



History Lessons from Ukraine

As the world watches tragic events unfold in Ukraine there are lessons that might be learned from reading the plethora of recent books outlining the violent history of the region over the past hundred years and more.



A view of the Babyn (Babi) Yar Holocaust Memorial Centre in Kyiv on 2 March, just days before it was targeted by Russian missiles

In recent years there has been an explosion of fascinating history books about Ukraine, mostly by Jewish American historians. It is interesting to compare these with histories of Stalinism and the Soviet Union from the post-war period. In Isaac Deutscher's famous trilogy on Trotsky (1954-63), for example, there is almost nothing on Ukraine: four references in Volume 2 and none in Volume 3. Leonard Shapiro's *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (1960) makes numerous references to Ukraine but almost none to pogroms, the famine in the 1930s

or the Holocaust and Deutscher's biography of Stalin (1949, 1966) has one reference to collectivisation and one to the German invasion in 1941. There is surprisingly little about Jews. More extraordinary still, in EJ Hobsbawm's *The Age of Extremes: 1914-1991* (1994) there are just three passing references to Ukraine, none to the famine and none to Jews in Ukraine, whether pogroms or the Holocaust.

What has happened more recently is
Continued on page 2

LET'S HELP THEM

As the national organisation representing and supporting Jewish refugees who fled and survived Nazi oppression, and made Britain a home following the horrors of the Holocaust and WW2, the AJR is deeply worried about the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine. We deplore the senseless invasion and strongly urge a de-escalation so that peace can return to Europe. Please see the appeal on page 3 and help however you can.

Meanwhile this month's *Journal* contains much that should be of interest, including interviews with members and inspiring stories that emerged from our recent tree planting project. We are also happy to be reintroducing a limited number of in-person meetings, events and even a holiday for members.

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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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History lessons from Ukraine (cont.)

nothing less than a revolution. Some of the best new history books are about Ukraine. In an extraordinary sentence in his book, *Bloodlands*, Timothy Snyder writes, 'During the years that both Stalin and Hitler were in power, more people were killed in Ukraine than anywhere else in the bloodlands, or in Europe, or in the world.'

In particular, Jews in the Ukraine are no longer on the margins. Suddenly, they are centre stage, from Steven Zipperstein's book on Kishinev (*Pogrom*, 2018) to Jeffrey Veidlinger's new book on the pogroms of 1918-1921 and the Holocaust (2021). Historians like Timothy Snyder (*Bloodlands*, 2010) and Anne Applebaum (*Red Famine*, 2017) have also focused on the terrible Ukrainian famine of the 1930s, The Holodomor, also known as the Terror-Famine and the Great Famine (1932-33), which led to the deaths of between 3.5 and 7 million (estimates vary widely).

The history of the Holocaust has shifted eastwards from famous German concentration camps like Dachau and Buchenwald to the death camps in Poland and now give due attention to the Shoah by Bullets in the Soviet Union (see Wendy Lower's *The Ravine*, 2021, and David Shneer's *Grief*, 2021).

In addition, there has been a new focus on the history of pogroms, some famous like Kishinev, others less well-known like the pogroms in Ukraine between 1918-1921. In a fascinating new book the American historian Jeffrey Veidlinger writes, "Between November 1918 and March 1921, during the civil war that followed the Great War, over one thousand anti-Jewish riots and military actions – both of which were commonly referred to as pogroms – were documented in about five hundred different locales throughout what is now Ukraine," an area violently contested by Russians, Poles and Ukrainians, disbanded soldiers, local warlords and civilians and brilliantly evoked by the great Jewish writer, Isaac Babel, in his book of stories, *Red Cavalry*. Forty thousand Jews were killed during these pogroms, Veidlinger writes, and another seventy thousand "subsequently perished from their wounds, or from disease, starvation, and exposure as a direct result of the attacks." "This was not the first wave of pogroms in the area," Veidlinger continues, "but its scope eclipsed previous bouts of violence

in terms of the range of participants, the number of victims, and the depths of barbarity..."

It's not just that these new histories include Jews or even place antisemitism centre-stage. It's the extraordinary violence these books describe. Historians have not just started to write about pogroms, they write about the physical realities of pogroms, rape, plunder and the sheer bestial violence of these attacks. In his book, *Pogrom*, about the famous Kishinev pogrom of 1903, Steven Zipperstein writes about how one Jew was killed with a pitchfork and another, Meyer Weissman, had his eye gouged out. I won't quote from the graphic accounts of sexual assault on countless girls and women.

Zipperstein points out the "interplay between familiarity and ferocity" in incident after incident. These were not strangers. They were neighbours, people who had known each other at school. "Victims of rape or beating were known to call out the names of their assailants," writes Zipperstein. "One raped woman spoke afterward of having held her rapist as a baby in her arms. The sons of a local shoemaker – the two boys hid behind a stove while their father was beaten and murdered – recognised the killer as a neighbour whose shoes they had recently repaired."

"Armed militants," writes Veidlinger, "with the acquiescence and support of large segments of the population, tore out Jewish men's beards, ripped apart Torah scrolls, raped Jewish girls and women, and, in many cases, tortured Jewish townfolk before gathering them in market squares, marching them to the outskirts of town, and shooting them."

These three developments – a new emphasis on east Europe and the former Soviet Union, the so-called "Bloodlands" (Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic Republics); Jewish experience during the first half of the 20th century; and a new tone, darker, with more emphasis on violence and suffering – are a feature of the best new history-writing about Ukraine.

One issue which remains elusive is the question of refugees. We have seen in the TV and radio coverage of Ukraine over the past few weeks how hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have been forced to leave their homes and have had to make heart-breaking choices about leaving members of their families, grandparents who can't travel, husbands and sons who at the time of writing have chosen to remain and fight. The best

reports have brought these decisions to life, images of a father touching a train window as his young children prepare to leave, young people fleeing their homeland leaving elderly or sick relatives behind.

Interestingly, despite the explosion of new books about Jewish refugees, especially from central Europe, there has been less written about refugees from east Europe and Russia. There is, however, a fascinating section in Jeffrey Veidlinger's new book about Ukraine, *In The Midst of Civilized Europe* (2021), on refugees. Veidlinger discusses three kinds of Jewish refugees. First, those who fled to other parts of Ukraine. By 1926, he writes, nearly half "of the 1.5 million Jews counted in Ukraine were no longer living in the locale in which they were born." Second, those who fled to Moscow (increased elevenfold) and Petrograd (tripled). Third, those who fled abroad, to eastern Europe and 75,000 who fled to Berlin, which fuelled rising antisemitism. In total, approximately six hundred thousand Jewish refugees fled abroad and "millions more were displaced internally." But, in general, this new wave of history books has not fully engaged with the history and experience of refugees from what was the Russian Pale, in part, of course, because it was so hard for Jews to escape from Ukraine during the Stalin years or the Holocaust.

Hardly any of these historians have been interviewed during the brutal invasion of Ukraine. Worse still, there has been very little discussion of this terrible history of the Jews in Ukraine, from Kishinev to Babi Yar (now known as Babyn Yar). One *Radio 4* programme, *Ukraine: How Did We Get Here?* made no reference to Jews at all. Not once. It is time that the media learn from the best new historians and include this history among the terrible lessons of the Ukrainian 20th century.

David Herman Bibliography

- Timothy J. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010)
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- Steven J. Zipperstein, *Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History* (2018)
- Wendy Lower, *The Ravine* (2021)
- David Shneer, *Grief* (2021)
- Jeffrey Veidlinger, *In The Midst of Civilized Europe: The pogroms of 1918-1921 and the onset of the Holocaust* (2021)

UKRAINE CRISIS APPEAL

The AJR is gravely concerned for the immediate welfare of all Ukrainian citizens, including Holocaust survivors, impacted by Russian military aggression. We stand ready to offer our unique support to any Holocaust survivor from Ukraine who has now found refuge in the UK.

We call upon our government to demonstrate once again its humanitarian compassion and simplify the process, to enable those fleeing their homes to be able to find sanctuary here. The AJR exists today because of the welcome given to the Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi oppression. We urge the government to act now to give safe harbour to those who have been displaced and whose lives are at risk. Specifically, the government needs to demonstrate a commitment to moving innocent civilians out of harm's way.

As the successor to the Central British Fund for German Jewry, World Jewish Relief (WJR) has for many years directly supported Jewish communities in Ukraine – and other Former Soviet Union countries – and is vastly experienced in responding to international crises. WJR is working with local agencies in Ukraine and neighbouring countries to where the refugees have fled.

In Ukraine, WJR is responding across the country by:



- Providing cash transfers, food and medical equipment.
- Continuing homecare and providing psychological support.
- Assisting its partners to evacuate vulnerable people where it is safe to do so.
- Working with the Ukrainian Embassy in the UK to provide over 40,000 emergency food packages.

In Poland and Moldova, WJR is:

- Helping its partners scale up their capacity to welcome refugees.
- Providing cash transfers, legal advice, food and shelter for displaced Ukrainians.
- Sending Humanitarian and Refugee specialists to Poland and Moldova to support partners there in expanding their capacity to assist refugees fleeing Ukraine.

Here in the UK we use our expertise in Ukraine and with refugees to assist with the Government's new 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. It's a very complex situation with many moving parts but a major pipeline of humanitarian relief is in the works and all financial support will be very much welcomed.

