



# AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

# Thank You Ma'am

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



The AJR is deeply saddened by the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who touched the lives of so many of us.



1926 – 2022

Her Majesty met and honoured many Jewish refugees during her reign. She is pictured here with Bea Green MBE at the opening of the first Holocaust gallery at the Imperial War Museum.

Her Majesty has been a constant in the lives of our members who were offered a safe haven and place of refuge in the United Kingdom after being forced to flee from Nazi persecution, as well as those who came as survivors of the Holocaust. We are grateful for the interest Her Majesty showed in the lives of our members, for her empathy when hearing of the hardship and heartbreak experienced at the hands of the Nazis, and for the many Honours bestowed on our members for services to Holocaust education and commemoration.

On behalf of the Jewish refugees and their descendants, we mourn the loss of our sovereign and send our sincerest condolences to the Royal Family and to King Charles III to whom we also wish much fortitude. May Her Majesty's memory be for a blessing. Long Live the King!

The AJR was proud to help honour HM The Queen's remarkable reign during our own recent 80th anniversary. Each of the trees planted within our 80 Trees for 80 Years programme formed part of The Queen's Green Canopy.

We have already published, via the AJR

website, some stories and photos from our members of their memories of Her Majesty, and we would like to gather more personal recollections to share with you in our November Journal. Please send any memories or comments to [editorial@ajr.org.uk](mailto:editorial@ajr.org.uk)

Tributes have poured in from members & friends in response to the news. One first generation member perfectly described the response when she wrote: "I shed a lot of tears. It felt like losing a member of your family".

Another 1G member, Bronia Snow, told us: "As one who came to England as an 11 year old child on one of Sir Nicholas Winton's Kindertransports and who has enjoyed life in this wonderful country, I deeply mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth, whose noble leadership as head of State has been an inspiration to all.

She went on to say: "I have had the honour and pleasure of meeting our new King, Charles III, on several occasions, as he played host to us Jewish Refugees and I feel the crown could not rest on a more worthy or honourable head. I wish him a happy and peaceful reign."



# A NEW PRECEDENT FOR ART RESTITUTION

**Sybil Gilbert and her cousins recently secured the restitution of their great great uncle's artworks in unusual circumstances. As she explains here, this sets a precedent for restoration of art that has been sold as a 'forced sale'.**

In 1998, a telephone call from an investigator acting for the Chief Rabbi of Berlin put me in touch with a firm of German lawyers. It appears that they were tracing the provenance of paintings for restitution to another claimant and 'Onkel Carl's name kept cropping up.

Carl Sachs lived in Breslau. He was an industrialist and patron of the arts. He and his wife were childless and he treated my grandmother, Anna Gertrude Gross-Sachs, as his only daughter. My mother and her younger brother, Klaus, hated their weekly duty visits to his home. Nevertheless, as I discovered when recently re-reading his letters to my mother, he was devoted to them. Perhaps he seemed to them a stern old man unused to children? In February 1939, he and his wife, Margarethe, fled to safety in Switzerland taking with them what they could and whatever had not been already seized by the Nazi government. Margarethe died the next year and Onkel Carl was on his own with no means of financial support other than what he had managed to bring into Switzerland.

Meanwhile my grandmother and grandfather fled to the Netherlands. Klaus had been sent to England on a Kindertransport and my mother came to England in March 1939 under the sponsored domestic scheme. I have several letters from Onkel Carl to my mother between the years 1941 and 1943 and it is obvious that his only remaining motivation in life – for he was by then old and sick – was to help the Gross-Sachs family in any way that he could. It is heartrending reading. He sent what money he could to my

*Frühlingsweide (Spring pasture)* by Hans Thoma, reproduced by kind permission of Sotheby's



grandparents as my grandfather (who had been a professor of engineering) was now working as a labourer in a mill. Onkel Carl must have been aware of their precarious situation. The letters were, of course, censored and he had no wish to alarm my mother, but his real, and unfulfilled, ambition was to help my grandparents. He wrote: 'Vor allem will ich jezt einmal versuchen, Deine Eltern nach Schweiz heraus zubringen (*Above all I want to try to get your parents out to Switzerland*)'.

Sadly, he died in 1943 after they had been taken to Westerbork. He was spared knowing that they died in Auschwitz.

To support himself in Switzerland, he sold what was left of his artworks. This brings us to the State of Baden-Württemberg. In a press conference of 18 July this year the culture minister for Baden-Württemberg and the director of the Kurpfälzisches Museum, Heidelberg announced that they were delighted to be able to restitute two paintings belonging to Onkel Carl. These were *Frühlingsweide* by Hans Thoma and *A Portrait : Student Michaelis* by Wilhelm Trübner.

These paintings are not especially valuable, but the restitution sets an important legal precedent. They were returned even though Onkel Carl sold them *after* he had fled to Switzerland and was technically free. However, because he had been

deprived of his home and most of his assets before he was forced to flee, the remaining art works were all he had left to provide him with a livelihood. This leads to the possibility that other artworks which were sold by refugees after they had escaped from Nazi occupied territory, might be restituted. Of course, Onkel Carl was old and ill and could not work, but there may well be many situations where refugees were unable to meet their living expenses without selling their possessions and, in those circumstances, a claim might now succeed.

The Baden-Württemberg authorities have a proactive approach to restitution. During the press conference it was announced that specific departments had been set up in archives and libraries to research the provenance of paintings as the authorities are aware of the State's historic responsibility for cultural assets seized from those persecuted by the Nazi regime. The minister said that, though injustice could not be undone, the State could, at least, contribute to the material reparation of the injustice committed.

For me, rather than any material gain, the benefit of nearly 25 years involvement with the restitution process has been learning of my family history through photographs and documents.



## SANDWICH LUNCH

On 7 September, a group of Kitchener Camp Descendants visited Sandwich for an interesting day planned by Clare Ungerson, AJR member and author of *Four Thousand Lives*, an excellent

written history of the Kitchener Camp. The day included a walking tour of the town, a visit to the local museum, and lunch at The Bell Inn, where AJR's blue plaque is located.

## HISTORY IN HAMPSTEAD



The AJR's Debra Barnes recently spoke to a group of Hampstead members about her own family history. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the fascinating talk by Debra, who runs the AJR's Next Generations project and whose own book, *The Young Survivors*, is 'highly

rated' on Amazon.

In the picture is: Barbara Simon, Elizabeth Bogard, Debra Barnes, Esther Duggan, Betty Shane, Gabi Forti, Eva Evans & carer, Andrew & Susie Kaufman and Doona Labi.

## ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING



The Annual Election Meeting of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) will take place at 3pm on Tuesday 13 December 2022 at AJR, Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, London N3 1HF. Anyone wishing to stand for election must be nominated by at least ten associate members of the AJR together with a notice signed by the nominee indicating their willingness to serve as a trustee should they be elected. This must be duly received in writing by **Monday 21 November 2022** at the AJR offices. If you wish to attend please contact Karin Pereira on **020 8385 3070** or at [karin@ajr.org.uk](mailto:karin@ajr.org.uk)

This new memorial to Trevor Chadwick was unveiled in Swanage on Monday 29 August. Read the full story on page 10.



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

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# Jewish refugees in and on the BBC

In October 1922, one hundred years ago, the BBC was founded. It has become one of the great British cultural institutions. What is less well known is the hugely important contribution that Jewish refugees made to the BBC, especially after the war.

Their impact was extraordinary. From Manuel, the luckless waiter in *Fawlty Towers*, to the documentaries of Robert Vas, from the TV and radio dramas of Tom Stoppard to the war broadcasts of Arthur Koestler and leading executives like Martin Esslin and Hans Keller, John Tusa and Stephen Hearst, from Feliks Topolski's drawings for the opening credits of *Face to Face* to Nikolaus Pevsner's Reith Lectures on *The Englishness of English Art*, from Rabbi Hugo Gryn's appearances on Radio 4's *The Moral Maze* to Rudolph Cartier's legendary drama collaborations with Nigel Kneale, including the *Quatermass* plays in the mid-1950s. The range is extraordinary. Comedy and science fiction, classical music and current affairs, radio lectures on art, liberty and the survival of the symphony. Refugees played a huge part in many of the greatest achievements of the BBC.

Many were familiar faces and voices on television and radio but some of the most influential figures were BBC executives and producers who we never saw. Misha Donat, the son of Wolfgang Suschitzky, the Austrian-born British documentary photographer and cinematographer, was a senior music producer at BBC Radio 3 for more than 25 years. Anna Kallin, was born into a wealthy Jewish Russian merchant family in 1896 and came to Britain with her father soon after the Russian Revolution. She joined the BBC during the war and from 1946-64 was



The BBC's 1953 *Quatermass Experiment* marked a new era for TV drama

a legendary talks producer, working with famous intellectuals such as EJ Hobsbawm and Isaac Deutscher, Isaiah Berlin and AJP Taylor. Berlin described her as 'a typical Moscow intellectual, high-grade, highbrow, [...] a brilliant and interesting woman' and *The Times* described her as 'fiercely intellectual, having intense convictions, and intolerant of all sloppiness, whether in thinking or in execution', 'a very human companion, an eager listener, a passionate talker, an earnest persuader, all without false pride or arrogance.'

