



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Are or 'Arendt' we refugees?

In January 1943, almost exactly eighty years ago, Hannah Arendt published one of her most famous essays, *We Refugees*, in the *Menorah Journal*. It was later republished in her book of essays, *The Jew as Pariah* (1978) and then in *Hannah Arendt: The Jewish Writings* (2007).



In the first place, we don't like to be called 'refugees.' We ourselves call each other 'newcomers' or 'immigrants.' Our newspapers are papers for 'Americans of German language'; and, as far as I know, there is not and never was any club founded by Hitler-persecuted people whose name indicated that its members were refugees."

– the opening paragraph of Hannah Arendt's polemic 1943 essay, *We Refugees*

Arendt was herself a refugee, twice over. In 1933 she fled from Germany and settled in Paris. Then in 1941 she escaped from France and came to the United States, where she spent the rest of her life until her death in 1975.

Arendt was born in Germany in 1906. She was raised in a politically progressive, secular family but in the words of one biographer, "They felt themselves to be very different from the poor Jews – the *Ostjuden*, or eastern Jews..." When she was three years old, she moved with her family to Königsberg, on the Baltic Sea. At eighteen she left home to study philosophy, Protestant theology and Greek philology. In 1933 she left Germany for France and spent the next seven years in Paris. In May 1940 Arendt

was sent to a French internment camp but in 1941 she and her mother and her second husband managed to escape to New York, where she became one of the leading Jewish refugee intellectuals of her time. During the war she wrote her first famous essays, *We Refugees* (1943) and *The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition* (1944), and then she began her breakthrough book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951).

We Refugees is a short essay. It is clearly written. "We [refugees] lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life," she writes. "We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in the world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness
Continued on page 2

MARCH TO THE BEAT

Music, Migration and Mobility, together with a report about a new musical production, *Engelchen*, are among the topics covered in depth within this issue. We also explore the subject of Reclaiming Citizenship, including a review of the AJR's recent thought-provoking and entertaining event featuring comedians David Baddiel and Matt Lucas (p.10).

Also in this issue are details of several interesting outings, meetings and even a holiday coming up in the next few weeks. We look forward to seeing many of our members in person at these occasions.

Please enjoy this issue in the meantime and do not hesitate to send us any feedback.

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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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Are or 'Arendt' we refugees? (cont.)

of reactions, the simplicity of gestures, the unaffected expression of feelings. We left our relatives in the Polish ghettos and our best friends have been killed in concentration camps, and that means the rupture of our private lives." But it is often curiously flat and lacking insight into the situation of wartime refugees. Published in 1943 there is little sense of the tragedy that was overwhelming European Jewry.

This raises a larger set of questions about Arendt's reputation. She was always more famous in America than in Britain where she was criticised by political philosophers, thinkers and historians like George Steiner, Isaiah Berlin and Stuart Hampshire. Hampshire wrote in one review, "She seems to me to be inaccurate in argument and to make a parade of learned allusion without any detailed inquiry into texts." He goes on, "She rambles on in the style of an essayist who freely associates one remembered quotation, or fragment of an idea with another until it becomes time to stop." In his recent book, *Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin* (2022), Kei Hiruta quotes Berlin, who wrote that Arendt "produces no arguments, no evidence of serious philosophical or political thought." Elsewhere, he said, "I really do look upon her as everything that I detest most."

The British historian Norman Stone was just as harsh. "Hannah Arendt's work does not amount to very much. I doubt if any historian, wrestling with the immense complexities of this century's history, has anything to learn from her. Her approach turns out to be yet another of these 20th-century ologies which contains an undeniable germ of sense but which rapidly becomes exhausted after being frogmarched across pages and pages of turgid platitude." In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, he wrote, "She has nothing of much significance to say about Stalin, and in any case Soviet totalitarianism does not fit very easily into her remarks."

Arendt's most famous books were *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, but today's leading Holocaust historians and historians of Stalinism barely mention her. There are no references to her in Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men* (1992) or his

book, *The Path to Genocide* (1992), none in Richard J. Evans's three volume history of the Third Reich (2003-8), one passing reference in Mark Mazower's 766-page *Hitler's Empire* (2008), eight references in Timothy Snyder's 543-page *Bloodlands* (2010) and two references in David Cesarani's 1054-page *Final Solution* (2016). The same is true in the best modern accounts of 20th century European history: no references at all in EJ Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* (1994), one reference in Mark Mazower's *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (1998) and just three references in Tony Judt's 952-page *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (2005). She was perhaps best known as a writer on Jewish history and antisemitism and yet there are no references to her in Robert Wistrich's *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (1991), two references in Yuri Slezkine's *The Jewish Century* (2004) and one reference in Antony Polonsky's *The Jews in Poland and Russia: A Short History* (2013, almost 700 pages).

Unlike the best Holocaust historians of the past thirty years, she didn't speak or read any central and east European languages. More important, she crucially missed two major historiographical shifts in the history of the Holocaust: the growing focus on Treblinka, Chelmno and Sobibor and, more important, the shift from Shoah by Gas to Shoah by Bullets. Her emphasis on bureaucracy in the Holocaust, epitomised by her famous phrase, "the banality of evil," seemed topical in the early 1960s but looks very out of date now.

So how do we explain the recent revival of interest in Arendt's work? First, it is mostly literary critics, philosophers and feminists who are drawn to her work not historians or political philosophers. Perhaps more important, her interests in colonialism, refugees and statelessness and her criticisms of Zionism fit in with today's intellectual fashions.