To support the appeal please go to: www.worldjewishrelief.org/ways-to-donate/appeals/1267-ukraine-crisis-appeal

World Jewish Relief,
Oscar Joseph House, 54 Crewys Road,
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KT DATABASE EXPANDED

Historians and scholars of the Kindertransport can now access AJR's vastly enhanced statistical database, offering an invaluable record of much factual knowledge about this extraordinary act of rescue.

The database – which gives further depth to the definitive 2007 survey *Making New Lives in Britain* – is available for interrogation via www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport-survey.



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WE! ARE! HERE!

Three AJR members and their grandchildren were recently featured in an exhibition at the German Parliament as a defiant response to the murderous intent of the Wannsee conference.

PHOTO © ANN KATRIN WARTER/IMAGO



Life size photos of Holocaust survivors and their descendants surround the table at this re-creation of the setting of the Wannsee Conference



Peter Brent and his granddaughter Selena



Hedy Gavurin and her grandson Frank



Lilian Levy and her granddaughter Rosie

Timed to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Conference, the **Wir! Sind! Hier!** project was intended to show that, despite the best efforts of the fifteen Nazi high-ups gathered round the table, a few Jews not only survived but went on to build new families and useful lives.

The project was first publicised in the *AJR Journal* a year ago, when AJR members were invited to take part by travelling to Berlin to be photographed by the world's only IMAGO camera – a unique, walk-in camera that projects an incredibly realistic life-size image directly onto photographic paper without the need for a negative.

Several AJR members responded to the call and were invited to Berlin with one of their children or grandchildren. Life-size photographs were made of each survivor and family member, and the mounted photographs were placed around the conference table, behind the vacant chairs of the perpetrators.

Originally, the aim was that this exhibition should be held at Wannsee itself, on the 80th anniversary of the conference, but as the site is a considerable distance to the South West of Berlin it was held instead at the German Parliament, in the Berlin

House of Representatives. Each survivor had been asked to write a short piece about her/himself, as well as some thoughts on the beautiful house which was the backdrop to such villainous deliberations; these texts were also on display.

Recounting the experience AJR member Hedy Gavurin told us: "I applied because of my admiration for the project and my feeling that this stark anniversary needed to be marked. My four grandchildren all wanted to come, but three had work commitments, leaving my youngest grandchild, Frank, very excited to go to Berlin with me and visit some museums and historic sites while we were there. The walk in camera is remarkable and the life sized photo – of which I was given a copy – is a wonderful memory of an amazing trip."

Hedy was born in Stuttgart in July 1938 to Maria and Herman Buller, both of whose own birth towns are currently in Ukraine. Her parents spoke very little about their lives in Germany and Hedy and her sister were afraid to ask questions in case they made their mother cry. She says "I realise now that being the child of refugees and, in fact, being a survivor myself has had its effect on me. For most of my childhood, teens and early years of marriage I was

very anxious, always preferring the past to the present and very fearful of the future. In later years I learned to live in the present but I always have a sense of being 'different' and I'm sure this is because of my background and history."

Another participant was AJR member Peter Brent, who wrote: "When I was in Germany with my granddaughter Serena – she is a lawyer – for the portrait we visited the memorial 'House of the Wannsee Conference'. It remains incomprehensible how an educated, cultured and intelligent group of people could hatch such cruel, genocidal plans especially in a holiday atmosphere, with food and cognac in idyllic surroundings. One cannot, and may not, imagine the fun and laughter that ensued around the table as the evil unfolded. Sadly, the conference was largely successful in its goals – but: WE! ARE! HERE! The black shroud over the Wannsee will forever cloud its beauty and must never be forgotten."

Survivors photographed included: Yisrael Abelesz, Peter Brent, Emil Farkas, Hedy Gavurin, Lilian Levy, Rachel Oschitzki, Eva Pusztai-Fahidi, Eva Szepesi.

Lilian Levy

LETTER FROM ISRAEL BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



ISRAEL AND THE REFUGEES



There was a general outcry in Israel when it became known that the government was demanding a not inconsiderable

sum of money (NIS 10,000) from non-Jewish refugees from Ukraine arriving in Israel. Jewish refugees were granted entry and all kinds of rights and privileges, as is customary for new immigrants. This kind of discrimination smacked of reverse antisemitism and aroused the anger and disgust of many Israelis.

When I was born in London in 1942 my parents were stateless and penniless refugees. The fact that I was born where and when I was gave me the right to remain in England, and so enabled my parents to remain. They were granted British citizenship only several years later. It was wartime, London was being bombed, but it was still a safer place than their homeland of Germany, where their parents were being carted off to concentration camps and murdered. That would have been their fate, too, had they remained there. They had committed the crime of being born Jews.

Watching television today, with its grim images from Ukraine of men, women and children traipsing through frozen wastes and towns full of destroyed buildings, in a desperate search for shelter, brings to life

in the most graphic manner the ordeal that throughout the generations my ancestors and those of most other Jews, somewhere along the line, undoubtedly went through. As we all know, Jews have not always been made to feel welcome in the places where they may have once settled and, given the circumstances of the time and the whims of the ruler or government, were forced to uproot themselves time and again to try to find a new resting place.

This went on for two thousand years until the second half of the twentieth century, when Israel was founded. It's true that over the years some Jews have found a relatively safe haven in various western countries, particularly America and England. But let me remind those who think the gates of those countries were opened wide for Jews trying to find a new home that in America the quota system introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century restricted entry to Jews from Europe to those who could find a guarantor to put up the fee required by the authorities. Not everyone had relatives there who could and would provide the costly 'affidavit' which was the *sine quo non* for entry into that country.

For every Jewish refugee seeking to enter England prior to WWII a sum of money had to be provided by persons residing in the country. Alternatively, they had to provide it themselves or have employment guaranteed. Since the Nazis stripped Jews of every penny they owned, as well as preventing them from taking money out of the country, this served as an additional obstacle to emigration and absorption in another country. My parents were in the fortunate position of having

relatives in England who – albeit reluctantly and belatedly – put up the money to guarantee their entry after Kristallnacht. Few Gentiles were targeted by the Nazis, so there was no need for them to seek refuge elsewhere.

Even for the acclaimed Kindertransport project, when almost ten thousand unaccompanied Jewish children from Europe were allowed into England, each child had to be guaranteed by a family that was ready to take them in or, alternatively, by one of the various Jewish or Quaker organisations that undertook to place the children upon arrival. The UK government's decision to allow the children into England was made contingent upon their not becoming 'a burden on the British taxpayer.'

And so, although it sounds unpleasant, the demand by the Israeli government for refugees from Ukraine to be guaranteed by relatives in Israel or produce a sum of money is not so unreasonable, or at least not unprecedented (and has anyway since been rescinded). This has always been the way countries have tried to regulate the influx of others seeking a new home.

The existence of Israel guarantees some form of protection for Jews wherever they may be, and now the country has opened its gates to a limited number of non-Jews too. There is a lot to be said for the magnanimity and generosity of this small country in allowing those in need to gain entry, but the existence of a Jewish state remains the ultimate objective that Israel's leaders should bear in mind.

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JEWISH LIFE IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

Thank you for the article by Geoffrey Weisgard (February). I thought your readers might be interested in some further memories of the Jewish community in the Peak District.

I was five when we arrived there from Manchester; my hazy memory is that it was only a few days after the declaration of war and we were one of the first of the families to arrive. It was shortly before the High Holidays and there was a full Service held centrally. After a few months regular Services were held. Buxton had become populated by evacuees from all the large cities and it seemed to me that people were speaking many different languages as there were many refugees who had managed to get out only just in time before war broke out.

My parents could speak both German and French and a sort of English-Yiddish and they immediately engaged in helping newcomers. My mother had her name and address and phone number up in the police station to help anyone who could not speak English. I often came down in the morning to find strange people sleeping in the lounge. I didn't understand what was going on although Lore, 'my big sister', tried to explain it to me (she had come to the UK on the second Kindertransport and, as far as I was concerned, she WAS my sister, being 9 years older and very caring and loving).

What even I could recognise was that the grey/white streets of the town were crowded with a great mixture of people – taciturn Buxtonians and, in comparison to the grey atmosphere, crowds of foreigners – louder, more excitable, more colourful, it seemed to me.

Shuls? Well, of course, there had to be two of them. My parents were unusual in that they had friends in both, though we regularly went to Dale Road, which was the more pious. I think the cheder was shared between the Shuls, and teachers came from Manchester from Sunday to Thursday. One of the Shuls was a

'breakaway', formed by two large families from Manchester – mostly Chassidic or very learned Litvaks. The Shul which was based on United Synagogue lines was also Orthodox but more relaxed – and less musical! The split between the two Shuls was apparently very dramatic and my parents spoke of it often.

There were two hotels: Hoffmans established just before the war by German refugees (where there were also regular Services) and the Pavilion Hotel in the famous Buxton Broad Walk. Both were equally kosher and, like the Shuls, one a bit more anglicised than the other. The lovely Goldstein family, who lived in a large house with huge rooms, invited everyone to come for celebrations on Simchat Torah and Purim and we children ran wild. (Don't forget that the blackout meant we were very restricted and Derbyshire weather did not help)

Visiting Buxton in later years it was hard to remember that the Market Square once had people with shtriemels, sheytels, bekishes and kapotes.