John Tusa is well remembered as a presenter of BBC2's *Newsnight* in the 1980s but went on to become Managing Director of the World Service from 1986-93 before leaving the BBC to run the Barbican Arts Centre. From 2000 until 2005, Tusa interviewed 55 major figures in the arts for BBC Radio 3. In 2009 he presented a 91-part series on BBC Radio 4. *Day By Day* used original archive news material to track events on a daily basis from 1989, including the fall of the Berlin Wall. Like Tom Stoppard, he was born in Zlin in Czechoslovakia and, also like Stoppard, he was the son of an employee of Bata Shoes. He came to Britain with

his family in 1939 and joined the BBC in 1960. He stayed for more than thirty years.

Other central European refugees who became leading BBC executives and had a huge impact on BBC talks and arts programmes included Stephen Hearst. Born in Vienna, he was the son of a Jewish dental surgeon and arrived in England after the *Anschluss* 'with £10 in my pocket. Yet that very evening I found myself in the Savile Club, being introduced to HG Wells'. He fought in the beach landings in Italy and became commandant of a camp for Italian POWs in Palestine. He later joined the BBC and became head of arts programmes in BBC Television and then Controller of Radio 3 (1972-78). This now seems like a bygone age. Under Hearst, programmes on Radio 3 included TS Eliot's *Four Quartets* read by Alec Guinness, with music specially composed by Peter Maxwell Davies, specially commissioned poems by Auden, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes to celebrate the BBC's fiftieth anniversary and one of Tom Stoppard's first radio plays.

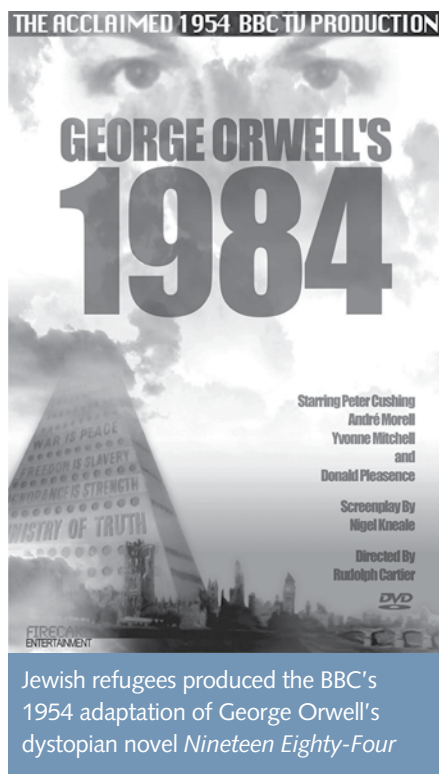
The famous drama critic, Martin Esslin, was born in Budapest in 1918 but was



Rabbi Hugo Gryn was a popular face on the BBC

educated in Vienna and escaped to Britain at the beginning of the war. He joined the BBC in 1940 and worked for BBC European Services, 1941-55, and became Head of Drama at BBC Radio from 1963-77. He famously encouraged younger writers, commissioning early plays by Joe Orton, Stoppard and Ian McEwan and championed central European playwrights, giving BBC radio drama a more cosmopolitan feel. Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* had its premiere in English on the BBC before being staged in Paris or London. Esslin left the BBC to teach drama in America during the 1970s and '80s.

George Fischer fled Hungary after the 1956 Uprising and joined the BBC in the 1960s, becoming Head of Talks and Documentaries at BBC Radio in the 1970s-80s until he retired in 1987.



Jewish refugees produced the BBC's 1954 adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*



BBC legend Sir John Tusa reading the news in the 1980s

Perhaps the best known of all was Hans Keller, married for many years to the German refugee artist Milein Cosman. Keller fled from Vienna in December 1938 and worked for the BBC for twenty years, from 1959 until 1979, running Orchestral and Choral Programmes and then as Chief Assistant, New Music.

These refugees had such an impact at the BBC in the 1960s and '70s that there was even talk of a Central European mafia. Esslin said that their predominance reflected 'the fact that the English educational system doesn't produce universalists.'

A number of famous German-speaking refugees, including George Weidenfeld, Ernst Gombrich and Franz Borkenau, worked for the BBC Monitoring Service during the war. Alfred Kerr, father of Judith, and Leoni Cohn, both worked for the BBC's German Service. Cohn retired in 1977 after 36 years with the BBC. Arthur Koestler, still best known for his novel, *Darkness at Noon*, wrote a number of famous war broadcasts for the BBC, including one on Streicher and another on Heydrich, both in 1942.

After the war, television increasingly took centre stage. The Hungarian director Robert Vas fled Hungary and made a series of famous films for the BBC from the 1950s, including *The Golden Years of Alexander Korda* (1968), *Heart of Britain* (1970), *The Issue Should be Avoided* (1971) and *My Homeland* (1976). Rudolph Cartier, born in Vienna, is best known for his 1950s collaborations with screenwriter Nigel Kneale (married to Judith Kerr) most notably the *Quatermass* serials and their 1954 adaptation of George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. These plays had an enormous impact

on the new look of TV drama. In comedy, Andrew Sachs later gave an unforgettable performance as Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*.

But perhaps the biggest impact of Central European Jewish refugees and immigrants was on talks programmes on the BBC, from *The Ascent of Man* to *The Moral Maze*. Figures like Isaiah Berlin, Hugo Gryn, George Steiner, EJ Hobsbawm and Jacob Bronowski gave a new intellectual breadth to BBC TV and radio programmes, from Berlin's lectures on Romanticism and 19th century Russian literature to Steiner's *Bronowski Lecture* on science and morality, from Bronowski's famous TV series, *The Ascent of Man* to Reith Lectures by Pevsner and Edgar Wind, Ralf Dahrendorf and Alexander Goehr.

The highpoint of the impact of these cultural refugees was between the 1950s and 1970s, though you could still watch interviews with Cartier, Berlin, Steiner and Hobsbawm on BBC2 in the 1990s. Whether commissioning music and drama or giving talks and presenting series, central and east European refugees made an enormous contribution to the golden age of the BBC. It would never have been the same without them.

**David Herman**

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# Letters to the Editor

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.

## ENJOYING AJR ELECTRONICALLY

I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen member who during the Covid lockdown spent more time reading your mails and *Journals*. This included watching several AJR video recordings on YouTube, as I do not zoom. It's absolutely wonderful to view these in one's own time and also makes me feel far more involved and aware, as a lot of these events take place in London and possibly we would not have seen them. I am so inspired that I am forwarding information to friends.

This obviously skews the viewing attendance figures and as Michael Newman mentioned his delight with the numbers, he can be assured they are even higher. I always look forward to the *Journal* and the experiences of others resonates with my own background but also provides fantastic resources.

Despite the circumstances and many changes, I hope this format can continue to be maintained as it is much appreciated.  
*Ruth Ramsay, Glasgow*

## IMMIGRATION TO BRITAIN

Martin Mauthner is not correct when he states, in his review of Lori Bihler's book about refugees in London and New York (September), that 'London [...] restricted the number of visas granted to Jews, not least during the critical years between 1938 and 1941, when they were desperate and still allowed to leave Nazi-controlled Europe'. The truth is almost the reverse of that. The number of Jewish refugees who were admitted to Britain in the first five years of Nazi rule, from January 1933 to December 1937, was small, probably not more than 10,000, or about 2,000 per year. But in the last eighteen months before the outbreak of war, between March 1938 and September 1939, well over 50,000 refugees were admitted, or over 3,000 per month. That cannot by any stretch of the imagination be described as a restriction.

The visa system was introduced in spring 1938 because the existing system, under which immigration officers at the ports of entry to Britain decided whether or not an immigrant would be admitted, could no

longer cope. Instead, British consulates in the principal cities of Germany and Austria issued visas, which effectively guaranteed entry to Britain; though it was never easy to gain entry, this can be seen as a measure designed to regulate immigration, not to restrict it. Between the Anschluss and the outbreak of war just over 30,000 Viennese Jews were admitted to Britain as their first country of refuge, more than to any other country and just ahead of the USA; that was one in six of the Jewish population of Vienna, and fully one quarter of those who survived the Holocaust.

The refugees themselves recognised how important Britain was as a country of refuge. Writing in November 1958 in *AJR Information* (the predecessor of our *Journal*), Werner Rosenstock, General Secretary of the AJR 1941-82 and editor of the *Journal* between 1946-82, wrote: 'The frontiers of most countries were barred. The United States and Palestine were restricted in their immigration policies by the quota and certificate systems. The only country which really reached [out] a helping hand and which thus lived up to the emergency, was Great Britain. Of the 100,000-150,000 Jews who left Germany between the pogroms and the outbreak of war, about 40,000 found refuge in this island, and in addition a further 40,000 from Austria and Czechoslovakia. One must have experienced what it meant in those days of anxiety if a letter from a guarantor or from a British immigration authority arrived in a Jewish household.'

*Anthony Grenville, London NW6*

## ITALIAN REFUGEES TO BRITAIN

David Herman's leader (September) on the contribution of Italian-Jewish refugees from fascism is mildly disingenuous in failing to mention that geneticist Guido Pontecorvo was the brother of nuclear physicist Bruno, a refugee who later defected to the Soviet Union. A much more serious omission, however, is the name of Massimo Coen. Unlike the Pontecorvos or Momigliano or Sraffa, Coen was not an academic. His contribution, however, both to Britain's war effort and more generally to Italian Britophilia, was far more prominent than theirs.

