitz which befell the rest of my family in Croatia, my



© ANDREA KULUNČIĆ

mother joined the Resistance. Luckily, a courageous family in Zagreb took me in, even though it could have cost them their lives. I was reunited with my mother when she was demobilised in the summer of 1945 when I was 4 and she 25. Without a home or any other family, she started again. She was a true survivor, but also a journalist. She frequently reported on the trials of war criminals, learning about the death of 37 members of her father's Bosnian Sephardic family in the Ustashi's camps. This on top of the murder by fascists of her husband (my father) and her own father in 1941 in Croatia.

In 1946 my mother married the editor of the main Zagreb newspaper. Soon they had a baby boy and a new life which, though short-lived, was the happiest part of my childhood. In 1949 Tito's Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet bloc. In consolidating the Communist Party, its leadership devised how to stifle any criticism from what they called 'bourgeois intelligentsia' by claiming it was a "pro-Stalinist treachery". They applied Stalin's methods of arbitrary arrests without proven guilt, court trials or defence. Thus Tito's gulag came into being, located on first one and later two rocky islands off the Croatian coast. Nominally it was for "re-education"; in fact it was slave labour, degradation, humiliation and torture and, in some cases, death. From 1949 to 1954 100,000 people passed through these horrors.

By the time I was eight, first my stepfather and then my mother had become victims; I remember the night arrests by the UDBA agents, their senseless search of our home, the morning after when we children were left in the mess, with only a kind maid to look after us before the eviction took place. Fortunately for my toddler brother, his father's family took him in, but as I had no blood relations left, I was sent to the Children' Home. I own that in those hard postwar years no children were left in the streets, and the care those homes provided for thousands of war orphans was as adequate as any such institution could give.

My mother only dared tell me about her experience of that horrific imprisonment when staying in my home in London in 1979. But before she died, my mother as Eva Grlic, in her much-praised book *Memories*, described the imprisonment on Goli Otok in a chapter considered among the best analytical testimonies recorded on the subject.

As for me, I have participated in several projects (one ongoing) researching this history, including visiting Goli Otok and concentrating on the imprisonment of 861 women there. I have lived a full and interesting life and it pains me in my mature years that the childhood traumas inflicted on my family and me resurge in a book fictionalising the experience.



The AJR helped author Tom Palmer to engage directly with pupils at over 250 schools.



The AJR was proud once again to sponsor the HMD event at the University of Sussex.

# A busy season for Teaching and Learning

**For many schools and universities, the period around Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is the ideal time to focus on lessons, activities and projects relating to the Holocaust. Several of the AJR's funding partners offer examples of what this looks like in practice.**

In 2021, we were pleased to offer an educational grant to the National Literacy Trust for the first time for their project centring around the book *After the War* by author Tom Palmer. The book is a fictionalised but accurate account of the so called 'Windermere Boys' – the group of survivors who spent time recovering in the Lake District following their liberation.

The Trust produced a range of educational resources to use, including a story written and read especially for HMD in five instalments by Tom Palmer; a video assembly presentation for use on HMD; videos and worksheets to support and inspire pupils to write their own responses; and a teachers' guide. They also organised a free online Q&A event with Palmer and Mala Tribich, a Holocaust survivor, on HMD. More than 17,000 pupils from over 250 schools registered to attend.

In Wales, a partnership between the Jewish History Association of South Wales (JHASW) and Aberystwyth University

has been working for several months to produce a range of Welsh-language teaching resources about the Holocaust. In the lead up to HMD, the first four of these were published on the website of the People's Collection Wales and on Hwb, the Welsh government's official educational online portal, accessed by all schools in the country. These four lessons focus on Jewish refugees who settled in Wales.

The first two lessons explore the life of a young Austrian Jewish girl, Dorothy Fleming, before she arrived in Cardiff and her journey in 1938 on a Kindertransport. The third lesson explores the story of Bea Green, a German Jewish child refugee, who travelled to Britain on Kindertransport and lived in Wales after her school was evacuated there. And the fourth lesson explores a range of locations across Wales where the Kindertransportees lived and the impact of Kindertransport on local history in Wales.

The AJR was proud once again to once again sponsor the HMD event at the University of Sussex. This annual event originated in 2001, the first of its kind in the country. This year the event was held online and featured the testimony of Hella Pick CBE who reflected on her experiences of leaving her home in Austria and coming to the UK to start a new life. She spoke about her thoughts and experiences of coming to terms with her own Jewish identity throughout

her life, after fleeing the Nazis in her home country. This was followed by an interview with Ivor Gaber, Professor of Political Journalism.