The local population regarded us with a mixture of responses. There was certainly some antisemitism (in the first few months, as the only Jewish child in the class, my classmates told me I had killed Jesus and attempted to crucify me in the playground). Many others were particularly kind and welcoming. Our home-made succah was once visited by a class of open-mouthed children and many talked sympathetically of the 'poor Jews'. One neighbour gave me all the toys her children had outgrown.
Judith Usiskin, London N3

A GREAT HONOUR

I would like to say what an honour and privilege it has been to have been invited to plant a number of trees for and with AJR during the current planting season. Not only have these 80 (I believe now increased to 100) trees been a celebration of the 80th anniversary of the founding of the AJR and a memorial to a number of refugees,

but they have also been a part of the Queen's Green Canopy – a legacy to mark the amazing 70 year reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

This has been of double significance to me firstly as The Queen's personal representative in Hertfordshire planting trees for Her legacy, but also in memory of my parents who both escaped Nazi Germany in the late 1930's and arrived in the UK as refugees. So every tree planting ceremony that I have had the pleasure to attend – and there have been quite few in Hertfordshire as well as in Hyde Park – has brought back memories of my family's arrival and establishment in this country. And one generation later I have the huge honour of representing The Monarch who ascended to the throne only a few years after their arrival.

So I thank the AJR for this great initiative in this Platinum Jubilee year and allowing me the opportunity of this double celebration.
Robert Voss CBE CStJ, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire

WHAT A SPREAD!

It was wonderful to see the five-page spread from the tree ceremonies that took place up and down the land on and around Holocaust Memorial Day. The planting of the tree in Leicester in honour of my husband, Ben Abeles, was a beautiful and meaningful event. One of the City Councillors who came said it was the most moving experience he had had during his time on the Council and has been in touch to say that he is going to start a project about recognising the contribution of refugees with local primary schools, using Ben's tree and story as a starting point. How pleased Ben would be that his Kindertransport journey will be used to inspire compassion for refugees arriving in our city today, and how great that the 80 Trees for 80 Years project will have this legacy. I would like to thank the wonderful AJR staff for the help and encouragement they gave from the beginning.

Helen Abeles, Leicester

LOOKING FOR?

THANK YOU AJR

We want to say a heartfelt thank you for everything you have done to support us. We honestly don't know how we would have coped without your help especially over the last two years.

We know that you often don't get to see the difference you all make, but everyone, from the accounts team to the trustees, makes such a huge difference to our lives.

The care we have received has been outstanding, and in particular we want to thank Florina, who has been there for us when we have really needed her. It's just so reassuring to know that there is a helping hand there when it's really been needed. It can't be easy, but we are so grateful that we feel looked after by you all. Thank you again.

Mary and Laszlo Dillinger

THE JEWISH UKRAINE

The Jewish community in Ukraine used to be the third largest in the world. Sometimes it flourished but more often than not it faced pogroms. It did so for a thousand years. More than 1 million Jews were shot by the Einsatzgruppen and their many Ukrainian supporters during WWII.

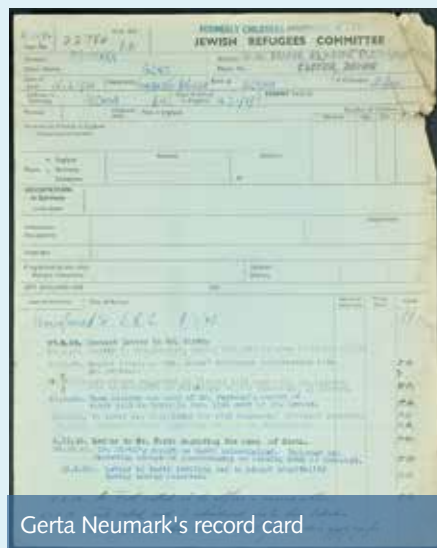
Antisemitic graffiti and violence against Jews are still problems in the Ukraine. The fact that their president is Jewish has nothing to do with it.

What I remember is that in our slave labour camp the guards were exclusively Ukrainian-SS. That would have been repeated in all other such camps, thousands of them. They fled before the Russian advance to the West. The post-war (Labour) government could have left such members of the Waffen-SS in Germany, as it did all the other German members of the Waffen-SS who were allowed to die untried peacefully in their beds. They didn't. They did something that must have frustrated the Soviets no end and does so to this day. They opened GB's doors and welcomed them. No questions asked. That is how they ended

GERTA & ISIDOR NEUMARK

Oliver Marsh has recently discovered that his grandmother Gerta Neumark travelled via Kindertransport from Vienna, arriving on 13 July 13 1939. He is looking for any additional information about her and her journey, and also about her brother Isidor who also came here to the UK.

olivermarsh23@gmail.com



Gerta Neumark's record card

2022 Thank-Offering

The Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship for this year has been awarded by the British Academy to Catherine Hezser, Professor of Jewish Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Professor Hezser is the daughter of a Hungarian father who fled to Germany at the time of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956. The subject of her research is rabbinic scholarship in

Palestine in the Graeco-Roman period.

The Thank-Offering to Britain Fellowship is funded by money raised by the Jewish refugees from Nazism in Britain in 1963-65. The fundraising was organised by the AJR, which formally presented the money raised, £96,000 (almost £2 million in today's money), to the British Academy in November 1965.



up on these shores. Compare that to the £50 any prospective foster parent had to pay the Home Office to obtain a visa for a Kindertransport child. An enormous sum in 1939 which prevented many suitable

couples from adopting, and delivered many children up to the waiting gas chambers. Something else kept out of the conversation.
Frank Bright, Suffolk

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Maria Pryimachenko is not a name I was familiar with. Think Babushka doll, that oval body, that child-like, head-scarfed face swallowing several identical versions, each tinier than the last. Forgive the irony. Think folk art. Think fantastic animals. Think primitive art. And there you have the primary-coloured innocence of Maria Pryimachenko's paintings.

For this issue I had planned to write about Tate Modern's new exhibition of surrealist art. It will have to wait. I am featuring the Ukrainian artist Maria Pryimachenko instead because 25 of her works have been destroyed by Russian attacks on the small Historical and Local History Museum in Ivankiv which housed them, setting it ablaze. Fortunately, local residents managed to save the rest. The small Ukrainian museum in a town 30 miles south of Chernobyl and 50 miles northwest of Kyiv was just another casualty in Russia's war on Ukraine.

Yet Maria Pryimachenko is considered one of Ukraine's most celebrated folk artists for the brilliant optimism of her paintings. Her work has featured on postage stamps and her image has appeared on Ukrainian coins. In 2009 she even had a Kyiv street named after her.

Much of Pryimachenko's work resonated both with Picasso and Chagall – you can easily see why – her black bull decorated with orange flowers in a forest of trees in full leaf bearing bright blue fruits suggests a typical Picasso motif, as does her two-head chicken with almost human eyes and fiery orange cox-comb.

She was awarded a gold medal for her work at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris, and an admiring Pablo Picasso even said: "I bow down before the artistic miracle of this brilliant Ukrainian".

The figurative dissonance may reference

Picasso, while the dreamy quality reflects a pure Chagall narrative. But the work of this apparently simplistic artist is unique, filled with the beat of Ukrainian music and vibrant Ukrainian colours. There are village people in folk costume, young couples holding hands beneath a benign golden sun and mythic yellow birds circling above in benediction. Here she is celebrating life as a continuum which nothing can break; romance, if somewhat static in her paintings, is in the air itself.

In similar vein she paints a sweetly pastoral scene in which a man drives three horses carrying six identical head-scarfed women with identical bags. Their expressionless faces and the flower-dotted yellow sky again suggest the safety and regularity of life. The repetitive nature, the need to present identical images, is intriguing.

It is, of course, the art of the everyday, the inexorable and repetitive life cycle of the village. But is there a message in the giant white dove flying high above the orange flowers, signalling protection and purity – but also warning of impending danger?

In contrast to the pastoral life the artist conveys so gently, her turbulent imagination takes a different form, revealing fantastical animals, again in unrealistic primary colours: a five-headed blue monster with red serpents' tongues roars against a pacific green background. But again, a constant theme in her work, the flowers and plants seem dangerous too, suggesting that all life, human or animal, can turn predatory.

And then comes another strange creature in pink against a black background, with an open mouth and bared teeth from which two serpents' fangs dart. The spikes on the creature's feet are referenced in the serpent's sting, and although this particular



May I Give this Ukrainian Bread to All People in This Big Wide World by Maria Pryimachenko

image reminds me of Indian folkloric art in its symbolism, the agitation and danger of the serpent and its host's bared teeth make me think of something more dangerously close to her home. Is there prophecy here or am I looking too deeply?

This may be naïve art, but the artist herself is anything but naïve. She paints prospects of peace, an idealised world, yet speaks of war. In perhaps the most moving of her paintings I have seen, a young woman stands, sad-eyed and looking into the distance, beneath a host of supersized sunflowers clutching a huge, circular loaf of bread, while petals fall, resembling hands, giving hands. The painting is entitled: *May I Give this Ukrainian Bread to All People in This Big Wide World*.

You can view some of Pryimachenko's work on this website: <https://kottke.org/22/03/the-colorful-work-of-ukrainian-artist-maria-prymachenko>

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**CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

A tribute to our Oxford scholars

On a perfect Spring day AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman joined Professor Jane Shaw, Principal of Harris Manchester College, Oxford, and other academics for the unveiling of a tree in commemoration of those who escaped from Europe and in recognition of Oxford University for taking them in.