Having fled to Britain in 1938, Coen became the voice of Britain on the BBC's Italian service (precisely analogous, as it happens, to the Cold-War role of Anatol Goldberg on the BBC Russian service). His sonorous bass became legendary. Arriving at Milan's Central rail station on one occasion some ten years after the War, he got into a taxi and stated his desired destination; the driver, without turning round, responded – "Parla Londra!" (London Calling!), the opening words of all Coen's wartime broadcasts.  
*Peter Oppenheimer, Oxford*

## THE BARBICAN MISSION

In response to Joanna Friel's article (September) which I read with interest, I must take up her comment 'There are those who disliked the Barbican Mission due to its proselytising.'

As a practising Jew and someone who has been involved with Holocaust Education, particularly Kindertransport for over 20 years and a member of the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust, I have always been disturbed by the actions of the Barbican Mission. To quote others ... William Chadwick in his book *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees 1938/39* wrote of the flight from Prague on 12 January 1939 '... organised by The Barbican Mission to the Jews which had been touting for business in Prague for a few weeks. It was founded for the express purpose of converting Jews and its leaders in 1938 saw Prague as an opportunity not to be missed. The entry of a Jewish child into the Christian fold could be exchanged for a ticket to freedom'.

Barbara Winton, in her biography of her father Sir Nicholas Winton, quotes from an article in the New York Times of 13 January 1939: 'The children will be brought up in London homes and in the Barbican Mission until they are 18 years old, when after training as artisans, they will be sent to British Colonies and Dominions.' Barbara also writes 'There is no suggestion that the children would return to their previous homes. Most would agree that this pressurising of parents to barter for their child's safety for a baptism is graceless'. In fact, I understand some were even baptised in Prague before they left. Not



## AJR's Annual Tea

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exactly altruistic! By contrast, there were many volunteers in Prague who took great risks in helping children and adults to safety. Most of them are unknown.

The majority of the children's families were murdered for being Jews and for the Barbican Mission children to be denied their faith is a double tragedy.

*Josephine Jackson, Bournemouth*

### VIENNA'S STEINE DER ERINNERUNG

As an AJR member and second generation survivor with Viennese parents, I would like to point out a need for better coverage of the brass memorial plaques in the *Six days in Vienna* article written by Debra Barnes (August).

There was no specific mention that the memorial plaques are part of the *Steine der Erinnerung* programme – The Stones of Remembrance – of which more than 2000 have been dedicated throughout the city of Vienna at the last known locations of Viennese Holocaust victims, including the stones that I participated in for a total of 12 of my relatives.

The *Steine der Erinnerung* programme was started in 2005 by Dr. Elisabeth Ben-David Hindler, who passed away in 2016. The project is very actively managed by the members of the Association for the Stones of Remembrance that includes Dr. Ben-David Hindler's daughter, Daliah. It deserves much better AJR coverage. In fact, you might want to consider having a standalone article about the *Steine der Erinnerung*. I have met many family members of victims in Vienna who have dedicated "Stones" and who have come from the UK.

*Irving M. Adler, Indiana, USA*

### OPTIMISM FOR VIENNA?

*Optimism for Vienna* reads one of the headlines on your Letters page (September). I share Michael Brandman's optimism but only because I love Vienna.

About ten years ago my wife and I took one of our sons and our two eldest grandsons (both at University at the time) to see Vienna through my eyes. Although I was only three years old when the Austrians made me Stateless, my parents talked so much about Vienna, and their life there that I felt I knew it well. Banbury in Oxfordshire, where we lived as I was growing up, might have been part of Leopoldstadt if only there had been another Jewish family there besides us! Anyway, we'd had a brilliant time. I even persuaded the boys that Heurigen could be fun. But after they left I managed to find the ugly side of Vienna. My wife and I had taken a taxi from the hotel in Leopoldstadt, where the "Welcome to Vienna" people had settled us, to a restaurant very near the central synagogue. The driver said he could not take us right up to the restaurant because of the Vienna one-way system so he dropped us "nearby". Although close, it was too far for me to walk as I have severe stenosis, so I hailed another taxi. This taxi driver insisted that I wore a seat belt in the back. He said he would do the belt up for me. In just two minutes we reached our destination. His charge was outrageous: 20 Euros. I started to haggle and refused to give him a tip. As I stepped out of the car he called me, in German, a filthy Jew and started following us down the street, shouting as he went. I waved my walking stick at him, said I would call the police if he didn't stop his threatening behaviour, and eventually he returned to his taxi. A nasty experience, but wait. I now wanted to tell my son and grandsons what had happened after they had left us. I would phone them from the restaurant on my mobile. But where was my mobile? The taxi driver had stolen it from my inside jacket pocket while fitting my seat belt.

Antisemitism? No, not the theft, but calling me a "filthy Jew" speaks for itself. How did the driver know I was Jewish? Possibly because I look Jewish but definitely because we were in a

# LOOKING FOR?

### EVA GEIGNER

Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein is seeking information about Eva Geigner. It is thought she came from Kolín, in the Czech Republic, to Britain on a Kindertransport. She was the cousin of Zdeněk Hybš who was also on the Kindertransport.

[agoldstein@tovmod.co.uk](mailto:agoldstein@tovmod.co.uk)

### 68 SHOOT UP HILL

Agnes Grunwald-Spier is writing a family memoir and would love to hear from anyone who remembers 68 Shoot Up Hill in Kilburn in the 1950s. The building is now a school but Agnes remembers visiting her late grandmother, Eugenie Greenwald (Grunwald), there in the 1950s.

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

### KURT MARTIN LÖWENBERG

Armin Flesch is a journalist from Frankfurt who is researching the history of the G. Löwenberg / Vohl & Meyer clothing store, founded by Moritz LÖWENBERG. Moritz's son Kurt escaped to Britain in 1939, where he lived in Beechcroft Avenue, London NW11, and Armin would love to hear from his descendants or anyone who knew him.

[info@arminhflesch.de](mailto:info@arminhflesch.de)

### FABI & BIBI SCHONFELD

Debby Spero is searching for any information relating to her late father and uncle, Fabian (Fabi) and Arnold (Bibi) Schonfeld. Both arrived from Vienna via Paris on the Kindertransport, under their original surname, Szajnfeld. Her father travelled as Szrage Mordka Szajnfeld in March 1939, aged 16, his younger brother came shortly after.

[debbySpero@yahoo.com](mailto:debbySpero@yahoo.com)

Jewish part of the city, with the restaurant next door to the synagogue.

Ariel Musicant, the former leader of the Austrian Jewish community, told me years ago that antisemitism was still rife in Vienna. I agree with Michael Brandman that it is probably seen more among the older Viennese but some of the Freedom Party, sadly now a power in Austria, are certainly not Jew-friendly. However, I agree we should be optimistic because, as the song says, "I'm in love with Vienna".

*Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts.*

# ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

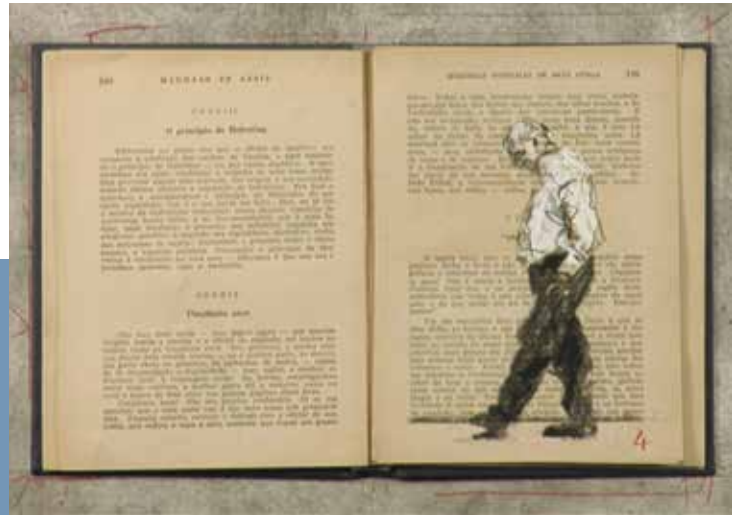
He has been described as a master in his own universe, a challenging South African multi-dimensional artist whose work implies violence and anguished emotion – particularly on the theme of apartheid. Now, after a 40 year career combining drawing, writing, theatre, puppetry, opera, film, dance, sculpture, tapestry and performance, William Kentridge is featured at the Royal Academy.

This is an immersive exhibition comprising floor-to-ceiling drawings, tapestries, multi-screen films, mechanised theatre sets, and stage performances with huge casts. It will include a free-screen film, *Notes Towards a Model Opera*. Many pieces have never been seen before, and some have been made specially for the RA.

Kentridge certainly has the wow factor. In his complex imagination he is virtually redrawing the map of the world. There's geography and history thickly layered with politics, as he swoops between nations and continents and includes music from Mozart and Hindemith to African brass bands. Some of his strongest imagery is inspired by the unexpected: his multi-layered and colourful paintings of African porters in the First World War, or his typical Soviet style interrogative works in bright red on the Russian Revolution,

He is fond of saying he was "reduced to being an artist as a last resort". You might think these are not the words of an artist of self-belief. But he had a rather truncated spell as an art student, leaving college because he thought he wasn't good enough at painting, and returning to it after trying acting and film making. In his view he wasn't any good at any of them, but for Kentridge, drawing in charcoal and Indian ink, offers the chance to mull over his ideas. The beauty of that is that they can be easily erased, in what he calls a "slow-motion

Video still from a film by William Kentridge, which includes this self-portrait



version of thought". And this is where film comes into play.