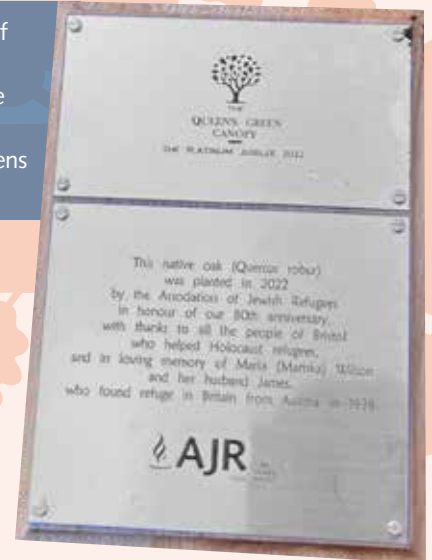
Sussex's HMD event also featured a screening of the film *Masel Tov Cocktail* and a discussion between its director Arkadij Khaet and Judy Ironside MBE, Founder and President, UK Jewish Film Festival. The short film, has featured at Jewish Film festivals in the UK, Europe, the United States, South America, and Asia, winning a string of awards along the way. It deals with the struggles of a Russian-Jewish teenager living in Germany today.

These sorts of HMD events inspire many teachers to seek out continuing professional development opportunities to help them become better equipped to teach about the Holocaust. Such courses are a central priority area of the AJR's grant funding programme.

From February 19-22 nearly 40 teachers from across the country participated in the Holocaust Educational Trust's annual *Exploring the Holocaust* course, which the AJR is supporting for the third year. This programme, also being held online this year, is designed for primary and secondary school teachers who wish to explore the Holocaust through a variety of subjects including History, Citizenship/PSHE, Religious Education/Philosophy and English. Discussions explored the benefits and challenges of cross-curricular collaboration.

# One Tree-mendous Week

One example of the many AJR plaques that are now in place in parks and gardens around the UK



Forty different towns and cities around the UK chose to mark this year's Holocaust Memorial Day by planting an oak tree in honour of AJR members, as part of our remarkable **80 Trees for 80 Years** campaign.

In a week of events that embraced well over a thousand people, including dozens of Mayors, MPs and other local dignitaries, we also saw unprecedented media coverage as local newspapers, radio & TV stations throughout the country covered our campaign.

On **Monday 24 January** trees were planted in **Bushey, Dorchester, Dorking & Radlett**, including:

- Sir Erich Reich planted a tree at the Dorking school he attended after arriving by Kindertransport from Austria as a 4-year old.

On **Tuesday 25 January** trees were planted in **Leicester, Prestwich, Sandwich**, including:

- Manfred Kalb, who fled to Britain with his parents in 1940, planted a tree in Sandwich where his father Mendel spent many months at an internment camp.
- The widow of Ben Abeles, a renowned physicist who fled to the UK and designed the technology behind the Voyager space shuttles, planted a tree in Western Park, Leicester in his honour.

On **Wednesday 26 January** one tree was planted in **Gateshead** and second generation members planted trees in **two Enfield** parks in honour of their parents, who managed to escape, and their grandparents, who perished in the Holocaust.

On **Thursday 27 January** 23 trees were planted: **Ashford, Bath, Bournemouth, Bradford, Dawlish, Ealing, Farnham, Glyndebourne, Gosforth, Haslemere, Ilfracombe, Ilkley, Ipswich, Llanwrtyd Wells, London (Hyde Park), Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Southampton, Sunderland, Tynemouth, Walsall**, including:

- Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, who came on the last Kindertransport train from Prague, planted a tree in the Welsh village where she stayed
- The widow and family of tenor Charles Danson, who fled Germany in 1936, planted a tree where he performed at Glyndebourne
- The Chief Rabbi planted a tree in London's Hyde Park to honour the AJR's 80th anniversary and, in particular, its founding secretary Werner Rosenstock
- Newcastle City Council planted a tree in front of the Civic Centre in appreciation of all the Jewish refugees who have greatly enriched the city
- Trees were planted in Ashford (Woodchurch) and Ilkley to commemorate schools that were set up there for Kindertransport children

- The widow of George Rosney planted a tree in Ilfracombe where her husband was stationed with the Pioneer Corps after he fled Germany in 1939

On **Friday 28 January** two trees were planted in **Leeds**, one by brothers Ernest & Kurt Simon and the other by sisters Vivien Freeman & Judy Corre. Both families escaped persecution in Germany and made their homes in Leeds.

On **Sunday 30 January** the daughters of the late Kurt Weinberg planted a tree to honour him and the other refugee children who were evacuated to the Cornish village of **Mousehole**, while Bruno Ferber planted a tree in **Shefford** where he was personally evacuated with the Jewish Secondary School, after arriving from Germany in 1939.

All the trees are now featured on the new UK Holocaust Map ([www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk](http://www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk)) and also under The Queen's Green Canopy ([www.queensgreencanopy.org](http://www.queensgreencanopy.org)), the nationwide tree planting initiative that marks this year's Platinum Jubilee and whose spokesperson said: "Thank you so much for all the planting that AJR has been doing across the UK. Seeing the wonderful photos is so uplifting."

We are delighted to share some of the photos with you here.