Oxford University supported and placed at least 50 European academic refugees, among them Professor Fritz Heinemann, a philosopher from Frankfurt, who arrived in Oxford in 1939 and taught at Harris Manchester College. An expert on existential philosophy, he encouraged philosophers to look forward as well as backward, notably describing them as "...the pioneers of the pioneers." He has already been honoured posthumously in Germany but has received little recognition in the UK until now.

In her introduction Professor Shaw mentioned the significance of the Holocaust refugees against the current situation in Ukraine. She was followed by Dr Wendy Fidler who, together with her husband Brian – himself a Supernumerary Fellow of the College – sponsored the Oxford tree, and who said "As we stand here we remember these academics who arrived in Oxford with absolutely nothing except their amazing abilities, knowledge and determination, attributes which they brought within themselves. We also remember and appreciate the huge contribution made by several of the Colleges here, who accepted

Tree Dedication
Honouring the Jewish refugees who came to Oxford
at Harris Manchester College
2.30pm, Tuesday 8th March 2022

Welcome
*Professor Jane Shaw, Principal,
Harris Manchester College*

Tree dedication
*Michael Newman OBE, Chief Executive,
The Association of Jewish Refugees*

Tea will be served in the Arlosh Hall

Reflection
Dr Wendy Fidler MBE

Closing remarks
Professor Jane Shaw

these strangers, funded them and supported them. We thank the university enormously, for they gave of themselves which the academic refugees received and accepted with grateful thanks."

To coincide with the event the College Librarian had set out a small exhibition of Dr Heinemann's works, including some inscribed by hand to the college.

A time capsule alongside the tree contained more information about Professor Heinemann as well as a list of other refugees who were supported by the Manchester College, as it was then known, including Martin Braun and Dr Karl Mannheim.

"It is our fervent hope that this tree, a newcomer to this plot, will endure and put down its roots in the same way that Prof Heinemann was able to do," said Michael Newman.

Other refugees who managed to escape the Nazis and teach or study at Oxford included:-

- Theodor Adorno
- Sir Isaiah Berlin
- M Braun
- Heinz Cassirer
- William Cohn
- Milein Cosman
- Albert Einstein
- Eduard Fraenkel
- Otto Haas
- H Handel
- Fritz Heinemann
- Hans Heller
- Klaus Hinrichsen
- Bela Horovitz
- Joseph Horovitz
- Sebastian Isepp
- Ingrid Jacoby
- Hans Adolf Krebs
- Hans Keller
- Lotte Labowsky
- Karl Leyser
- Donald Mackinnon
- Eisen Mayer
- Lorenzo Mino-Paluello
- Arnold Momigliano
- Rudolf Oldem
- Otto Pächt
- Pfeinner
- Karl Popper
- Oskar K. Rabinowicz
- Albi Rosenthal
- Cecil Roth
- Kurt Schwitters
- Strzalkowski
- Jacob Leib Telcher
- Egon Wellesz
- Nelly Wolffheim
- Ilse Wol



Guests at the Oxford University tree planting, with Dr Wendy Fidler – the tree sponsor – at the centre



Professor Fritz Heinemann's work on display at Harris Manchester College

Community garden oak tree ensures lessons of the past cannot be ignored

Tree planting honours role in rescuing children from Nazi Europe

Ruth Dowds

r.dowds@ardschronicle.co.uk

IN order to ensure that history is not repeated it is firstly important to know what that history is.

The village of Millisle is ensuring that the lessons of the past cannot be easily ignored with the planting of a commemorative oak tree in its community garden which honours the role played by Magill's Farm in rescuing refugee children.

Over 300 Jewish children and young adults were taken by kindertransport from across Europe and offered refuge from Nazi persecution at the Millisle farm.

The farm, and its surrounding 70 acres of land, was leased by the Belfast Jewish community and run by businessman Maurice Solomon who helped to make the farm a home for the young people.

Last Friday, as Storm Eunice battered the province, tribute was paid to that life-saving wartime work by Maurice Solomon's grandson Curtis Ross, who flew from his home in London to plant the commemorative oak sapling. He did so in place of his mother Suzanne

Solomon, Maurice's daughter, who was unable to make the journey herself but who donated the tree to the village.

The event took place as part of the Association of Jewish Refugees' (AJR) 80th anniversary commemorations, which it is marking with the launch of an '80 Trees for 80 Years' initiative to honour people and places symbolising the contribution made by Jewish refugees who escaped Nazi Europe.

Millisle was chosen by the Association as one of these locations at Suzanne's request and her wishes for Friday's ceremony were executed with the help of Jo Scott, chairwoman of Millisle and District Community Association.

As he planted his mother's tree in the village's community garden, Curtis Ross told invited guests that he did so 'with great pride' in the memory of his grandparents Maurice and Hertha Solomon and the villagers who had helped them. A commemorative plaque bore testament to their work and noted: 'May their memories live on as this tree blossoms'.

Guests at the outdoor tree-planting ceremony later adjourned to an informal reception held in the village's community hub where Curtis spoke to the Chronicle about how he had grown up in England, 'hearing about Millisle all the time'. Clearly touched that his grandfather's legacy had

left such a mark on the village, he said: "I'm terribly honoured that people have come and taken the time to be here with us today." He continued: "The holocaust has been a big part of my life since the day I was born so that was always sewn into the DNA of our upbringing. I was absolutely brought up hearing about all the things that my grandfather had done." He added that when he thinks of his grandfather he asks himself how he can ever live up to his legacy.

Answering that challenging question, he said: "I just try and be a good person and treat people in the right manner and that's how I live my life."

"It has left an impression with me because it has taught me the importance of caring for people and treating them with respect and dignity and I hope to be able to pass that on to my children and grandchildren."

"I think that's probably the best way he could have passed on his legacy."

The event also provided a more formal opportunity for some of the invited guests to speak about what the village's holocaust history has meant to them.

Following a welcome by Jo Scott there were speeches by Linda Patterson, retired principal of Millisle Primary School, Leah McKay from the Association of Jewish Refugees, Mayor of Ards and North Down Mark Brooks, and Rev. Colin Davis of St Patrick's Church, Millisle.

Frankie Hennessy, a former pupil at Millisle Primary School read a poem about the village's helping role.

Leah McKay from the Association of Jewish Refugees was, like Curtis Ross, another guest who has travelled from London to be in Millisle on Friday.

She said the Association, which delivers social, welfare and volunteer services to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression, was delighted to be able to help the Solomon family mark their family heritage with the planting of an oak sapling.

Representing Suzanne Solomon, she offered a fascinating insight into Maurice Solomon, who was born in Belfast in 1895 to Russian Jewish parents who had arrived penniless to the city not long before he was born.

She explained: "Determined to boost the struggling household income, young Maurice left school early. He sold cups of water on the beach in Millisle in summer and peddled haberdashery in the winter, with a growing interest in the 'new fangled' wireless business."

"In partnership with Harold Peres he took an agency for Decca Records and Solomon & Peres became one of the leading record distributors in Ireland."

"They also focused on identifying and nurturing Irish musical talent - Van Morrison is just one of many Irish artists whose career took root from the Solomon & Peres stable."

As a prominent member of the Belfast Jewish community Maurice became a key part of Belfast's Refugee Aid Committee during the build-up to the Second World War.

In May 1939 he, along with Barney Hurwitz and Leo Scop, leased the derelict farm and surrounding land in Millisle which became a safe haven to well over 300 Jewish children and young adults.

During her 39 years at Millisle Primary School until her retirement as headmistress, Linda Patterson ensured that the retelling of the village's part in holocaust history was woven into the fabric of school life.

Many of the Jewish refugee children were educated at Millisle Primary during the war and the school has marked that legacy with a memorial garden in its grounds, fittingly called A Safe Haven.

Speaking last Friday Ms Patterson said that 'a safe haven' was exactly what the community of Millisle had provided for over 300 Jewish



refugees during the Second World War and right up to 1949.

Commenting that Jewish children had been rescued from their homes and brought to the village by kindertransport, Ms Patterson said that the school had been honoured to maintain links with some of those past pupils. She continued: "Pupils of Millisle Primary have enjoyed meeting many of these people over the years including the late Walter Kammerling. As a 15 year-old Walter was sent by his desperate parents from his home in Vienna as part of the kindertransport to Britain where he found a temporary home at the Millisle farm."

"One of his sisters, Erica, gained a precious work permit for England and she made an escape at the same time. His 17 year-old sister Ruth was too old for the kindertransport and too young to obtain a work permit."

"Walter learned later that Ruth and both his parents had perished at Auschwitz in 1944, just three months before the liberation of the camp."

She said she had also had the privilege of meeting Ruth Kohner and her family who had escaped Prague and came to the Millisle farm when Ruth was only a toddler and her sister Dinah was not much older.

Said Ms Patterson: "They eventually built their lives in Northern Ireland and founded the BelleArt clothing factory."

She recalled that a pupil at the school had interviewed Ruth Kohner's 93 year-old mother, who even at that great age still spoke five languages.

Said Ms Patterson: "I'll always remember a little girl said to her, 'did your daughters like living on the farm?' And she said 'my daughters liked living'."

Ms Patterson also had fond memories of another Magill's Farm resident, the late Larry Kichler, who lived in Donaghadee.

She explained: "His Jewish parents had found refuge in Northern Ireland at the beginning of World War Two and Larry and his mother spent time on the Jewish farm in Millisle. Later they moved into a house in Millisle and then eventually settled in Donaghadee."

"These are only some of the people I have had

"THANK YOU AJR"

I waited 45 years to pay proper homage to my late father, Maurice Solomon.

participants and their families experienced similar feelings, in varying ways...