Film-making, often based on drawings, alters his perspective; the ability to transform a static image into a kinetic scene – a typewriter becomes a tree; a cat curls into a cartoon-bomb; a man in a suit on the beach lobs a stone over the waves. Kentridge's drawings are also the basis for performances, installations and operas, morphing into many different dimensions with movement and sound.

A selection of his early, rarely-seen drawings from the 1980s and 1990s include three triptychs displayed together for the first time and the most significant work from the period, *The Conservationist's Ball*, 1985 (Rupert Museum, Stellenbosch). Around 25 large charcoal drawings, made for the creative process of the eleven animated *Drawings for Projection*, are also displayed.

The son of deeply committed anti-apartheid parents, both lawyers, his father, Sir Sydney Kentridge represented three Nobel Prizewinners: Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Chief Albert Luthuli, and played a leading role in the 1956-61 Treason Trials. He defended the family of activist Steve Biko during the inquest into his death in police custody in 1977.

Kentridge's mother, Felicia Geffen, co-founded the human rights body, the South Africa Legal Resources Centre that continues to provide free legal services to marginalised people today. It is hardly surprising that with his background, Kentridge references the evils of apartheid and colonialism, but his work though dark and menacing, also has elements of humour, like one in which a coffee plunger drills into a gold mine beneath

Johannesburg, or another in which blue water flowers from the breast pocket of a man, a pool suggesting grief arising around him.

In a film based on his set of large scale pastel and charcoal drawings, *Ubu Tells the Truth* (1997) a robustly drawn figure faces various torments of interrogation, suggested by childish shapes swirling around him. It is, of course, based on testimonies from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Committee. Kentridge imagines the protagonist Ubu as an agent of the secret police during apartheid.

His fifth film, *Felix in Exile* made in 1994, just before South Africa's first general election, is also based on another series of pastel and charcoal drawings, and his energy and sheer talent give the animated film its power. The work, set in a derelict and nostalgic landscape, questions how those who died fighting apartheid are remembered.

In 2016 Kentridge founded The Centre for the Less Good Idea, based on the Tswana proverb "If the good doctor can't cure you, find the less good doctor". It is used by young artists, based on Kentridge's view that failure itself can inspire creativity.

**William Kentridge is at the Royal Academy until 11 December 2022**

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# LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



## CLOSING THE CIRCLE



In 1985 my parents left London and moved to Israel after my father retired from his work as

administrator of a Jewish charity. One of the first things they did was to join Bnai Brith, an organisation devoted to aiding Jewish communities worldwide and human rights in general. The lodge my parents joined in Jerusalem consisted of individuals (many of them, like my parents, former refugees) who preferred to conduct their affairs in English as their insufficient command of Hebrew did not enable them to be involved in the Hebrew-speaking lodge.

The Albert Einstein lodge provided my parents with an immediate circle of friends (actually known as 'sisters and brothers') as well as a channel for their desire to volunteer and contribute to the society in which they now found themselves. Thus, they would travel across Jerusalem by bus to tutor children from underprivileged homes in English at a school in a Jerusalem neighbourhood, as well as attend lectures on subjects of interest and enjoy the company of like-minded people.

This was a time when Jews were being allowed to leave Soviet Russia, and many of them came to Israel (a cause for which my parents had campaigned in England). An instance of financial hardship that was brought before the Bnai Brith lodge was that of a teenage girl who had shown musical ability, been accepted to the Academy of Music in Jerusalem, but could not afford the books and equipment required. The Albert Einstein lodge undertook to cover the costs of the young girl's high school education, and when she graduated and was awarded a scholarship to study piano and singing at the Royal Academy of Music in London, the lodge decided that their help was no longer needed.

But my father did not let matters rest there. It came to his knowledge that the scholarship in London did not include accommodation, and that was a major obstacle to enabling the young girl to continue her studies. My father contacted a relative living in London, a widow living on her own who happened to love music, and suggested that she provide a home for the young girl while she studied. This 'shidduch' turned out to be a great success, and the connection with that family has continued to this day, even after the demise of the relative concerned.

The young woman, Ilona Domnitch, went on to make her home in London and establish herself in her chosen career as a singer. She has appeared in many illustrious venues, including the

Albert Hall and Westminster Abbey. I was present at the latter some years ago when she sang the soprano solo in Brahms' *German Requiem*. Whenever I am visiting London we try to meet, though with a busy performing schedule she isn't always around. When we do manage to meet she always reminds me how grateful she is to my late father, insisting that without him she would not have been able to have her career.

This summer, at the height of London's horrendous heat wave, Ilona was one of the few brave souls who was prepared to risk life and limb to board the tube and meet me in our hotel in central London. She told me that she would be singing *Tosca* with the British touring opera company Diva Opera, and would be appearing in central France, not far from where we were going to stay. Music festivals are held throughout France in the summer months, and this year the performance of Puccini's opera *Tosca*, with Ilona singing the main role, is part of the festival in the grounds of the imposing Saillant Château in the Correze region. And so, my husband and I were able to obtain tickets for the event, picnic in the grounds of the château, and hear Ilona perform brilliantly in the demanding role of *Tosca*.

If my father could have been here with us today, I'm sure he would have been overjoyed to see and hear his protégée in what could be regarded as closing the circle that he began all those years ago.

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# New icons of the

Last month saw two major Kindertransport commemoration projects come to fruition, with the AJR's support

## SWANAGE HAILS FORGOTTEN HERO

**On a beautifully sunny Bank Holiday Monday afternoon several hundred people attended the unveiling and dedication of the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Statue in Swanage, Dorset, writes Josephine Jackson.**

Trevor Chadwick was one of a handful of volunteers at the office in Prague of the British Committee for Czechoslovakian Refugees helping to organise the rescue of mainly Jewish children by Kindertransport which permitted them entry to the UK. Most of these volunteers were unknown and unacknowledged.

Trevor was a school teacher at a private school in Swanage which decided to sponsor two refugee boys and at the very end of 1938 he went with a colleague to Prague. They expected to pick up the two boys and return after a few days; however Trevor was shocked to see the

thousands of refugees and their children queuing for documents to enable them to escape Nazi persecution.

He met Nicholas Winton, who could only stay at the office for three weeks, and they agreed to work together: Nicholas from the London end and Trevor from Prague. Trevor chose the children to travel and arranged transports. After the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939 he also had to deal with the Nazi officials. On occasions, if the necessary documents failed to arrive in time, Trevor had them forged.

In all, Trevor organised eight trains rescuing 669 children from almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis. He had to leave Prague in June 1939 when things got too dangerous for him, by which stage five trains had already left and three were to follow shortly. Nicholas Winton acknowledged that Trevor was the 'real hero' saying "He was in a much trickier position and did the more difficult and dangerous work after the Nazi invasion and deserves all the praise".

The Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust was established in 2020 (see *AJR Journal*, October 2020) when the the Mayor of Swanage, Councillors and other locals decided to commemorate Trevor's actions with a life size statue to remind future generations of the horrors that can be caused by racism and hatred. A date was fixed for its unveiling, even though the Trust was still short of its target.

Welcoming guests to the ceremony Chairman John Corben explained: "The cavalry arrived in the form of the AJR, whose generous donation enabled us to reach the target."

Other speakers at the event included Swanage Town Mayor, Cllr Tina Foster, and Cllr William Trite, who told Trevor's story. The Lord Lieutenant of Dorset Angus Campbell Esquire said how pleased he was to be present on this special day and there

was a moving recorded message from Her Excellency Marie Chatardova, Ambassador of the Czech Republic.

I was personally honoured to read an emotional letter from Paul Walder, son of Peter Walder – one of the two boys that Trevor rescued on his first trip to Prague. After school Peter joined his family in Chile, where they had managed to flee, but always told his own son that his time in England were the best years of his life.

Samuel Chadwick, a grandson of Trevor, unveiled the statue which was sculpted with great warmth, vitality and movement by local Sculptor Moira Purver. The statue was then dedicated by Revd Tony Higgins of Swanage and Rabbi Maurice Michaels of Bournemouth Reform Synagogue.

**AJR Trustee Danny Kalman represented the AJR at the Swanage event and writes:**

It was a proud moment for me to speak on behalf of the AJR. The location of the memorial is very fitting, just in front of a children's playground and adjacent to the sea front.

Judging by the numbers of people present, I felt there was a genuine interest in the work of Trevor Chadwick and a sense of pride that 'one of their own' had made such an important contribution, helping so many young children escape from the Nazis. I also met a number of people from the local Jewish community, a number of whom were AJR members.

As the son of a refugee who came on the Kindertransport from Frankfurt in April 1939, I think our support of this project shows that the AJR, through its sponsorship programmes and investments, is an organisation that we can all feel proud to be associated with.