Tree sponsored by Michael Rosenstock in honour of Werner Rosenstock  
London (Hyde Park)  
27 January



Tree 1 sponsored by Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines in honour of all the children evacuated by Kindertransport from Prague to Llanwrtyd Wells with her. Tree 2 sponsored by Ellen Petzal in honour of Harry Petzal  
Llanwrtyd Wells  
27 January



Tree sponsored by David Schiff in honour of Leo Arjeh Schiff and Miriam Schiff (née Kopelman)  
Enfield (Bury Lodge)  
26 January



Tree sponsored by Annie Doctors & Mendel Markinson in honour of Mrs Feiga Markinson (née Marek)  
Enfield (Bush Hill Park)  
26 January



Tree sponsored by Tom Barth in honour of Robert Barth  
Farnham  
(Rowledge School)  
27 January





Tree sponsored by Margot Fraser in honour of Herta (née Joseph) and Michael Fraser (formerly Manfred Fruhling)  
**Ashford**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Charlotte Balazs in honour of Johann Balazs and Johanna Balazs (nee Weisz)  
**Bournemouth**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Sidonia Farago in honour of Ernest Kohut  
**Bradford**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Peter Phillips in honour of Marcus and Betti Pfeffer  
**Bushey**  
24 January



Tree sponsored by Michael Haffner in honour of Anne Haffner  
**Ealing (Lammas Park)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Michael Hilsenrath in honour of William Hilsenrath  
**Bath (Eckweek Play Park)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Helen Abeles/Pearson in honour of Ben Abeles  
**Leicester**  
25 January



Tree sponsored by Hanneke Dye in honour of family members who perished in the Holocaust  
**Ilkley**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Gerald & Monica Stern in honour of Eve & George Loble and Gaby & Freddy Stern  
**Gosforth**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Yvonne Gordon in honour of Hortense Gordon  
**Gateshead (Avondale Park)**  
26 January



Tree sponsored by Gary Zucker in honour of Lilly Scherer Zucker and Joseph Zucker  
**Walsall (Barr Beacon Reserve)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by George Donath in honour of Anne Judith Donath  
**Tynemouth (Tynemouth Park)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by David Kett in honour of Lottie and George Kett (Katz)  
**Southampton (Common)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Ron Burnett in honour of Sophie Burnett (née Grunspan) and Walter Burnett (né Inlander)  
**Sunderland (Minster Park)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Peter Goddard in honour of Margit Goddard, Walter Goddard and Lilly Ullman  
**Nottingham (National Holocaust Centre)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by John Martins in honour of Martin Martins (Schmalz)  
**Prestwich (The Fed)**  
25 January



Tree sponsored by Vivian Freeman & Judy Corre in honour of Sidney and Thilde Brook Leeds (Roundhay Park) 28 January



Tree sponsored by Audrey Rosney in honour of George Rosney, né Rosenfeld Ilfracombe 27 January



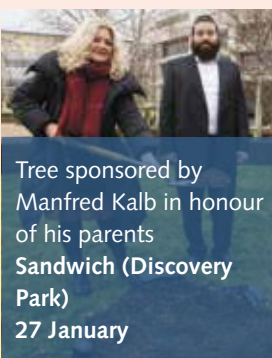
Tree sponsored by Clari Morgan in honour of Adolf & Netty Blond Haslemere (St Christopher's) 27 January



Tree sponsored by Bruno Ferber in honour of Rosa Ferber Shefford 1 February



Tree sponsored by Jackie Danson in honour of Charles Danson and Ruth Boronow Danson Glyndebourne 27 January



Tree sponsored by Manfred Kalb in honour of his parents Sandwich (Discovery Park) 27 January



Tree sponsored by Frank Land in honour of Louis and Sofia Landsberger Plymouth (Peace Garden) 27 January



Tree sponsored by Peter Brent in honour of Geza and Gisela Bischitz Radlett (King George V Field) 24 January



Tree sponsored by Rachel Meller & Claudia Pim in honour of Ilse Epstein and Josef Melle  
**Norwich (Chapel Field Gardens)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Miriam & Stephen Kramer in honour of Fritz (Frederic) Kramer, Lotte Kramer, Siegfried Leopold and Charlotte Leopold  
**Ipswich (Northgate High School)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Rachel Schaufeld in honour of Avram Schaufeld  
**Dawlish (Orchard Manor School)**  
27 January



Tree sponsored by Charlotte & Ruth Weinberg in honour of Kurt W. Weinberg  
**Mousehole (Cholera Field)**  
30 January



Tree sponsored by Ernest & Kurt Simon in honour of Karoline and Ludwig Simon  
**Leeds (Roundhay Park)**  
28 January



Tree sponsored by City of Newcastle in honour of the Jewish community who fled Nazi persecution and found refuge in Newcastle  
**Newcastle (Civic Centre)**  
27 January



Tree planted in honour of Francoise Robertson  
**Bury (Hamilton Park)**  
23 January



Tree sponsored by Sir Erich Reich in honour of Mina and Schapse Reich  
**Dorking (Ashcombe School)**  
24 January



Tree sponsored by Leonard Honey in honour of Henry and Lila Honey  
**Dorchester (Thomas Hardye School)**  
24 January

# PORTRAIT PRIDE

AJR wishes to congratulate all of our members who were selected as subjects for the remarkable series of portraits recently displayed at Buckingham Palace to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

HRH The Prince of Wales, who is Patron of the National Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, commissioned seven leading artists to paint portraits of seven remarkable Holocaust survivors, each of whom has in recent years been honoured for services to Holocaust awareness and education.