And then AJR came to the rescue. Their brilliant '80 Trees for 80 Years' project ticked all the boxes and met all my criteria in one go...

Storm Eunice wasn't going to get in anyone's way.

- to plant an 'eco-friendly', much needed oak tree,
- to put a small, unknown to most, village on the map - another AJR brainwave with their UK Holocaust Map,
- last but not least, to have the ceremony and the tree planted, by my family, in its rightful place.

AJR's skillful organisation of our special occasion was exemplary; applying my wishes with sensitivity and reassurance throughout the entire process.

Karen Diamond and Jo Briggs guided me from a tentative beginning to a successful end, and Leah McKay kindly represented the organisation at the Millisle event.

It was the most touching and meaningful of occasions, unlike any other.

Thank you AJR. As was my mother, I'm proud to be a member.

Most probably, all the other 79

Suzanne Solomon

as a result of the planting of one of our '80 Trees for 80' Years. the daughter of Maurice Solomon.

red of Millisle farm Nazi persecution



Pupils from Millisle Primary School who attended the reception held in Millisle Community Hub. Also included are Curtis Ross, son of Suzanne Solomon and Jo Scott, chairman of Millisle and District Community Association.



Curtis Ross, (son of Suzanne Solomon who donated the tree), in Millisle Community Garden with Mayor of North Down and Ards, Mark Brooks. J5-24/2/22

the pleasure to meet. There have been so many over the 39 years and it was lovely to have the holocaust garden to bring people to." Making his first visit to Millisle Community Association's village hub, the Mayor, Councillor Mark Brooks, said that as a former businessman in Donaghadee he had known the Kichler family well and was familiar with many of their stories of life on the farm. Paying tribute to the role played by villagers, he said: "This village and its people provided a safe place and environment for them where they could live, work and play during what was an extremely difficult time. "If you look around the world today, those difficult



Maurice and Hertha Solomon

times are very much still amongst us and many people are still looking for a safe haven such as Millisle. "This is why we are planting the tree here today in Millisle. It is in honour of those people and places that symbolise the enormous contribution of Jewish refugees. I hope this tree will be appreciated by future generations in the town and will act as a platform in telling the story of the Jewish refugees in Millisle." Rev. Colin Davis, a Londoner now based at St Patrick's Church in Millisle, said: "There is a saying that history repeats itself because no-one listened the first time. It's good to commemorate this but what is even more important is that we learn from this when we go forward. "That's something we need to remember when we look at the trees. We remember the stories and we do our little bit to make sure it doesn't happen again. But we also remember how welcoming Millisle is to foreigners. "It's important to continue to care because when we look at the world today there are still refugees, there are still people who need looking after and caring for. "We welcome the alien, the foreigner into our communities. That's what you've done and I hope that's what we continue to do."

Grandson learns 'true scale' of grandfather's role in helping refugee children

THE guest list at Friday's commemorative tree planting included Richard Solomon from the Belfast branch of the family.

Also a grandson of Maurice Solomon, Richard's paternal grandmother was Evelyn Solomon who was Maurice's first wife, with whom he had two sons - Mervyn and Phillip. Richard explains that his father Mervyn was just 17 when Evelyn died, Maurice later going on to marry Hertha by whom he had another two children - Suzanne and Stephen. A practising barrister for the past 20 years, Richard began his career working in the music industry for Solomon and Peres, the company Maurice set up with Evelyn's brother Harold Peres which turned them into leading music distributors in Ireland. Richard had followed his own father Mervyn and uncle Phillip into the family business. In his younger days he helped to run the Caroline Music and Gramophone Shop outlets owned by Laser, a business that came out of the Solomon and Peres company. Richard was aged 14 when his grandfather died but he has clear memories of the 'incredible man' that he was. He recalls that Maurice's personal experience of the Troubles prompted him to leave the province for good and move to England, but he remained close to his grandchildren in Belfast. Says Richard: "Many years ago there was a bomb placed at his house by I don't know which paramilitary group and after that he decided to leave Northern Ireland and he then went to England and he had a house in Switzerland as well." By this stage the man who had begun life in poverty, selling cups of water on the beach at Millisle, had made millions. Says Richard: "I remember he said that he built up enough money to buy a horse and cart and that was the biggest mistake because the horse cost a fortune to feed and then died. Therefore he had to start again.

"But he had a remarkable story. His parents arrived over from Russia and they couldn't speak any English. The name Solomon is actually not the real name, I don't know what the Russian name is and they got the name Solomon when they arrived into Northern Ireland and I believe they lived in Donaghadee initially. "It's a fascinating story of rags to riches. Maurice had done very well for himself and his two sons came along, Mervyn and Phillip, and I remember my dad telling me stories about the Millisle farm. "He said he would never forget arriving to meet the children and he had a bag full of sweets and some of the kids were so thin. Normally kids would go mad for sweets but he said they wouldn't touch them because they couldn't eat them, they were in such a terrible shape. "I remember dad telling me about helping and having great fun on the farm with the others. He had quite a few memories from it." Richard says that until Friday's event in Millisle he had been unaware of the true scale of his grandfather's influence in helping the wartime refugee children. "It is fascinating to hear it all," he says. He says that Maurice was fortunate to have been born in Northern Ireland and therefore to have escaped the concentration camps, but from childhood Richard heard first-hand accounts of what it was like to live under the Nazis as a Jew from his grandmother Hertha and her sister Liesl. Says Richard: "We would go over to my grandfather's home in Switzerland and Liesl was a great walker: We would walk down the mountains and Liesl would tell me the stories about what went on. "She lived in a cave for so many years to try and escape the Germans and it left her skin very badly marked because she had been in darkness for so long. "She lived there with her husband. He wasn't Jewish and he would go out and get food and come back and look after her. It was some journey that Hertha went through with her sister." Those stories have stayed with Richard and he remarks, "It's so sad when you think we haven't learnt the lessons and this is still going on today. We don't learn from our past."



Members from the Solomon family, Mayor of North Down and Ards, Mark Brooks, Millisle and District Community Association members, local MLAs and councillors who attended the planting of an Oak Tree in Millisle Community Garden last week to honour the 80th anniversary of the Association of Jewish refugees and loving memory of Maurice Solomon. J6-24/2/22



Curtis Ross, (son of Suzanne Solomon), (left) is with Richard Solomon, his wife Caroline and granddaughter, Eloise Solomon-McIlroy in Millisle Community Hub after the tree planting event. J7-24/2/22

“A Stone has Fallen

On 28 April AJR will plant one of its last 80 Trees for 80 Years at Gwyrch Castle in North Wales. This article, written by Jonathan Carr, a writer and teacher working in

Henry, who is now 97, came to the UK via Kindertransport when he was 15 years old and spent 18 months at Gwyrch Castle. This interview took place in a back room in Stepney Jewish Community Centre. Jonathan reports that Henry hadn't yet taken his Tramadol but was planning to do so, in anticipation of some dancing after lunch. He danced with his wife, Roberta, right up until her death five years ago. The stroller beside him was previously hers. On its aluminium frame, in brightly coloured letters, it reads: **BOBBI**.

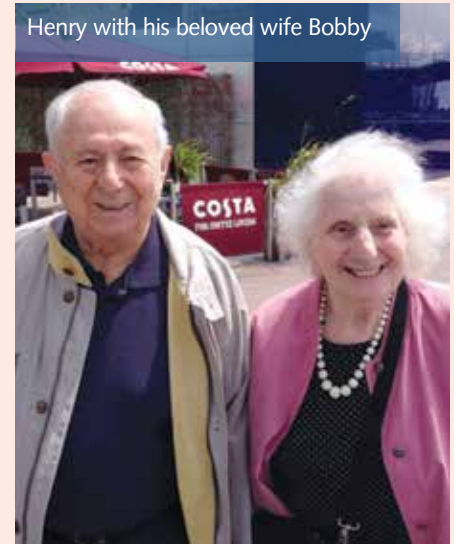
My surname is Glanz. In German it means splendour, or shine. Did you know that? No? Well, even with such a name, my life didn't have such a bright start; when I was two years old, my parents took me from Zolynia in Poland to Germany for medical treatment. You see I had a large growth right here (*he points between the bridge of his nose and his left eye*). Doctors in Poland said I needed an operation to remove it, but there was a risk I might lose my sight. At the same time, an uncle at Kiel University sent my mother some literature describing experiments with radium. This was 95 years ago. So I went to Kiel, had six months of treatment, and, sure enough the growth disappeared. Afterwards, we made our home in Kiel, and then, when I was 8, I broke my leg, and went back to the same hospital. The doctor who had treated me, Professor Beck, recognised my name, gathered all the surgeons around my bed, and showed them the original x-rays, "Look at this!" he shouted "Look at this!" Years later my daughter looked him up on the internet. He'd joined the Nazi party.

Life in Kiel was difficult during those years; all of the Jewish boys were beaten up and insulted on a regular basis. One teacher used to grab me by the ear and call me a snotty-nosed Jew boy. Of course, things got worse. The day after Kristallnacht, when store windows were smashed and synagogues desecrated, my mother gave me an envelope with some cash in it. She told me, if there's any commotion whatsoever, any trouble, I was to take my sister, Gisela, who was three years younger than me, and get a ticket to Flensburg, on the Danish border. She also gave me an address, and told me to go to the man who lived there; he'll get you to Denmark. I imagine he was a professional smuggler. In the end, we never used him.