© ROSALIND SCHÖGGER

Nick Winton, son of Sir Nicholas Winton and Samuel Chadwick, grandson of Trevor Chadwick, with the new Swanage statue

# The Kindertransport

support helping to not only make them a reality but to ensure that they reach and educate their audiences.

## SAFE HAVEN IN HARWICH

**Harwich Kindertransport Memorial and Learning Trust's new statue and educational programme will become a focal point for learning about the Kindertransport and the crucial role played by Harwich and Dovercourt, writes Jo Briggs.**

The new *Safe Haven* statue and supporting programme was launched on Thursday 1 September at a moving ceremony on Harwich Quayside, attended by more than 30 refugees who arrived on the Kindertransport in 1938 and 1939.

The statue was unveiled by Dame Stephanie Shirley CH, a refugee herself who arrived at the age of five in Harwich on a Kindertransport.

She said: "I shall never forget my first sighting of Harwich as a thousand of us children came in from the grey North Sea after a horrendous two and a half days journey from Nazi Europe.

"Arriving in Harwich was just yet another



The new *Safe Haven* statue at Harwich

unknown, strange, nasty place; I was put on a train and went off to Liverpool Street Station.

"The kindertransport has made me what I am. It gave me the resilience. If I could cope with that sort of change, I could cope with anything."

The lifesize statue is sculpted in bronze and depicts five children descending from a ship's gangplank. Moving quotes from the child refugees have been inscribed on the memorial and there is a space between the figures so that visitors can explore them at close hand.

Ian Wolter, the local sculptor behind the statue, said: "It's a Holocaust memorial. It might be capturing a very happy moment but immediately behind it there's a terrible tragedy unfolding – 85% of these children never saw their family again.

"The figure at the back is looking up the gangplank, he's looking homesick and that's really a nod to the Holocaust."

Several other Kindertransport memorials have already been erected in Europe and the UK, including at Liverpool Street station in London.

In addition to the memorial, an audio bench and new information boards have been

installed around Harwich. The audio bench allows visitors to listen to first-hand testimonies recorded by former Kinder for The AJR's Refugee Voices programme.

Mike Levy, chairman of the Harwich Kindertransport Memorial and Learning Trust, said: "This is a day that so many of us have waited for. Now Harwich can take its full place in this remarkable part of British history. With the unveiling today, in some ways the journey of those children more than 80 years ago is complete. Today is a day of celebration, of commemoration, a looking back, but also, we hope, a way of looking forward to a kinder future."

Other speakers at the ceremony included Harwich Mayor, Ivan Henderson; Miguel Berger, German Ambassador to the UK, Lord Eric Pickles, United Kingdom Special Envoy for post-Holocaust Issues, and Michael Newman OBE, Chief Executive of the AJR.

Michael Newman commented: "Harwich will always have a special place in the hearts of those refugees who arrived on the Kindertransport.

"The AJR is proud and delighted to be a prominent supporter of the effort to establish this memorial that honours them and their loved ones who sent them to safety."



The statue unveiling ceremony at Harwich Quayside on 1 September

# There was a time...

Family photographs are overlooked as historical or artistic objects in their own right. But the Wiener Holocaust Library's new exhibition, which brings together over 100 never-before-seen portraits and snapshots from twelve Jewish families in the 1890s through the 1930s, provides a rare glimpse into a lost world.

Most of the photographs consist of domestic, everyday images, and lack complete captioning, context, authorship, or even clear, named subjects. They span holiday snaps from the 1920s, photo-postcards sent during the First World War, and formal studio portraits from the 1890s. Drawn from the Library's archives, these private family photographs uncover a hidden history of pre-Nazi era Jewish life in Germany and Austria.

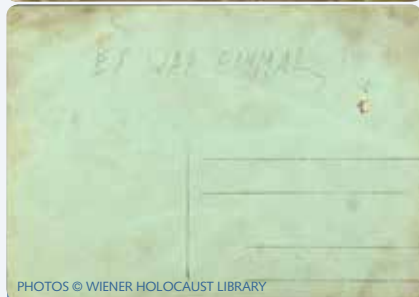
The images on display document ordinary and sometimes intimate moments and expressions of culture and identity, creating a physical record of how the subjects wished to be seen and remembered. They are shown at home; on holiday; as professionals; as family members, and pursuing sporting and leisure activities. It is fascinating to see how people fashioned their own identities through the creation of these images. Today they appear as images of life and leisure on the brink of catastrophe. Captions reveal the fates of some of the individuals depicted: persecution, deportation, annihilation, or escape.

"We are drawn to these beautiful photographs because they enshrine everyday moments from lives that were soon to change forever. You might recognise yourself and your own family in these warm and personal snapshots and portraits.

"I hope that this exhibition will start a conversation about family photographs and the way they are shown and used today. The images have their own histories as documents created in a certain time and place and then returned to by others years later."

Curator of the exhibition, Helen Lewandowski, Assistant Curator, said:

The exhibition can be viewed at The Wiener Holocaust Library until 4 November.



PHOTOS © WIENER HOLOCAUST LIBRARY

COLLECTIONS  
 Photograph of Dorothea Jacoby (née Salinger) by her husband c. 1911. The text on the reverse can be translated as 'Once upon a time'. Jacoby was deported with her husband and son to Auschwitz in 1943, where they were killed.



Photograph belonging to Hubert Nassau of the *Hakoah* swimming team, c. late 1920s. From left to right: Hans Goldberger, Fritz Lichtenstein, Fred Guth, and Hubert Nassau.



Photo album by Louis Linton (né Ludwig Liebermann), photographs taken 1927-1937

# FUNDING PARTNERS FORUM

## Innovation and partnership were on full display at the AJR's annual meeting of educational experts

On 10 August the AJR hosted its annual Funding Partners Forum, an online meeting of organisations which receive grant funding from the AJR in support of their educational and commemorative projects. Representatives from 20 different organisations took part, each making a short presentation to assembled colleagues to share some of what they had learned from their AJR-funded projects.

On its surface, the forum demonstrated how tens of thousands of students at hundreds of schools around the UK are now benefitting from enhanced teaching resources and skills as a result of AJR-funded projects, ranging from learning programmes at museums to teacher CPD courses to new digital teaching resources. However the event also served as the latest example of how the AJR is working to affect positive change more broadly, across the entire educational and remembrance sector.

AJR Head of Education and Heritage Alex Maws said "The AJR believes that being a funder carries with it great responsibility. It's not enough just to provide financial backing to projects; we also use our position to bring together organisations at meetings such as this one, so that our investments in educational innovation can benefit dozens of other organisations as well, up and down the country."

A few key themes emerged from the presentations made by the Funding Partner representatives. Gareth Redston, Chief Executive of the Manchester Jewish Museum, spoke about his institution's efforts to build connections to, and create partnerships with, other local organisations. He spoke about how the museum's Manchester-centred narrative helped to make the Holocaust seem more "real" and personal to local students.

Other organisational leaders, including Marc Cave, CEO of the National



Between 1939 and 1946, Trainers House in Newmarket, which is today part of the National Horseracing Museum, was home to a group of Jewish refugees. In 2022, partly thanks to a grant from the AJR, students and young musicians took part in a Holocaust awareness project and unique concert, while a special exhibition about the talented cellist Fritz Ball and other former Jewish refugees was seen by thousands of museum visitors.

Holocaust Centre and Museum, and Beki Martin, Executive Director of Facing History & Ourselves, both spoke about the potential of a "blended learning" model when teaching about the Holocaust – that is, a hybrid model which uses both online and more traditional in-person approaches. Both pointed out that adaptations to their programmes that were made out of necessity during the pandemic actually ended up yielding some valuable insights that they intend to carry forward.

One real benefit to the diversity of different types of organisations represented at the forum was that organisations which are well established in the Holocaust educational field had an opportunity to learn from those which do not primarily work in that field. For example, Colin Baird, Head of Trusts and Statutory Fundraising at the National Literacy Trust, spoke about his organisation's approach to challenging the preconceptions that students may inherit from their families and to encouraging the safe and appropriate use of social media in teaching about sensitive topics like the Holocaust.

Some of our newest Funding Partner organisations highlighted the spirit of educational innovation that is an

important priority of the AJR's grant funding programme. For example, the Glasgow-based organisation Gathering the Voices spoke about its project to launch a new "serious" video game based on the testimony of Marion Camrass. The Harwich Kindertransport Memorial and Learning Trust spoke about how their new memorial is flanked by an educational "audio bench" where visitors can sit and listen to recordings of first-person testimony. And Orchestras Live highlighted their music education programme, centring on the story of Jewish refugee Fritz Ball, through which it forged an unlikely but very fruitful partnership with the National Horseracing Museum, which is housed in the building where Ball and other refugees once lived.

Alex Maws summarised the significance of the Forum, "The meeting lasted for three hours, and it could have easily gone on all day long. The topics covered – uses of technology, methods of evaluation, localised approaches to teaching and commemoration, building partnerships – all demonstrate how important the AJR's role as a funder is. Our members should rightly be proud of the breadth of expert-led work that the AJR facilitates, all of it aimed at continually improving the ways that we educate about the Holocaust in the UK."