The profoundly moving portraits are now part of the Royal Collection and stand as a powerful testament to the extraordinary resilience and courage of those who survived.

Manfred Goldberg sitting for Clara Drummond



The seven sitters and artists are:  
**Helen Aronson** painted by Paul Benney  
**Lily Ebert** painted by Ishbel Myerscough  
**Manfred Goldberg** painted by Clara Drummond  
**Arek Hersh** painted by Massimiliano Pironti  
**Anita Lasker-Wallfisch** painted by Peter Kuhfeld  
**Rachel Levy** painted by Stuart Pearson Wright  
**Zigi Shipper** painted by Jenny Saville



# TIME TO HALT: EASTER IN RIGA

Every March an event takes place in Latvia that needs to be stopped now, argues **Christopher Hale**.

It was Easter 2010 and bone shockingly cold in Riga, Latvia's capital city. The Daugava river was flecked with ice. A freezing fog lowered over the city. I had travelled here to join protestors from all over the world to demonstrate against a memorial march by veterans of the 'Latvian Legion'. The name sounds inoffensive, but the legionaries had served in two Waffen-SS Divisions mustered by the Nazi high command in 1943 and thrown into battle as the Soviet Army smashed into the Baltic States in 1944. On that freezing day, the spectre of collaboration in the Nazi Holocaust reared its ugly head once again.

Since 1998, Riga has honoured the surviving Latvia Legionnaires each and every 16 March. I watched the elderly veterans hurry through flurries of snow to enter Riga's 800 year old Lutheran cathedral, then march through the city towards Riga's Freedom Monument. It was here that we had gathered, held back behind lines of rather formidable Latvian policemen. 'Shame on you!' I heard; 'What is there to be proud of?'. Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre was there, surrounded by journalists and denouncing the commemoration as 'deeply offensive'.

Many Latvians are divided about the Easter commemoration – and by the bitter history of their nation, summoned into existence after WW1 and successively occupied by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union with catastrophic consequences. These occupations are like memory wounds in Latvian memories.

But a vast moral gulf gapes open between the Soviet and Nazi periods. For under German rule, the Jewish citizens of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were brought to the very brink of extinction by SS murder squads, known as Einsatzgruppen, and local collaborators who eagerly joined in round-ups and mass killings. It is only by erasing or diminishing the Baltic holocaust that a soothing narrative of Latvian victimhood can be told. The 67,000 Latvian Jews who were murdered came from families who had lived in Latvia for centuries; people who



Protestors calling for a Latvia without Nazism being held back by police

PHOTO: JOSEPH KORNEN 16.03.2010

spoke Latvian; traded with Latvians and were Latvian by all accounts. I had spoken or corresponded with writers and historians who vehemently argued the memory of the young Latvian men who joined the Legion should not be stained by the mass killings of Latvian Jews in 1941/2. Latvian historian Andrew Ezergailis claims in his book *The Holocaust in Latvia, 1941-1944* that the Latvian Legion had 'nothing to do with the Holocaust'.

So, let's be very clear about the facts. In 1943 the collaborationist puppet government of occupied Latvia complied with the German request to conscript tens of thousands of young Latvians to form two Waffen SS divisions. Many of the conscripts were swayed by German propaganda that they would be defending Latvia against the hated Bolsheviks. A kind of semantic trick was played on these young Latvians: as a conscript, you might well believe that you were fighting against the hated Soviets. At least a third of those who served in the Latvian Waffen-SS divisions were volunteers who willingly donned SS uniforms to defend Hitler's shrinking empire.

There is an even darker side to the history of the Latvian Legion. The elite core of the Latvian Waffen-SS divisions recruited in 1943 comprised former members of Latvian 'Security Police' units. When the German murder squads crossed the Latvian border in 1941 they began recruiting locals and found many willing executioners to do the

dirty work of identifying, rounding up and murdering Latvian Jews. The volunteers, such as members of the infamous 'Arājs Kommando' were fanatical haters of Bolsheviks and Jews and they proved themselves as diligent killers. In 1943, when the Germans began recruiting foreign Waffen-SS divisions in Latvia, the period of mass killing was over – and the men of the Arājs Kommando joined the Legion.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the history of the Latvian Waffen-SS divisions has been misremembered, misrepresented and misused. Seventy years ago the Nuremberg judges got it right: the SS, including its military wing, was a 'criminal organisation.' The judgement went on: 'The truth is that the SS actively participated in all these crimes, on a scale larger and more shocking than the world has ever had the misfortune to know. This must be said.'

And said again... It is time to halt the Easter commemorations of the SS Legion in Riga.

**Christopher Hale** is a producer, journalist and author of a number of books about the Holocaust, including *Hitler's Foreign Executioners: Europe's Dirty Secret* (2011) and *Deception: How the Nazis Tricked the Last Jews of Europe* (2019).