As war approached, and after all of the Polish Jews were forced to leave Germany, my parents organised my escape through the Kindertransport, along with my sister. My father, Mordko, went to Switzerland because he had a bank account there; the Swiss caught him and sent him back to Germany. Then he went to Belgium; the Belgians turned a blind eye, but the Germans caught him and they too sent him back. My mother, Esther and my younger brother, Joachim, who was five years younger than me, were interned in a disused Jewish school in Leipzig.

I left on the Kindertransport on the 29 August, along with about 200 other children and at 15, I was one of the youngest. My sister had left a week earlier. I remember the journey clearly; we went from Kiel to Hamburg to Hanover to Berlin, crossing the Dutch border at midnight on the 1 September – five hours before the invasion of Poland. I always remember us driving through lovely Rotterdam, only to see the city twelve months later, completely destroyed by the Luftwaffe. We then got on a boat to Harwich in Essex. We had arrived in England! By this time my sister was in a bedsit in North London. We were safe.

Years later, I read in a German newspaper about a train that had tried to get through



to England from Vienna, but the Germans stopped it; it was ten hours after the invasion. They just wouldn't let it through. There were 120 children on board. All of them were murdered.

From Harwich, we went on a truck to Liverpool Street Station. Have you seen the plaque at the station dedicated to the Kindertransport? Then we went to Paddington, and from there to an abandoned 19th Century castle in North Wales.

An abandoned castle?

Yes! Can you imagine it? 200 Jewish children arriving at midnight at Gwyrch Castle near Abergele – no heating, no lighting, no toilets, no running water and only straw pallets for beds, and the Irish Sea to wash our faces. The castle itself had a series of interconnected underground tunnels that were supposedly haunted, but despite this, it was our safe haven. The local community were incredibly welcoming, and we Jewish Refugees actually became quite famous. We even worked for the local farmers, picking up the Welsh language as we went. I was one of the few with excellent English anyway – having practised it with sailors who inhabited the port at Kiel – but we knew we could get away with murder if we spoke to

from my Heart"

Wales, which served as an agricultural training centre for hundreds of young Jewish East London, features an interview with one of those refugees **Henry Glanz**.

Henry (4th from left) and other boys working in the forest at Gwrych Castle



The young Henry standing in front of Gwrych Castle



the locals in their own language. I can actually still swear perfectly in Welsh!

On one occasion, myself and a few other boys went shopping in Abergele, when a policeman approached us, and two of the boys ran off. Being the only English speaker in the group, the policeman asked me why they'd run, so I explained, "If a policeman approached a Jewish kid in Germany, it always meant trouble – so you'd run!" The policeman got quite emotional at this, and told me, "This is not Germany. Tell your friends they don't need to run away." Then, a few days later, a couple of officers came to the castle to talk to us about the British Police, and I remember – they brought tea and cakes.

I was at Gwrych Castle for eighteen months, but for the whole time I was there, I was thinking about my parents. I missed them terribly. I would write to them via the Red Cross; it cost two shillings, and you'd have to write down your thoughts in 25 words or less. About 4 years later, I found out that my father was murdered at Auschwitz. My mother and brother were also sent to a concentration camp, most likely Majdanek, on the outskirts of Lublin. I never saw them again. The last letter I received from my mother said, "My dear beloved children, keep always together in love and faith, and God will bless you."

Were you eventually called up by the British Army?

I was, but the war was reaching its conclusion by that point. However, once the British Army learned that I spoke excellent German, they asked me whether I'd like to join the American Army in occupied Germany, as a Postal Censor. I was told I'd get British Army pay but American PX rations – well this was a good deal, so I said, "Oh yes please." After they interviewed me, they also gave me a slightly higher grade because I could read and write Yiddish. Anyway, I was stationed in Munich, and my job was this: any letter that came in smelling of Nazi underground activity, written in secret ink, or code, was to be handed over to the American Army; anything that suggested black market activity was to go to the German Police, and anything uncomplimentary about the occupation, I was to grab a pair of scissors and cut it right out of the letter. I quite enjoyed that part.

Have you ever been back to Germany?

I've never been back to Poland, but I've returned to Germany quite a few times. My granddaughter even lives in Berlin now. You know in Germany they have the Stolpersteine – concrete blocks with

brass plaques that commemorate those killed in the Holocaust. You find them in the pavement outside the last known address of those who died. On one of those times I returned to Kiel, I took a friend along, and we got to cleaning the stones outside our house, and a lovely blonde woman, a bit like Princess Diana, stopped and asked us what we were doing. So, I explained what happened to my family, and she started crying. And when she stopped, she said that she had something that she was ashamed to speak of, but she must. So, I said go ahead and speak, and she recounted how her grandfather had been a sweet old man, until he got Alzheimer's – and then he started telling terrible stories. "I'm too ashamed to even tell you what he told me", she said. She cried some more, and I told her, "You're not responsible for your grandfather's action." She looked up at me, and said, "Really?" I nodded at her, and she thanked me. Then she uttered a phrase that is familiar in Germany: mir fällt ein Stein vom Herzen! Do you know what that means? A Stone has Fallen from my Heart. Then she gave me a kiss. And I slept well that night.

A WESTPHALIAN HERO

Willy Katzenstein 1874-1951

In memoriam: Eva Roberts, née Katzenstein (9 February 1925 – 3 March 2022)

In 2020, when rummaging in one of my mother's cupboards, I found a document, 292 pages, called *Landsturm im Weltkrieg*. I realised that this was a diary, written by my mother's father, the jurist Willy Katzenstein, while he served in the *Landsturm* division of the German army as part of the occupying forces in Belgium throughout the First World War. My rudimentary German enabled me to understand enough to recognise its importance. Further rummaging revealed Willy's autobiography – a 212 page typed account, written shortly after he and his family arrived here in June 1939.

My grandfather died two years before I was born and I knew little about him other than that he had been a lawyer in Bielefeld, Westphalia, whose last years in Germany had been spent largely in helping would-be emigrants leave the country. My mother, his daughter, Eva Roberts, recalled leaning over the banister in their Bielefeld home, and seeing emaciated, shaven-headed men, recently released from concentration camps, sitting on the settle, waiting to get advice from her father. I still have the settle.

Willy's autobiography is also of rare interest. While the first half is a kind of *Bildungsroman* account of his ancestry and early life, the second half is of particular value to Jewish historians.

Willy was a meticulous recorder of events and detail. From 1933, having previously been only semi-attached to his Jewish roots, he was drawn ineluctably into Jewish affairs and fulfilled many roles in Westphalian and national Jewish organisations. In particular, from 1935, his time was taken up in helping increasingly desperate people bereft of their livelihoods and homes. In 1936 he opened an emigration advice office for Westphalia and a further office in his own home. The principal task was to find countries that would take people. As is well-known, fewer and fewer countries

were prepared to accept German Jews and the work was relentless.

Despite such overwhelming daily evidence of the Nazi determination to rid Germany of Jews, Willy refused to believe that the brutal regime was no more willing to tolerate him – he had two Iron Crosses from the first war – than his fellow Jews. While recognising that the Nazis made laws to suit their purposes, his belief in law *per se* failed to shake his confidence until it was almost too late. It was his unfailingly clear-sighted wife, Selma, née Zehden, who secured places for their daughters on the Kindertransport and managed to send as many of their household possessions as was possible to England where they arrived on 1 June, 1939 – each with the permitted 10 Deutsch Marks.

Some of Willy's papers – mostly correspondence with many of the leading German Jews of the 1920s and 1930s – were given to the Leo Baeck Institute (Willy worked closely with Baeck in the 1930s) or the Wiener Library after his death. However, these documents bring to light his considerable significance in two periods of twentieth century history. That he was also an elegant and perceptive writer is a further attraction. His *Landsturm* diary proves to be of unique value to Belgian historians who, in the words of one of them, "have countless accounts of the occupation from Belgian people but nothing from an occupying German officer". It is full of anecdotes, vivid descriptions and honest reflection – though Willy, as a true German officer, remained convinced of the rightness of the German cause even after the defeat. Extraordinarily, not once during its 292 pages does he refer to his being Jewish.

The entire WW1 diary is currently being translated into Dutch – the academic language of Belgium – and annotated by Belgian historians of the period. The translated autobiography has been condensed and abridged by his granddaughter – the writer of this piece – and is to be published shortly in two



Willy Katzenstein

instalments in the Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute. Finally, both works are to be published in full and in hardback by the *Historische Kommission für Westfalen* which, by an exquisite turn of fate, is based in Bielefeld. Both works will also, eventually, be available in full on the website of The Wiener Library.

It is clear that my grandfather facilitated the emigration of many hundreds of families and individuals to countries all over the world. The writer of this piece would be fascinated to hear from anyone who has documents related to his involvement.

Susan Hamlyn



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KITCHENER MEMORIAL CONCERT

Holocaust education charity Learning from the Righteous is marking Yom HaShoah by telling the little known story of Kitchener Camp in a lunchtime concert at the Wigmore Hall on Thursday 28 April.

Readings by Michael Rosen and Jon Soper from testimonies, diaries and other contemporaneous sources will be accompanied by music that was played by the Kitchener Camp orchestra, performed by Benjamin Nabarro (violin), Claudia Ajmone-Marsan (violin), Rachel Roberts (viola) and Gemma Rosefield (cello) and featuring The London Cantorial Singers .