# Faking it

**Elmyr de Hory was a Hungarian-born painter and art forger, who is said to have sold over a thousand art forgeries to reputable art galleries all over the world. He was a charming *bon viveur* who seduced everyone he met, including Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor, Montgomery Clift, Rita Hayworth, and Orson Welles. He was also a Jewish refugee.**

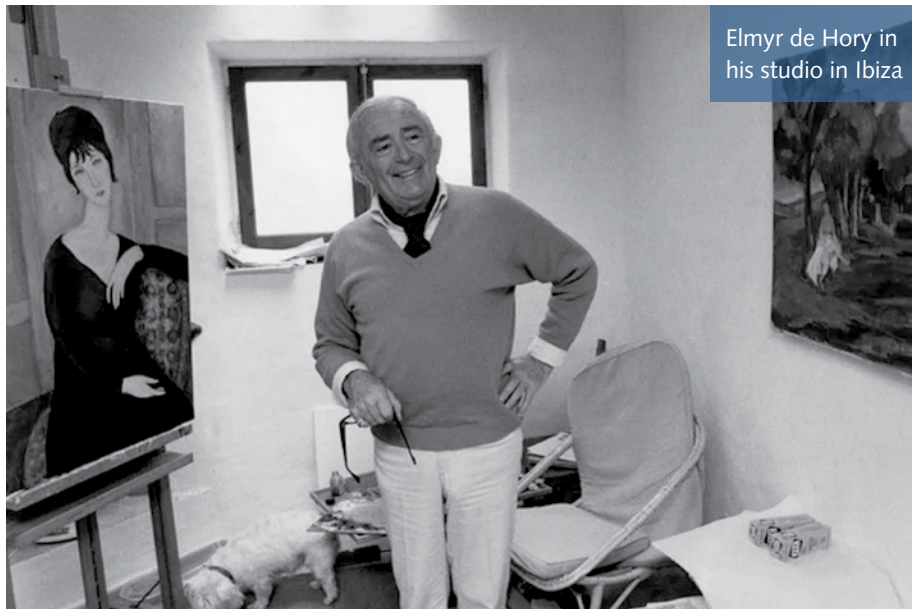
Born in 1906 as Elemér Hoffmann to lower-middle-class Jewish parents in Budapest, he always told people he was born into an aristocratic family. But this was as false as many of the other claims he later made.

His art education started in Nagybanya followed, at the age of 18, in Munich. By 1926 he was studying in Paris under Fernand Leger.

He found it very difficult to earn a living from his art and became involved in petty crime. After his return to Hungary he ended up in prison in Transylvania and from there was sent to a German concentration camp where he was very severely beaten. He was transferred to a Berlin hospital from which he escaped and returned to Hungary.

From Hungary, back to Paris where he again tried to make an honest living. His career in art forgery was triggered by a woman mistaking a sketch of his for one by Picasso. This opened his eyes to the fact that there was far more profit to be made from painting in the style of fashionable artists such as Modigliani, Picasso, Matisse, Soutine.

For a while he lived modestly in Paris, then in Rio de Janeiro. From there to America, where he decided to stay. He painted pictures in his own style, but they never made enough money, so he always made ends meet by forging the work of famous artists. He sold over a thousand forged paintings, either without signing them with the artist's name, or by signing in many names, including his own. He fooled several respected art dealers, too.



Elmyr de Hory in his studio in Ibiza

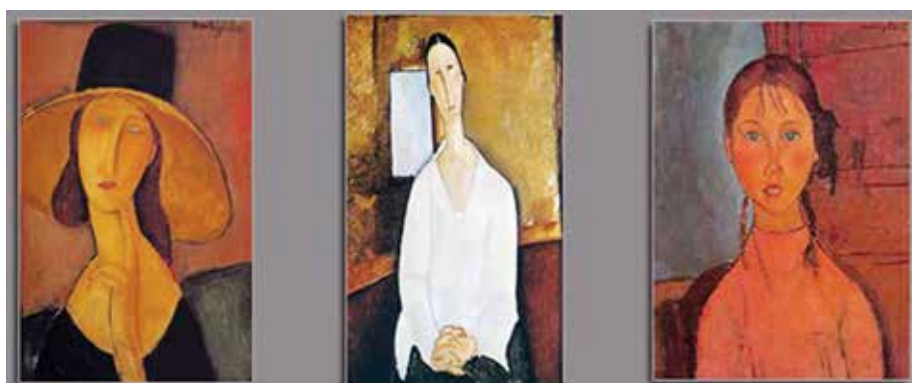
By 1966 many of his paintings were revealed as forgeries. In Spain he was convicted of homosexuality (though not of painting forgeries, as it could not be proved that he had made the forgeries in Spain). A two months prison sentence followed. After his release he returned as a celebrity to Ibiza.

During the 1970s he tried again to sell paintings in his own name but with limited success. When the French authorities asked for his extradition from Spain he committed suicide by taking a drug overdose.

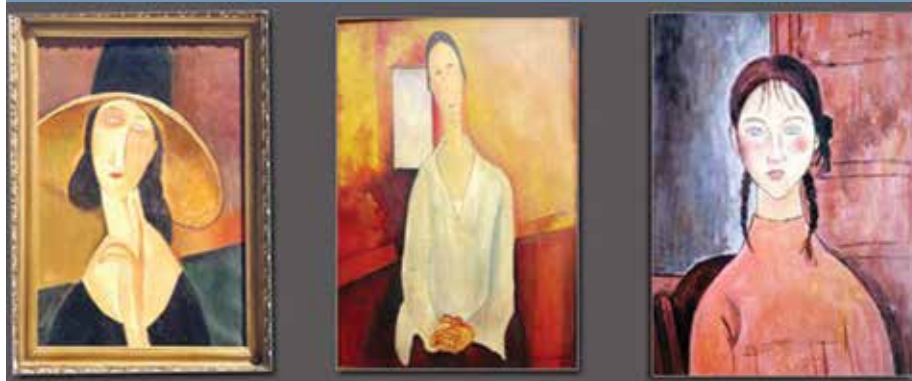
He was a celebrity and numbered famous people amongst his friends, such as Zsa Zsa Gabor and Orson Welles, who made a film about him called *Fake*. However, paintings in his own style and bearing his signature never sold well and were rarely appreciated.

De Hory was a Walter Mitty figure: in his life, fact was frequently mixed with fiction. His claim to fame rests on the recognition that he was the greatest forger of all time.

**Janos Fisher**



Above: original paintings by Modigliani. Below: copies by de Hory





# NEXT GENERATIONS

## The Association of Jewish Refugees

### 2ND GENERATION WRITING – WHY?

**Rosemary Schonfeld offers her thoughts on why so many members of the Second Generation are now writing their own stories.**

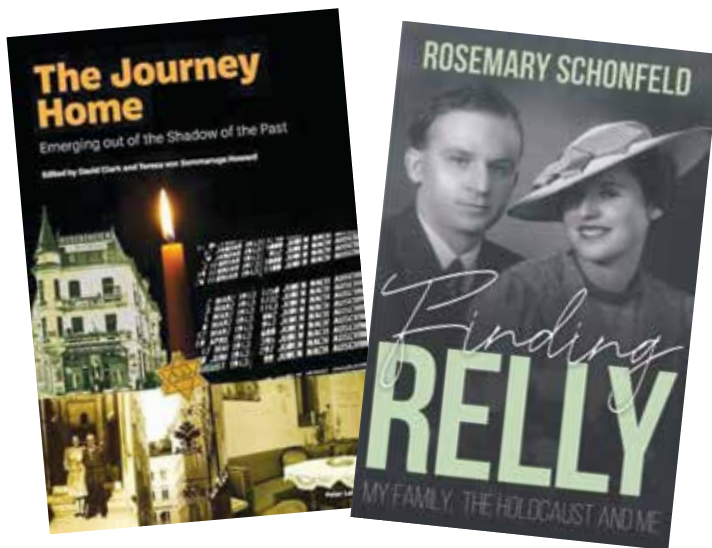
What is it that compels some members of the Second Generation people to write our own stories? There are various reasons and I want to write about one which is very important to me: I try to use my writing to raise awareness of the Holocaust and to give it contemporary relevance, by giving talks and presentations to groups, organisations and schools for educational purposes.

When I finally finished writing my book *Finding Relly – my Family the Holocaust and me*, and before it was published in 2018, I thought to myself, “I’ve just written a book which no one will read” because of the topic. Although I have always felt it important to be vigilant regarding the constant simmering threat by extreme and far right elements, for most people it has not been real: fascism was defeated in 1945, and the world has moved on.

I hoped by writing my book and giving talks which entwine my story of searching for my Aunt Relly with the truth about my father’s family’s deaths and experiences in the Holocaust, that I could reduce the convenient distancing which is used to relegate the Holocaust to history. I felt people in Western countries had become complacent, actually preferring to keep the Holocaust in the past at a safe distance. But we members of the Second Generation, who in 2022 are still searching for information about what happened, know it is not ‘the past’. It is integral to our ‘present’.

Then came 2016: the Trump election and Brexit. I (and I’m sure most readers) were shocked and horrified at what felt like the boil of British xenophobia and racism bursting out into society, media and conversations. Xenophobic sentiment and language were suddenly acceptable, and no politicians were prepared to challenge the populism and hateful views of Farage and his followers, or address the galloping political shift in this country towards the extreme right, undermining our democracy. The parallels between what was happening in England, and what happened in the tolerant 1920s and 30s Weimar Republic and Germany, although not nearly as extreme, are striking. If effective lessons are to be learned to ensure ‘it must never happen again’, then identifying the warning signs or their developing elements is key. Once a fascistic or totalitarian regime is in place, it is too late for politicians to mitigate it. One crucial lesson is that no one with hateful, bigoted, racist, xenophobic, homophobic etc. views should ever be let near power.