Add YOUR voice to the petition to STOP the 16 March marches:  
[www.petitions24.com/stop\\_the\\_16\\_march\\_marches\\_and\\_latvians\\_revising\\_history](http://www.petitions24.com/stop_the_16_march_marches_and_latvians_revising_history)

# Trailblazers in Glasgow

**The hidden Holocaust-era history of the Garnethill area of Glasgow is revealed in a new walking trail from the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre which showcases buildings connected with Jewish refugees who came to Glasgow before, during and after WW2.**

The Garnethill Refugee Trail begins at Garnethill Synagogue on Hill Street, where a house in the synagogue grounds was used as a Boys' Hostel for children who came on the *Kindertransport*. Many of the children attended the local primary school, Garnetbank.

Further along Renfrew Street at Glasgow School of Art, Jewish sculptor Benno Schotz helped refugee artists who arrived in the city. Refugee artists who later taught there were

sculptor Paul Zunterstein, artist Frederick Selby and architect Isi Metzstein. The trail extends to Sauchiehall Street, where the Refugee Club (on part of the site of the current Dental Hospital) was an invaluable hub for refugees to meet each other and to mix with local people.

To get your copy of the Trail go to <https://sjhc.org.uk/jewish-glasgow-garnethill-refugee-trail/> and download the pdf: <https://sjhc.org.uk/downloads/>

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HEROES

Registrations are invited for a memorial walk of 130 kilometres dedicated to Rudolf Vrba and Alfréd Wetzler, who risked their lives to try to save Hungarian Jews from certain death. Their escape from Auschwitz and the report they compiled is a significant moment in the history of the Holocaust.

Based on a vision by Rudolf Vrba's late daughter, Zuzana, the Vrba Wetzler Memorial route is divided into five walking days, with one day of rest, and will take place from 31 July – 6 August 2022.

To register please go to: [on.icej.org/Vrba-Wetzler-2022](https://on.icej.org/Vrba-Wetzler-2022)

## A 2G TREAT

**AJR member Joan Pollack recently celebrated her birthday at the Czech Club in London's West Hampstead and reports that the building is splendid as ever, ornately decorated and creating a unique vintage welcoming, warm ambiance.**

The event was a joint meeting of the Association of Children of Jewish Refugees and the Second Generation Network. Though I live in North London where there is an undeniably sizeable Jewish community I have recently endeavoured to meet more local people with a similar background.

I have never had a close large family network: my parents both survived concentration camps and worse;

The elegant dining room in the Czech Club



consequently their families were strewn asunder by the Nazis. It has always been thus but lately I have been feeling the need to belong somewhere.

This meeting with eight other members of the second generation felt like a united, sharing event of kindness and sympathy. It was undoubtedly helped by the delicious food, with the nine gleaming white empty plates visibly displaying our appreciation, all at a suitably safe distance from one another. I look forward to many more gatherings with like-minded descendants of Jewish refugees.

## Szloma Albam Scholarship

**The Szloma-Albam Foundation invites applicants for four scholarships that are available to Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste volunteers.**

The scholarships are primarily aimed at Jewish volunteers who – regardless of their religious orientation and practice – would like actively to support a democratic, liberal and open society.

The volunteers are involved in a wide range of projects aimed at combating discrimination against people on the basis of religion, sexual identity, skin colour or language. They support socially disadvantaged people, e.g. refugees or homeless people, people with disabilities and survivors of Nazi persecution and their relatives. They work in memorials, archives and museums, in peace and human rights organisations. They actively campaign against antisemitism, racism and other forms of group-based hostility in the present.

Every year, ASF sends up to 180 volunteers for a one-year service to 14 countries in Europe, Israel and the USA. [www.szlorna-albam-stiftung.de](http://www.szlorna-albam-stiftung.de)

# HERITAGE TRIP TO VIENNA



The AJR is delighted to invite some of our 2G and 3G members to join us for a week long heritage trip to Vienna this summer.

Organised by The Jewish Welcome Service Vienna, which was set up in 1980 especially to organise visits by expelled Viennese and their descendants, the AJR trip is likely to start on either 27 June or 4 July 2022. It is exclusively open to the children and grandchildren of Jewish refugees from Vienna.

The itinerary will include a walking tour of Jewish Vienna, museum visits – including the Jewish Museum, the Kindertransport Museum and the House of Austrian History – and guided visits to many important sites including the City Temple, Rachel Whiteread’s Shoah Memorial and the new Shoah Wall

of Names Memorial. The organisers will also provide support in family tracing and arrange meetings with other descendants, opinion leaders & professionals engaged in memory and politics.

The cost of the programme – including return airfare from London, accommodation, group meals and all transfers – is covered by the Jewish Welcome Service Vienna. Any partners or companions will need to pay for their own airfare. An AJR member of staff will accompany the group.

There are only a limited number of places available and we anticipate a high level of interest. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis so please email [enquiries@ajr.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ajr.org.uk) to register your interest asap, clearly stating your relationship to someone who was expelled from Vienna.