Kitchener Camp provided a safe haven to 4000 Jewish refugees, many of whom had been in concentration camps after Kristallnacht. Conceived and managed by British Jewry, its

significance belies the relatively small part it played in the broader picture, enabling these traumatised men to recover their faith in humanity. Furthermore, despite the local presence of the British Union of Fascist, the population of sleepy Sandwich extended an overwhelming warm welcome to their guests. In the months leading up to WW2, while the plight of refugees was often seen as a regrettable, inevitable by-product of Nazism, this is a story of compassion for displaced people with a poignant contemporary resonance.

Tickets for this event will be available via the Wigmore Hall Box Office. For further



information please contact the charity's CEO Antony Lishak at antony@learningfromtherighteous.org

AJR TRIP TO THE COTSWOLDS

Sunday 8 May – Thursday 12 May 2022



The itinerary will be a full five days of visits (four nights accommodation) to attractions in The Cotswolds and surrounding areas, returning to the hotel in Tewkesbury each evening. It includes a fair amount of walking, getting on and off the coach, early starts, steps and sightseeing.

All meals, accommodation and travel will be included in the price.

Places are limited and are on a first come, first served basis.

For more information please call **Susan Harrod** on **020 8385 3070** or email susan@ajr.org.uk

WALKING TOUR



Sunday 19 June
5.30pm – 7.30pm

Blue Badge Guide Rachel Kosky will lead us on a tour of leafy and tranquil West Hampstead where the spacious homes provided a haven from the East End and a refuge for émigrés escaping 1930s Europe.

Learn how the refugees established a new community in and around Finchley Road, with cafés serving schnitzel and shops selling the best chocolate. Hear stories of art and literature linked to the area, with readings that evoke the time and place.

The tour involves two hours of gentle walking with the option to adjourn afterwards to a local restaurant for dinner.

For more information please email susan@ajr.org.uk

REVIEWS

MALA'S CAT: THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF SURVIVAL IN THE SHADOW OF THE HOLOCAUST

Mala Kacenberg
Penguin Michael Joseph

When she was small Mala Kacenberg had a cat which always followed her around. Nicknamed Malach, which means "angel" in Hebrew, Mala imagined her feline friend was a real angel watching over her and so it proved to be as darkness gathered. Mala (née Szorer) was born into a large happy, observant Jewish family in the Polish village of Tarnogród on the edge of the pine forest. They had a simple home and a mainly agricultural life in the close-knit community. But before long Jewish children were insulted and physically abused at school as antisemitism grew.

Mala was staying on a farm with relatives when the Nazis invaded Poland as the summer holidays ended in 1939, so returned home quickly. She had no inkling of the horrors to come but life soon worsened and her family and the rest of the Jewish community were reduced to starvation. Ever enterprising Mala and her brother Yechiel went out foraging for food but tragedy struck when he was shot by SS officers although miraculously she escaped. Aged only 12 she was forced to continue alone looking for supplies for her family, bravely removing her yellow star and risking sneaking out of the ghetto created at Tarnogród. One terrible day she received a smuggled letter from her sister Balla warning her to stay away and to her horror Mala saw her family rounded up for deportation. She never saw them again.

Days and nights sleeping rough followed in the forest, protected from danger including soldiers searching – by alerts from Malach, the cat, who fended for herself and who brought respite from loneliness. Occasionally Mala returned to Tarnogród to look after her feeble grandfather who had been left behind. Mala herself kept going, thanks to her remarkable spirit. She was helped by the fact she was fair haired and didn't look Jewish as she outwitted Germans and hostile villagers.

As winter approached and it became colder she knew it would be impossible to continue living out of doors and dangerously going from village to village trying to find food. She helped along the way with tasks such as assisting felling trees, milking cows, sleeping rough in shelters and haystacks and even learned to eat raw potatoes. After assuming false identities and living by her wits, Mala eventually enrolled at the Labour Exchange for work in Germany. En route she had a harrowing ordeal when she was interrogated by the Gestapo after a quarrel with another girl.

She spent the rest of the war working under an alias in a guest house in a small town near Leipzig, Saxony and many narrow escapes and adventures ensued. Afterwards, Poland proved too dangerous a place to settle and Mala immigrated to London with other Jewish refugees, married and raised a large family.

This interesting and beautifully written story tells of incredible bravery and survival against all odds. We hear of hope, cruelty and kindness and friends and enemies seen through the eyes of an incredibly resourceful and shrewd child, always accompanied by her faithful cat.

Janet Weston

HITLER'S JEWISH REFUGEES – HOPE AND ANXIETY IN PORTUGAL

By Marion Kaplan
Yale University Press

It was a scholar's dream come true. New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage wanted to know if Marion Kaplan, Professor of Modern Jewish History at New York University, was interested in a cache of 207 unopened letters and 76 postcards. Written in the early 1940s, not long after Kaplan's parents had fled Nazi Germany, they were addressed to refugees in Lisbon, care of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. But the intended recipients had moved on, and clearly been unable to leave a forwarding address. Never claimed, the correspondence hibernated in the 'Joint's' offices – until the aid agency passed them on to the museum. Needless to say, Kaplan 'rushed to the building at the tip of Manhattan' – and this absorbing book is the result.

Perhaps Lisbon does not immediately come to mind as a major part of the refugee saga, but there are two significant markers in popular culture. Made in 1942, *Casablanca* is about refugees trying to reach the Portuguese capital from Vichy-controlled French North Africa. The movie famously ends with Humphrey Bogart helping Ingrid Bergman and Paul Henreid catch a plane to Lisbon. And the city's harbour is a powerful feature of Erich Maria Remarque's refugee melodrama, *The Night in Lisbon*, published two decades later.

Although refugees had been arriving in Portugal before the war, it was not among the thirty-odd countries President Franklin Roosevelt invited to the ill-fated conference in Evian in the summer of 1938. There, diplomats set up an intergovernmental committee to deal with the growing crisis; it

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would consider Portugal's colonies, Angola and Mozambique, as sites for resettling refugees. Portugal, however, turned down the invitation to join the body.

Once war broke out, two waves of refugees headed for Lisbon: first, in the spring of 1940, after Hitler had overrun the Low Countries and France, and Italy had entered the war; and, secondly, after Berlin occupied Vichy France. Marseilles and Genoa gave way to Lisbon as the major European port of exit for refugees hoping to escape, especially to the western hemisphere or to Britain.

Franco allowed them to cross neutral Spain, if they had visas to enter Portugal. Salazar, Kaplan estimates, let between forty thousand and one hundred thousand refugees pass through neutral Portugal. Crucially, there was no question of lingering there: the government issued thirty-day transit visas, and set the secret police upon lingerers. In fact, most refugees managed to flee the country within a few months; the less fortunate were forced to leave the capital for 'fixed residences' in remote villages.

Inevitably, much of Kaplan's book deals with the frustrations and agonising delays as refugees tried to penetrate the 'paper walls' – the bureaucratic hurdles in Portugal, but also in recipient countries. If the Salazar regime was hostile, though not antisemitic, Kaplan found that citizens tended to be sympathetic, generously offering food and shelter. And, of course, refugees relied heavily on charitable organisations for succour, and guidance through the red-tape jungle. Besides the 'Joint', she cites the Quakers and the Unitarians. And, not surprisingly, Professor Kaplan reminds us that the flight from political and economic disasters continues: 'Paying careful attention to the words of refugees in Portugal may help us understand Jewish heartbreak and perseverance in the 1940s and also listen compassionately to refugees' stories in our own time.'

Martin Mauthner

AN EXCELLENT PORTRAIT

This wonderful portrait of AJR member **Gerald Hellman** has just been awarded a Certificate of Excellence by the Portrait Society of America and will shortly feature in the Royal Society of Portrait Painters' Annual Exhibition at Mall Galleries.

Gerald's son Anthony commissioned artist Charles Moxon to paint the portrait for his father's 95th birthday. Anthony has always been passionate about art, and first met the artist ten years ago. He told us that "the painting captures my father's warm heart, love of life and caring soul. It will forever be treasured by the family."

Gerald himself is a keen amateur artist who was filmed working on one of his paintings by the BBC when they came to the National Holocaust Centre to record *Songs of Praise*. He values this portrait "as it will be passed onto the next generation and with it will go my life's story, which I have recorded and summarised in several volumes. That it has been a highly acclaimed painting is an added bonus."



Gerald Hellman

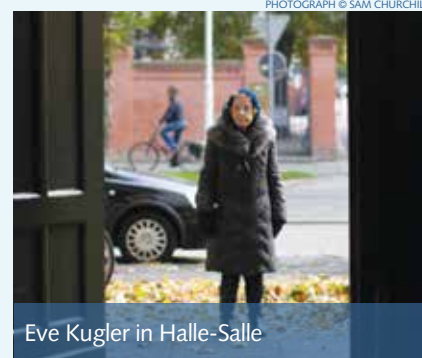
Artist Charles Moxon writes: "Gerald Hellman is a story of optimism. Despite his past, he emanates a jovial spirit inspiring all those he encounters, including me. To realise my vision, I centred the piece around his face, omitting a background and taking from the techniques of the old masters. With each day and month spent with the work, I realized how much of himself he had passed to his son. The portrait transformed, showcasing the eternal hope one can impart."

RETURN TO HALLE: some addenda

Our March issue featured a moving account of Eve Kugler's recent return to the building in Halle-Salle where her family experienced Kristallnacht.