Thus, I have added another dimension to my talks: I try to get listeners to question how people who have lived together



peaceably for years and generations can be divided and manipulated at a breath-taking speed, and taught to hate. I refer to instances in Relly’s life where someone she knew well seemed almost overnight to become a virulent Nazi supporter. I have added slides illustrating Hannah Arendt’s *The Banality of Evil*.

In an attempt to shatter one distancing mechanism – that only Germans and other nationalities fall victim to effective propaganda – I include slides of specific propaganda techniques employed by the Nazis which were applied in this country during the *Leave* campaign.

I’m not alarmist, or attempting to frighten people into thinking we are on the brink of another Holocaust or genocide. But it is clear that people – and young people in particular, because they are the future – need educating in how to identify the warning signs of a hateful ideology gripping a population. I also point out that Hitler came to power in a country which was arguably, at the time, the most culturally sophisticated and scientifically advanced in Europe; that genocides can and do happen anywhere. What can we really do to prevent the division and hatred which can lead to genocide? My hope is that by listening to someone whose life is inextricably linked with the Holocaust despite being born after the event, people might begin to think, reflect, engage or even be pro-active in ensuring ‘it’ actually does not happen again.

**The February 2021 issue of the AJR Journal published a review of Rosemary’s book, *Finding Relly – my Family, the Holocaust and me*. The review was written by David Clark, co-editor of another recently published book *The Journey Home*, which comprises chapters by 20 Second Generation authors about travelling back to the European country from which their parent/s either had to flee in the 1930s and 40s, or stayed and survived.**

# REVIEWS

## THE ESCAPE ARTIST: *The Man Who Broke Out of Auschwitz to Warn the World*

Jonathan Freedland

John Murray Publishers Ltd

The protagonist and owner of the title of Jonathan Freedland's fascinating book was Walter Rosenberg, later known as Rudolph Vrba. Born in Topol'cany in Slovakia in 1924, his ambition, when he was seventeen, was to travel via Hungary to England and join the Czech army in exile. However, this proved impossible as he was rounded up and sent to a transit camp in Novaky.

He managed to escape from Novaky's labour camp but sometime later was arrested by a Slovak gendarme and sent back to Novaky, from where he would be transported to Majdanek.

In Majdanek, Walter and others were told they would be taken to do farm work. The cattle truck they were in arrived at another destination, where the words '*Arbeit Macht Frei*' encouraged Walter to believe they were in a labour camp.

After becoming aware of the reality of Auschwitz, he decided that someone needed to escape and warn the world. Transferred to Birkenau, he was to work under Alfred Wetzler, the registrar for the mortuary. Meeting in the morgue, stuffed with hundreds of dead bodies piled in neat rows, they became partners in the search to flee.

After hiding in a tiny hole, they managed to escape via an unmanned fence. During their escape, they were disguised as peasants in clothes given to them by a farmer who had offered them shelter.

On their escape journey, Walter and Fred met representatives of the Slovak Jewish Council and revealed the truth of Auschwitz to them.

All were greatly impressed by the depth and sharpness of memory the two men displayed but Walter was irritated by their lack of compassion. Nevertheless, one council member had taken notes

which were typed into a report of 32 pages, including drawings based on sketches Walter had made of the Auschwitz layout. However, no mention was made in the report of the threat to the Jews of Hungary, a subject that had preoccupied Walter for a long time and to which he had given constant expression.

A safe house in the mountains was provided for Walter and Fred, who also had to change their names. Fred became Josef Lanik but later took back his original name. Walter was given the name Rudolph Vrba, which he kept till the end of his life.

The report itself eventually found its way to important people in many places in the world. Nevertheless, nothing was done to halt the transports.

Freedland also writes about developments in Rudi's private life – his reintroduction to a young woman, Gerta, whom he had once rescued, who became his first wife and mother of his two daughters, and his second marriage to Robin in 1975 which lasted till the end of his life; he had met her in Boston while he was teaching temporarily at Harvard and he resettled in Canada.

The Eichmann trial had led to Rudi appearing in newspapers, on TV and radio and a book, *I Cannot Forgive*, written with a journalist. High among those who were not forgiven was Rezso Kasztner, whom Rudi blamed for not warning the Jews of Hungary. He would later appear as a witness in many other trials, in some of which he was the initiator, and he gained more recognition and appeared in the film *Shoah*. He was also a key interviewee for Martin Gilbert's book, *Auschwitz and the Allies*.

Freedland recounts the story with great skill. Although the subject he covers is both tragic and complex, *The Escape Artist* is highly readable.  
*Emma Klein*

## SPYMASTER – *The Man Who Saved MI6* Helen Fry Yale University Press

*Spymaster* retells the heroic story of Thomas Kendrick, the diplomat who, after the Anschluss, used loopholes and

bent the rules to save the lives of George, Lord Weidenfeld, the publisher, and many other Austrians seeking refuge in Britain and its possessions. Kendrick had been serving as 'passport control officer' at the British consulate in Vienna, when hundreds of desperate Jews sought his help in overcoming the bureaucratic obstacles to their flight.

That lowly administrative title was in fact a cover for his important spying activities. Born in South Africa in 1881, he had engaged in 'intelligence' since the Boer War. In the mid-1920s he was posted to Vienna to run spy networks in Central Europe on behalf of MI6, the Secret Intelligence Service. Initially his agents harvested information about Moscow's secret moves to destabilise the West. After 1933 the gregarious Kendrick, who had a German wife, used his many high-society acquaintances to garner information about Nazi plans to rule the continent. Berlin expelled him, following his betrayal by a double agent in 1938, and included him in the 'black book' list of people to be arrested after the occupation of the UK. Back in Britain Kendrick practised a different kind of intelligence — eavesdropping on high-ranking German prisoners-of-war held in the Tower of London and in requisitioned stately English homes, such as Trent Park, north of London. That enabled him to pass on valuable details about Hitler's development of flying bombs.

An honorary member of the AJR, Dr Fry started with research into the many Hitler refugees who helped Britain's war effort. She learned that some, such as the broadcaster Robin Lustig's father, Fritz, were employed to bug the captured German generals, and tell Kendrick and his staff what they were talking about. Since then Fry has written prolifically on and around Kendrick. Whereas in earlier years Fry had to self-publish her work via Amazon, she today has become an acknowledged authority on Kendrick and MI6. She is in the hands of one of London's best known literary agents, Andrew Lownie, while a prestigious university press publishes her books.

Nevertheless, Fry is not resting on her laurels. She feels strongly that society has not yet adequately recognised

Kendrick's achievements. That is partly because Kendrick, as a spy, understandably remained silent about his feats. She compares the relative neglect of Kendrick with the fame of Bletchley Park and its 'Enigma' code-breakers, such as Alan

Turing. It also irks her that Israel's Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, has not honoured him as a 'Righteous Gentile', apparently because no eye-witnesses have testified to his work in saving lives. Fry has found and submitted to the centre new testimonies

and fresh evidence; she believes Yad Vashem is reconsidering the case which seems appropriate, especially as 3 March 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of Kendrick's death.  
*Martin Mauthner*

## NEW BOOKS by AJR MEMBERS

**We are happy to share information about these new books written by different AJR members, all of which are independently published.**

### **SYLVIA COHN 1904-1942: POEMS AND LETTERS**

**By Eva Mendelson**

[Available on Amazon](#)

In her foreword to this book of poems, letters and plays by her mother, Sylvia Cohn, Eva Mendelson writes that the Nazis had scattered her family all over Europe. Her mother, deported first to France and then sent east, was murdered by the Nazis but managed to send Eva the only possession she had: a book of poems she had written. The poignancy and beauty of these poems cannot be overstated and a mother's love and care for her children is beautifully expressed.

The poems, written in German, are very considerable works of art in their own right and these translations do full credit to the originals. The translator, Marion Godfrey, is to be congratulated on rendering them into such moving English.

### **WHAT SORT OF A NAME IS THAT?!**

**By Herbert Rindl**

Contact: [maggiemcnally6@gmail.com](mailto:maggiemcnally6@gmail.com)

Herbert Rindl was 8 years old when he

arrived in England with the last train to leave Vienna before the outbreak of WW2. He was sent first to Manchester and then to Blackpool. In September, 1944 he became naturalised as a minor and felt completely anglicised. Throughout the war years he received no news of his family left behind in Austria and gradually came to accept that they had 'disappeared'. In 1959, realising how little he knew about himself, he returned to visit Vienna twenty years to the day after arriving in Britain, and made contact with his only surviving relative, an uncle who had fled to France; they had a very emotional reunion. In 1961 Herbert married Winnifred Jones ('Win'); they had a long and happy marriage which produced three children. This book tells Herbert's very moving story and is beautifully illustrated.

### **JUST FREDDY**

**By Joel Stern**

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

*Just Freddy* charts the journey from a happy childhood in a small German market town, through the Nazi's rise to power, as Freddy's friends, teachers and eventually family all desert him. At the height of his problems, he is forced to make a split-second decision, one that might just save his life.