**'STOLEN COOKBOOK' SAGA CONTINUES**

Karina Urbach's remarkable account of the way a Third Reich publisher aryanised her grandmother's cookery book is now available in English.

Alice Urbach was a renowned chef who built up her own cooking school in Vienna and published a bestselling cookery book before she fled Austria after the 1938 Anschluss. Returning to post-war Vienna she discovered that the book was still on sale, but under a different name.

## BOOKS

**THE SEARCH**  
**Dr Jennifer Langer**  
 Victorina Press

Last August we carried an article by the poet, Dr. Jennifer Langer, on A 2G's *Search for Meaning*. Her book of poetry on this subject, entitled *The Search*, has now been published and is a highly sensitive exploration of what it means to be a refugee, or the child of refugees. It digs deeply into the poet's complex identity as the daughter of German Jewish refugees who fled Nazi Germany.

Born of the history of memory, of loss and of refugee roots, the poet dreams of a lost world, snatching at fragments, striving to create a narrative.

*The Search* is an attempt to make sense of a devastating past even when 'memory chokes us'. Dr. Langer also casts her net beyond the Jewish refugee experience: **The Exiled Writers Ink**, which she founded, worked at the Calais migrant camp and UK exiled writers from Syria, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Somalia ran live literature and workshop sessions there.

[www.fishburnbooks.com](http://www.fishburnbooks.com)

**Jonathan Fishburn**  
 buys and sells Jewish and Hebrew books, ephemera and items of Jewish interest.

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

Contact Jonathan on  
 020 8455 9139 or 07813 803 889  
 for more information

# A RETURN TO HALLE

**Last October I joined the UK March of the Living's four-day trip to Germany to commemorate the liberation of Bergen Belsen by the British. To highlight Kristallnacht, just two weeks hence, the organisers arranged a side trip for me to Halle–Saale, where I lived through the pogrom.**

Travelling with me from Berlin were Revital Krakovsky, of the International *March of the Living*, her videographer, and *MOL* photographer, Sam Churchill. Our first stop was my childhood home. I couldn't remember what the house looked like – the house where my father's mini-department store took up the entire ground floor which the Nazis destroyed on Kristallnacht. I wanted to see what was there now and what had happened to the red brick building across the street that housed the local police station.

I stood at the unobtrusive door of the large apartment house, not moving, just taking in that it was here that I lived as a young girl, part of a loving Jewish home, but also where, when I was almost eight years old, six Nazis broke in, ransacked our apartment and arrested my father.

Although I know in detail what happened there 82 years ago during the night of November 9-10, even being there I could not feel it had anything to do with me. I think that even now I do not want to accept emotionally what was done there.

Outside I walked along the pavement covering the length of the building. A TV shop and a pharmacy took up most of what had been my father's business. During the decades that followed Kristallnacht someone had finished what the Nazis started. Today there is no sign that the store ever existed. It made me truly angry.

We crossed the street to the red brick



Eve Kugler was just seven years old when Nazi soldiers burst into her home on Kristallnacht, destroying her family's possessions and arresting her

building that had been the local police station, visible from our flat. Nothing identified the current occupants and no one was about. I thought of my mother walking up these very steps the day after Kristallnacht, seeking news about my father who had been taken during the night. I was so proud of her immense courage, prepared to face the Nazis, perhaps the same men who had arrested her husband or who had ordered her to sweep up the broken glass and for two long hours watched her until there was not a sliver left.

Our next stop was to be the site of the Synagogue that my paternal grandfather, Markus Kanner, had established when he emigrated from Poland in the mid-1890s, because the existing Synagogue was too grand for him.

However, Revi suggested we first visit Halle's current Synagogue. A memorial in the shape of a tree with two branches stands in front of this Synagogue, inscribed with the names of two Jews who were murdered there in an antisemitic attack on Kol Nidre, 2019. The tree has 47 leaves, one for each of the worshippers inside during the attack.

The old cemetery still adjoins the building and I wondered if this could be the burial place of my paternal grandmother who died before I was born. Within minutes two men announced, "We've found your grandmother's grave."

Inside the Synagogue there were still more surprises, the greatest of which was the wall filled with rows of wooden

plaques bearing the names of Halle Jews who had been murdered in the Holocaust. In the second row was a plaque with the name of my grandfather, Markus Kanner, who was deported to Poland ten days before Kristallnacht.

We knew only that he perished in June 1940, we have never known where or whether he was buried. I struggled to hold back my tears, knowing now that there exists a visible memorial to my beloved grandfather. I feel it is especially fitting that he is remembered in a Synagogue. Discovering it was the highlight of my return to Halle.

We visited the stone memorial on Jerusalem Platz of the 1870 Synagogue, destroyed on Kristallnacht. Notwithstanding the horrific act of antisemitism of the 2019 Yom Kippur attack, the existence of the memorial is Halle's acknowledgement of the horror perpetrated here by the Nazis 82 years ago.