Eve herself has since asked us to point out that "I was NOT arrested on Kristallnacht. It was my father. To my knowledge Nazis did not arrest children that night, though they did so ten days earlier when they arrested children of all ages who were Polish citizens and deported them to Poland with their families."

Meanwhile we at AJR extend our apologies to fellow AJR member Sam Churchill, for omitting to credit him for this



Eve Kugler in Halle-Salle

wonderful photo that appeared with Eve's article. Sam – whose grandmother Litz Smith, née Lemberger, also came here via Kindertransport – travelled to Germany in the same *UK March of the Living* group as Eve. We are grateful to him for giving us permission to use his photograph.

OBITUARIES

WALTER GRATZER

Born: 20 September 1932 Breslau (now Wroclaw, Poland)
Died: 20 October 2021 London



Distinguished scientist, who documented the rise of molecular biology, and was a polymath and entertaining communicator in his conversations and books.

Walter Gratzler was born in the Jewish Hospital in Breslau. The family later moved to Poland and in 1938 the Polish government decided to expel all Germans, so Walter's father had the choice of taking Polish citizenship or expulsion. Most of the family chose to stay, but Walter's father at the last moment said, "No": he would remain a German. He took his wife Margit (née Perlstein) and son to Czechoslovakia, from where they managed to escape to England. Walter's grandmother and several members of the family perished in Auschwitz. His father's choice had been lucky, both for own his family and for science, since Walter became one of the outstanding biophysicists of his generation.

The family landed in Hull. They then moved to London, but shortly after the war began Walter's father, being an 'enemy alien', was arrested and sent to the Isle of Man, soon to be followed by his wife and Walter, who were put in a different camp. After ten months they were sent back to England and settled in Cheltenham. Walter spoke no English when he arrived in England, but learnt quickly, winning a scholarship to the local grammar school. From there he won

the top scholarship to Exeter College, Oxford, where he read chemistry, before doing his National Service in the RAF.

At the end of his two years' service Walter was wondering what career to pursue. A fellow officer suggested he should apply to the National Institute for Medical Research at Mill Hill. Walter was accepted and worked under Dr. Gilbert Beaven, an expert on genetic disorders associated with haemoglobin. Walter found that subject and red cell membranes absorbing and before long had written a number of papers. While there he worked on his Ph.D., which he gained in under three years. He then got a Fulbright travelling fellowship to work at Harvard, where he studied nucleic acid biochemistry. Hannah was working in the next lab to Walter's and so they met, which he lovingly said in a memoir was 'the most important event of his life'. They married in 1963.

Oh his return to England Walter continued to work for the MRC in its Biophysics Unit at King's College, London, where he specialised in work on red blood cells and on how RNA and proteins are linked. He also taught, and recruited Ph.D. students for the lab. One had been told that he must go to King's, because Walter was there, and he was 'by far the best biophysicist in the country'.

When John Maddox, the Editor of the world-renowned scientific journal, *Nature*, asked Walter to join him, Walter refused, but became their unofficial correspondent on molecular

biology and was entrusted with the delicate task of advising which research papers they should publish.

Walter's own work will survive. Indeed, only a few months ago *The Biophysical Journal* published a paper, which summed up the work that he and his colleagues did on spectrin, a red cell membrane protein.

The books, which Walter wrote in his spare time, will live for their inimitable combination of erudition and humour. His first was a *Literary Companion to Science*. Next came *Bedside Nature*, a selection from the journal, then *The Oxford Book of Scientific Anecdotes* and other books all gently instructing while amusing the reader. He read omnivorously – never forgetting the *AJR Journal*.

Among his passions were music and cooking. Gratzler dinner parties were always memorable not just for the dishes, which Walter prepared with scientific precision, but for his convivial hosting.

After Walter's death Hannah received about a hundred letters of condolence from his friends, colleagues and ex-students here and abroad. Many said how much they owed him, not only as a polymath scientist, but how, always self-effacing, he changed their outlook on life, taught them to appreciate the arts and to become better humans. He told me that he would like to be remembered for helping others. Those letters prove that he will be.

Hannah J Gould and Nigel A Hawkins



AUDREY SUGARMAN

Born: 6 July 1931, Hull
Died: 1 February 2022, Hull

AJR volunteer Audrey Sugarman displayed immeasurable commitment and dedication to her local community and to those who were vulnerable or disabled.

She was a volunteer for the local Stroke Association for almost 35 years, receiving medals, certificates and awards for her outstanding service. She was a hospital visitor for many years and also visited members of the synagogue who were unwell and lonely. In 2015 she began volunteering for the AJR, supporting and assisting Jewish refugees in the Hull area.

Audrey was one of four children. She had two brothers, Leon and Stuart, both deceased, and a sister Natalie, who is still going strong. She attended Kingston High School, going on to train as a secretary. This training came in handy when she joined the family business, Rossy Brothers, well-known local bookmakers. She worked in the office for over 30 years, overseeing all the administration and the credit customers' financial accounts. She left Rossy Brothers to help her husband, Harold, when he took over the local kosher butchers. Her ability to talk, gossip and take meat orders from customers at the same time was amazing.

As a small child she was evacuated to Hornsea and delighted in recounting her time there as well as her later ride on Concorde. She married Harold in 1952 and they shared many happy years until he passed away in January 1981.

Well-known for her catering skills Audrey was usually at the forefront of food preparation for a range of social events. Family meant everything to her, including Ian and Cecelia, her son and daughter-in-law; Natalie, her sister; Aimi, Hugh and Yosef, her grand-children; and Sophia and Hayden, her great grand-children. Life will be a lot quieter without her and she will be sadly missed by her family and all who knew her.

Ian Sugarman



FREDA WINEMAN BEM

Born: 6 September 1923, Metz, France
Died: 1 January 2022, London

Freda Wineman spent her last 30 years as a Holocaust witness. She spoke without anger, focussing her audiences on the facts, the need for tolerance and to confront hatred.

She worked closely with HET, National Holocaust Centre, HMD Trust, LJCC and AJR. In 2018 she received a BEM for services to Holocaust education. She made friends everywhere with her elegance, warm smile and manner.

Freda was born in Metz, France, the second child of Ezriel (Paul) and Sarah (Rose) Silberberg. With three brothers, David, Armand and Marcel, they moved to Sarreguemines. When war started they fled to St Etienne. Freda's education was interrupted and she went to work.

In May 1944, the family was betrayed and arrested. They were sent to Drancy and then by cattle truck to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Her mother and youngest brother, Marcel, went directly to the gas chambers. She, and her other brothers, were put to work. She was tattooed with the number A-7181 and dug trenches, afterwards working on sorting the clothes and belongings of the murdered.

After the Sonderkommando revolt in October 1944, she was sent to Bergen Belsen. Her health suffered; her stomach and lungs never recovered. She was moved to Raguhn, near Hanover, for slave labour in a factory. She was moved to Theresienstadt in April 1945. After liberation, she learned her father had also died in Auschwitz. She found David and Armand in St Etienne.

In 1949 Freda visited London and was introduced to David Wineman, an electrical engineer running the factory of the family business. The two were instantly attracted and married on 29 January 1950. A year later Sandra was born and, 21 months later, Irene. Tragically, David died in 1952, leaving Freda alone with a toddler and baby. Tough years followed. Her situation eased in the 1970s and she travelled, meeting friends and family.

Freda recorded her life story for the British Museum, Yad Vashem, the Shoah Foundation and Washington Holocaust Museum. She appeared on *Blue Peter* and in the 2015 TV programme *Touched by Auschwitz*. She is survived by two daughters, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren

Sandra Wagner

ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 4 April @ 10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 5 April @ 2pm	Efram Sera-Shria – The life of Harry Houdini https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88164819738	Meeting ID: 881 6481 9738
Wednesday 6 April @ 2pm	Susan Soyinka (author) – From East End to Land's End https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83818110676	Meeting ID: 8381 811 0676
Wednesday 6 April @ 4pm	Tibor Frank – Migrations of Jewish-Hungarian professionals through Germany to the United States 1919–1945 https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88026752422	Meeting ID: 880 2675 2422
Monday 11 April @ 10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Tuesday 12 April @ 2pm	Michael Kushner – The Spy Who Loved Himself: the story of Eddie Chapman https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85153179029	Meeting ID: 8515 317 9029
Tuesday 12 April @ 6pm	Online 2g social get-together https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/8891_630_5424	Meeting ID: 8891 630 5424
Wednesday 13 April @ 2pm	AJR Book Club Discussion (no speaker) – Charles Dickens: A Life by Claire Tomalin https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88568044323	Meeting ID: 8856 804 4323
Tuesday 19 April @ 2pm	John Reed, the Story Teller Fella – Music, comedy, storytelling & poetry https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83552942138	Meeting ID: 8355 294 2138
Wednesday 20 April @ 2pm	Irene Kyffin – The Origin of Theatre in Ritual and Worship https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81701521852	Meeting ID: 8170 152 1852
Monday 25 April @ 10.30am	Online yoga: Get fit where you sit https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439

IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	REGION	CO-ORDINATOR
Monday 4 April @ 2pm	Kingston & Surrey	Ros Hart roshart@ajr.org.uk ; 07966 969 951
Thursday 7 April @ 2pm	Pinner	Karen Diamond karendiamond@ajr.org.uk ; 07966 631 778
Monday 25 April @ 12 noon	Bournemouth	Ros Hart roshart@ajr.org.uk ; 07966 969 951



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