This book, whose foreword is written by barrister and TV & radio personality Rob Rinder, is written primarily for children and young adults with the aim of introducing them to this important subject, as well as

teaching themes such as acceptance, kindness and overcoming adversity.

The author, Joel Stern, realised from a young age that there was an 'elephant in the room' when it came to the story of his grandfather Freddy's escape from Nazi Germany. It was during a year living in Israel and on multiple visits to Yad Vashem that Joel really became fascinated by this subject and yearned for more information about his great-grandparents who, he knew, had perished in Hitler's concentration camps. After his grandfather passed away, Joel wanted to piece this story together and put it into a format he could use to introduce his family's history during this dark episode, to his own children.

### **THE SURVIVAL OF A GERMAN JEWISH FAMILY**

**Ruth Schwiening (née Auerbach)**

[www.thegraphicprint.co.uk](http://www.thegraphicprint.co.uk)

The author of this book is a gifted artist, working in glass, paint, acrylic, soft pastels, chalk and charcoal. She has been very much influenced by the artist Chagall in the use of bright colours and dream-like situations. Her work is beautifully reproduced in this small book, which depicts the disintegration of her family under the Nazis, when they were forced to sell their farm for a pittance and both grandmothers were transported to Theresienstadt.



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# OBITUARIES

## LADY ZAHAVA KOHN MBE

Born: 5th August 1935, Ramat Gan, Palestine  
Died: 29th July 2022, London



**Zahava Kohn never defined herself as a Holocaust survivor. For most of her life, she never spoke about her wartime experiences. Her parents had always encouraged Zahava and her brother Jehudi to look forwards – to be optimistic and build a happy life ahead.**

Despite enduring unimaginable brutality and hardship, as well as serious illness, she took this lesson to heart. She later came to realise that there is a fine balance to be struck between not allowing the past to bury her in anger and hate, and the need to bear witness to her own struggles for the sake of future generations.

Zahava Kanarek was born in British-Mandate Palestine and grew up in pre-war Amsterdam. These were anxious times for European Jewish families living in the shadow of Nazi Germany. In May 1943, Zahava and her family were rounded up and sent to Westerbork transit camp in Holland, and in January 1944 they were sent to Bergen-Belsen. They were released in 1945 and following a prolonged period of intensive rehabilitation in Switzerland, settled back in Amsterdam, hoping to re-build their disrupted and shattered lives. In 1958, Zahava moved to London. She married Dr Ralph Kohn (the late Sir Ralph Kohn), a pharmacologist, in March 1963, and lived in London ever since. She had three daughters and five grandchildren.

In 2001, after her mother, Rosy died, Zahava discovered her mother's archive of documents and relics – precariously hidden during the war – secreted

away in a small suitcase at the back of a cupboard. Armed with this treasure trove of memories, Zahava wove together the story of her family's wartime experiences in a book, *Fragments of a Lost Childhood*, published in 2009.

Soon after, she and her daughter, Hephzibah started a Holocaust Education Programme, 'Surviving the Holocaust' for children of all denominations and backgrounds across the UK, as well as in Germany. Zahava shared with these young people her wartime experiences – and the messages of the Shoah. It was an inspiration for them to bear witness to her story and they immediately responded to the way she presented it without drama or self-pity. The simple facts and her quiet resilience and inner strength were infinitely moving. In the words of her daughter Hephzibah, "Anyone can tell horror stories, but what the youngsters experienced first-hand in meeting Zahava was the uncrushable dignity of the human spirit". Her story also featured in many news articles, various online exhibitions and in numerous interviews over the years, and in October 2020, she was awarded an MBE for her work in Holocaust education.

Zahava was a superb linguist, fluent in Dutch, German, Swiss German, English and she also spoke French, Yiddish, and Hebrew. She was actively involved in a range of charitable work over the years, supporting the arts and music as well as scientific, educational, and humanitarian causes. Family was paramount to Zahava, who loved nothing better than spending time with her husband, children and grandchildren.

Zahava is survived by her daughters, Hephzibah, Michelle and Maxine.

**Hephzibah Rudofsky**

## DAVID SIGALL

Born: 12 November 1943, Windsor  
Died: 29 May 2022, London

**David Sigall was the doyen of London classical music agents. His parents were refugees from Nazism: a Russian mother, and German father from Leipzig who prospered in the fur trade once the family became established in London.**

David left City of London School to train as a solicitor. Happily for the world of music and perhaps also for the law, better judgement prevailed and he jumped ship early on. He joined the Ingpen & Williams agency (founded by Joan Ingpen whose dachshund was named Williams), eventually inheriting the business in partnership with his colleague, Jonathan Groves. When many agencies merged to become music supermarkets during the 'Big Bang' years of the 80s Ingpens remained an independent, bespoke business. David's client list was crème de la crème: Alfred Brendel, Joan Sutherland, Jessye Norman, Georg Solti, Pierre Boulez, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Daniel Barenboim's West – Eastern Divan Orchestra, amongst other star names. He was also an astute spotter and nurturer of young talent. He admired and loved his artists, even the most demanding, and they reciprocated. He served as chairman of the British Association of Concert Agents and later as president of the International Artist Managers' Association. The motto 'do the right thing' could have been invented for him. His long-time assistant, later a successful manager in her own right recently told me, "I learnt so much from him, and had fun along the way".

Tall, cultured, smiling and stylish, he



was an enthusiastic cook and avid purchaser of every latest kitchen utensil, who loved hosting friends around his gleaming glass and steel dining table. His dinners were invariably lavish affairs with wonderful food, wine, chocolate and fine cigars, his guests seemingly chosen for their divergent views about everything. David presided with amused detachment. He was a generous and often anonymous benefactor of many arts organisations.

He faced his protracted, untreatable illness uncomplainingly, courageously and with good humour, buoyed by the love of his wife, Karen, and sister, Vera. It was wholly in character that he took pleasure in knowing his affliction, corticobasal syndrome, was something very rare, and that the cemetery in which he would lie was just a short walk from his favourite shopping destination, Costco. The twinkle in his eye remained to the last.

**Joseph Seelig**

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

**Jonathan Fishburn**

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# The AJR's Bathtime

**At the beginning of September a group of our Next Generations members enjoyed a four-day holiday in Bath.**

On the first evening they were treated to a private concert by AJR member and viola player Philip Heyman (see photo below) who delighted with a repertoire ranging from *Mission Impossible* to Disney songs, classical favourites and Klezmer.

There is much to see in this historic city, and plenty of great food along the way. An undoubted highlight of our trip was our visit to the Jane Austen Centre, which focuses on the life and works of Jane Austen, as well as the Regency period in which she lived. The attraction is interactive, and the experience is immersive, as you can see from the lovely photo above of AJR members dressed up in Regency costumes.

Other activities included a tour of

the Roman Baths, one of the great religious spas of the ancient world which was miraculously hidden and preserved until the 1870s. The AJR group also enjoyed a tour of Bath Abbey, a boat trip on the River Avon, tea at the illustrious Pump Rooms and lunch at the famous Sally Lunn's Buns.

Bath also played host to a number of Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, and earlier this year an oak tree was planted in Eckweek Lane Play Park as part of our 80 Trees for 80 Years commemorative project.

The group was accompanied by the AJR's Karen Diamond and Ros Hart, who afterwards commented: "We saw, at first hand, what AJR is all about – bringing members together."



## IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Monday 3 October	2.00pm	Kingston	Ros Hart
Thursday 6 October	10.30am	Radlett	Karen Diamond
Thursday 13 October	All day	Outing to Dumfries House	Agnes Isaacs
Wednesday 19 October	2.00pm	Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 20 October	2.00pm	Newcastle	Agnes isaacs
Tuesday 25 October	10.30am	Ealing	Ros Hart
Tuesday 25 October	12.30pm	Norwich	Karen Diamond
Thursday 27 October	10.30am	North London	Ros Hart
Thursday 27 October	10.30am	Ilford	Karen Diamond
Thursday 27 October	2.00pm	Glasgow (Tea with Maria Chamberlain, author of <i>Never tell anyone you're Jewish</i> )	Agnes Isaacs

## CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

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## ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 3 October @ 10.30am	<b>Get Fit where you sit</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Wednesday 12 October @ 2pm	<b>AJR Book Club Discussion (no speaker) – <i>The Lost Café Schindler</i> by Meriel Schindler</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84289834738">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84289834738</a>	Meeting ID: 8428 983 4738
Monday 24 October @ 10.30am	<b>Get Fit where you sit</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Monday 24 October @ 4pm	<b>Jimmy Young – Malt Whisky</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81244146721">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81244146721</a>	Meeting ID: 812 4414 6721
Tuesday 25 October @ 2pm	<b>Judy Karbritz – Inside the Victorian Pantry</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89416776078">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89416776078</a>	Meeting ID: 8941 677 6078
Wednesday 26 October @ 2pm	<b>Dr Rachel Pistol – Internment camps in the UK/Australia/Canada v USA</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82426259124">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82426259124</a>	Meeting ID: 8242 625 9124
Monday 31 October @ 10.30am	<b>Get Fit where you sit</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439</a>	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Monday 31 October @ 4pm	<b>Michael Newman – To be or not to be European</b> <a href="https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87279332460">https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87279332460</a>	Meeting ID: 872 7933 2460

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