After a visit to Ravensbruck Camp, the 2021 *March of the Living* trip ended at Bergen Belsen where we were joined by representatives of the two British regiments who had liberated the camp. After liberation, the British razed every single structure in an effort to halt the spread of typhus among the survivors. In a moving ceremony of remembrance, the two officers laid beautiful wreaths whose ribbons bore the words, "We did what we could."

**Eve Kugler**

# OBITUARIES

## FREDDIE KNOLLER

Born: 17 April 1921, Vienna

Died: 26 January 2022, London



**Freddie Knoller was charming and popular with a perpetual smile, always great company and a larger than life presence at AJR events. He was also always keen to ask how he could help us, knowing that through his personable approach he could bring influence to bear.**

For many years, he contributed to the work of one of our social welfare committees that oversaw the disbursal of welfare aid to fellow Austrian survivors and refugees with the greatest needs. Through the Austrian Holocaust Survivor Emergency Assistance Programme, Freddie served on a panel that approved awards for hearing aids, glasses, specialist clothing and care, among other items.

Freddie was also an engaging speaker in schools, narrating his experiences fleeing Austria and life in occupied Belgium and France, where, among other escapes, he worked in Parisian nightclubs. He also told of derring-do with the resistance before being betrayed by a girlfriend, which culminated in him being deported to Auschwitz from Drancy on convoy 60 of 7 October 1943. This was all documented in his two books, *Living with the Enemy* and *Desperate Journey*, a signed copy of which I will always treasure. Co-written with John Landaw, Freddie describes his remarkable story, not only of survival, but also of resilience and humanity.

The episode recalling an encounter in Paris with a Nazi official, who claimed to be able to identify Jews from the shape of their heads while concluding that Freddie's was that of a gentile still sends shudders down my spine. In contrast, his time spent in the resistance recalls a young man undeterred by the surrounding danger, who was determined to do his bit to undermine and counter the Nazi threat.

Born in Vienna's second district – the Matzes Insel, or Leopoldstadt – Freddie was the youngest of three brothers who were each encouraged to learn an instrument. Freddie opted for the cello, a gift that stayed with him throughout his life with him often playing in older age. His upbringing reflected the middle-class position occupied by his parents, and he fondly recalled a happy childhood before the Anschluss and the terror of Kristallnacht. An abiding memory is of him addressing the congregation in 2018 at Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the November pogrom, recalling the chilling murder of his family's neighbour, Mr Epstein, who was thrown to his death.

It is poignant that Freddie's funeral took place on Holocaust Memorial Day when the world gathers to remember and honour those who experienced Nazi oppression and to mark the liberation of Auschwitz, where he was designated the number 157103.

Yet Auschwitz, where his parents were murdered while Freddie was there, was merely one of the episodes he survived. He endured a death march to Dora-Mittelbau helped by quick thinking to switch his yellow

star with an 'F' from a deceased Frenchman.

He was then liberated at Bergen Belsen two days before his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday, bringing to an end an odyssey criss-crossing Europe for more than six years. He returned to Paris before joining his brothers in the United States. In 1950 he met and married Freda and relocated to England, where his two daughters were born and where the Knollers founded Lady M fashion shops. In 1984, he became a director of State of Israel Bonds, demonstrating his support for Zionism.

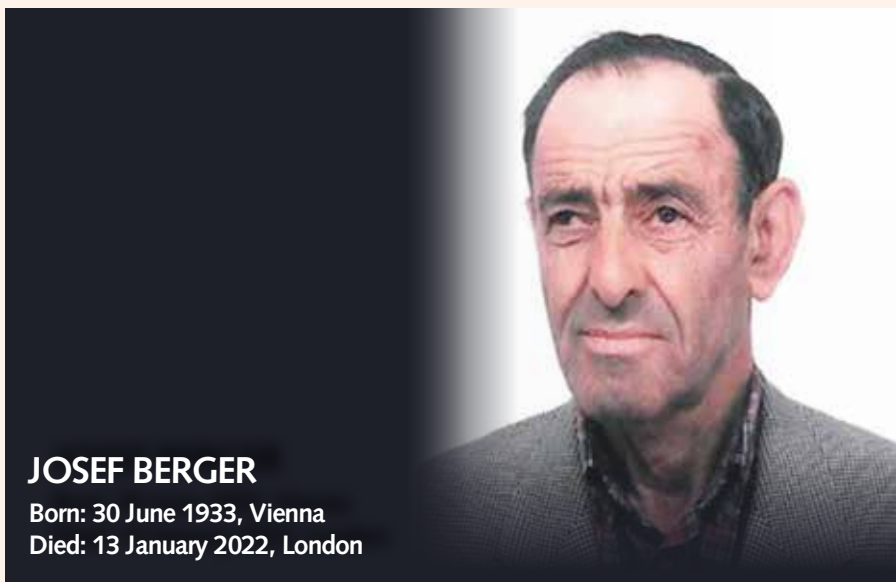
Upon retirement, he used his considerable energies to campaign successfully for recognition and reparations in respect of the slave labour he, and thousands of others, performed.

He was awarded a British Empire Medal in 2015 for services to Holocaust education, a role in which he excelled as a speaker in schools for, among others, the Holocaust Educational Trust, and at civic events, including speaking to AJR staff.

In 2017, he had the honour to escort The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall on a visit to Vienna.

He will be greatly missed, but forever fondly remembered for his remarkable tale and cheeky personality, and we send our sincerest condolences to his family. It has become a hackneyed phrase to have been privileged to know someone, but Freddie truly was an exception. Farewell my friend; your story and your charm will stay with me.

**Michael Newman**



**JOSEF BERGER**

Born: 30 June 1933, Vienna  
Died: 13 January 2022, London

**Josef's early years found him incarcerated in Theresienstadt after being left by his mother at six weeks old in the care of a Roman Catholic family. His mother, Grete, was never seen again despite strenuous efforts by Josef to trace her after the war.**

He grew up with that couple and with Herti, his "adopted foster sister", to whom he often referred and with whom he kept in contact until his death.

In 1939, just as Josef was about to start primary school and the Nazis had annexed Austria, his carers were forced to send him to a children's home in Vienna. It was from there that he was transported to Theresienstadt where he stayed until liberated by the Russian army in 1945. He often recounted that a passing Russian soldier gave him his first chocolate for six years.

After being liberated he walked with others back to Vienna from where he was transported by Wellington Bomber to Manchester and then to the Lake District thus becoming one of the "Windermere Boys".

After several moves, he came to settle in his modest bedsit in Chingford in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. He gave many interviews to organisations investigating his past and became closely involved with the AJR, participating in many events including national and foreign holidays. In his later years he also took the domiciliary

care offered by the organisation and was always appreciative of the help he was offered; indeed, he saw the AJR as his family.

Josef started work in 1949 as a wireman in the electronics industry, for most of the time with the Standard Telephones and Cable Company, until being made redundant in 1982.

He became an active Trade Unionist, shop steward and convenor for the TGWU, to – as he stated – protect the rights of his fellow workers. From 1983 to 1988 he gained a Certificate in Industrial Relations and a degree in Social Science from Middlesex Polytechnic.

During his adult life he kept fit and healthy and in the 1950-60s was a keen amateur cyclist, winning many distance and speed medals and awards. After this he became an active member of the over 40's cycle club, often bemoaning my meagre efforts. He was a fierce English patriot and very much supported English democratic traditions, believing that most politicians did their best whatever their political persuasion.

He stated in one of his job applications that his experiences during the war were formative in shaping for him a commitment to a more just and fair society.

He will be sorely missed by his friends and neighbours.

**Stephen Jacobs**

# SAVE THE DATE

There are probably few people in the UK who have not heard a TV or film theme tune by the award-winning composer Debbie Wiseman. Her credits are literally too many to mention, many of them for iconic British TV or film productions.

You will be able to join AJR on **Tuesday 14 June** to hear Debbie talk about her work. Look out for more details in our next issues.



Debbie Wiseman receiving her MBE in 2004

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# ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Tuesday 1 March @2pm	Jonathan Bergwerk – The story of Richard Rodgers of Rodgers & Hammerstein fame <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89933004944">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89933004944</a>	Meeting ID: 899 3300 4944
Thursday 3 March @11.30am	Kinder Contact Project <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85956560657">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85956560657</a>	Meeting ID: 8595 656 0657
Monday 7 March @10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 8 March @2pm	Gary Italiaander – The story of Larry Adler, the famous harmonica player <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83709325926">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83709325926</a>	Meeting ID: 837 0932 5926
Wednesday 9 March @2pm	Sabrina Gröschel – Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP) <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82207438632">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82207438632</a>	Meeting ID: 8220 743 8632
Thursday 10 March @4pm	Arnold Rifkind – The history of Edinburgh's Jewish community <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81340191014">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81340191014</a>	Meeting ID: 813 4019 1014
Monday 14 March @10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 15 March @2pm	Victoria Prever (Food writer for the JC) – How to make Hamantaschen <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89989310430">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89989310430</a>	Meeting ID: 899 8931 0430
Wednesday 16 March @4pm (NB: Later time than usual)	AJR Book Club Discussion (no speaker) – <i>The Giver of Stars</i> by Jojo Moyse <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85284481154">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85284481154</a>	Meeting ID: 852 8448 1154
Monday 21 March @10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 22 March @2pm	Judy Karbritz – From the pantry to the toy box and the high street to the tuck box <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81911125820">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81911125820</a>	Meeting ID: 8191 112 5820
Wednesday 23 March @2pm	Nick Dobson – The World of Flowers: Spring Bulbs <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82020984511">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82020984511</a>	Meeting ID: 820 2098 4511
Monday 28 March @10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 29 March @2pm	Tony Zendle – Jews & Sport <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83827056892">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83827056892</a>	Meeting ID: 8382 705 6892
Wednesday 30 March @2pm	Edwin Lucas – Prisoner Artists <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88950441885">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88950441885</a>	Meeting ID: 8895 044 1885



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