Second, she had an interesting life and she was largely famous for the men she knew and wrote about: her close friend Walter Benjamin, her teacher and lover, Heidegger, thinkers like Karl Jaspers and Gershom Scholem.

Third, she was a high-quality journalist, who wrote for *The New Yorker* (which originally published *Eichmann in Jerusalem*), *Partisan Review* and the

New York Review of Books. Her books often had short, dramatic titles: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, *The Human Condition*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, *Men in Dark Times*, *On Violence*, *Crises of the Republic*.

Arendt often embraced controversy. Most general readers probably know her best for her infamous account of the Eichmann Trial, in particular her failure to appreciate the terrible moral dilemmas faced by so many East European Jews. This is what appalled critics like Berlin, Steiner, Scholem and Saul Bellow. They couldn't forgive her for the tone in which she wrote about the *Ostjuden*.

Arendt loved to be where the action was. As Norman Stone wrote, "In the Sixties, Hannah Arendt was very Sixties. Her friends in America were of the Left – Philip Rahv, Mary McCarthy (her generous literary executor) and Dwight MacDonald – and she supported, usually with some individual overtone, the advanced causes of the era, from Castro to Vietnam."

Almost fifty years after her death, Arendt remains a controversial figure. It will be interesting to see how her reputation will look when today's fashions have passed. What will remain?

David Herman

Josef Berger

The interesting article in our February issue about the 'Windermere boy' Josef Berger was written by Alan Freundlich, who volunteers at the Wiener Holocaust Library. The photograph of a group of men in Austria in 1953, was of Josef's father and his pals, not Josef himself.

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NEXT GEN TO GATHER ROUND THE STOVE

On Sunday 2 April a large group of AJR's second and third generation members will gather in NW London to share their family stories over dinner.

The Stove is a unique storytelling experience led by theatre-maker Emma Brand which provides a wonderful meeting place to share stories over dinner and create new worlds with people you haven't yet got to know. Developed with support from Arts Council England, *The Stove* explores the stories Jews carry with us from our various migrations, and the inherited tales we bring to the table. It's a journey to the 'old country' and back again, with food provided.

The Stove was originally created in March 2020 as a response to the lockdown rules, which left many people incredibly isolated. It began as a virtual performance designed to replicate the sense of occasion and togetherness that live theatre can bring. Since then, it has become an in-person storytelling



experience, complete with a shared meal. The Stove is a place where entertainment meets company, and where participants have a real sense of each other's presence.

AJR's event is suitable for ages 16+. Tickets are priced at £15 for AJR members, £25 for non-members and include the performance, vegan dinner and drinks. Book online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-stove-a-place-to-share-stories-over-dinner-tickets-536011403537>

DID YOU KNOW ?

DNA REUNION PROJECT

Genealogy company Ancestry.com has donated 2,500 DNA kits to help Holocaust survivors find relatives. The initiative, which is being operated through the Center for Jewish History in New York City, should give hundreds of families the opportunity to make crucial connections with relatives and reclaim their family story before it's too late.

<https://cjh.org/research/dna>

INTERNET SENSATION

83-year-old AJR member Joan Salter became a global superstar after a video of her confronting UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman about her use of hateful language went viral. Tens of millions of people watched the video, which was posted in January by the charity Freedom from Torture.

<https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/holocaust-survivor-confronted-suella-braverman-to-say-your-hateful-language-has-consequences>

CORRESPONDENCE EXAMINED

A new exhibition at the Wiener Holocaust Library looks at how people exchanged information across borders, in defiance of censors and amid chaos, deportations and destruction, as events of the Holocaust unfolded. Until 26 June.

<https://wienerholocaustlibrary.org/exhibition/holocaust-letters/>

REMEMBERING GREECE

15 March marks 80 years since the start of the deportation of Greek Jews. Greece's second city, Thessaloniki, had a population of more than 50,000 Jews before WW2, some 46,000 of whom were deported and killed in Nazi death camps.

<https://www.ekathimerini.com/news/1203206/jewish-community-holocaust-remembrance-is-sacred-mission/>



FAMILY HISTORY WRITING COURSE

Author and journalist Nick Barlay will run this six-week course to guide you on how to write your family history.

Date: Starting 25 April

Time: Tuesday evenings 6-8pm

Location: AJR office Finchley Central

Please email Debra for more information on debra@ajr.org.uk



Guided tour of the MUSIC, MIGRATION & MOVEMENT EXHIBITION

at the Royal Academy of Music, London

Tuesday 28 March at 2pm

Please email Karen Diamond for more information on karendiamond@ajr.org.uk



WHO DOESN'T LOVE A SMOKED SALMON BAGEL?

We are delighted to be able to take a group of AJR members for a tour of the world famous Formans Smoked Salmon Factory to include a light lunch of a smoked salmon bagel made fresh on the premises

Thursday 27 April 2023

Please email Ros Hart for a booking form and more details on roshart@ajr.org.uk

MEETING THE KINDER

In the lead up to the 85th anniversary of the first Kindertransport this November senior AJR representatives have pledged to meet different Kinder every month throughout the year. In January AJR CEO Michael Newman and Danny Kalman, Chair of our Kindertransport Committee, met Rev Bernd Koschland MBE and Dr Eve Willman BEM.

Bernd Koschland was born into an orthodox Jewish family in Fuerth, near Nuremberg, in 1931. On Kristallnacht Bernd's father was one of many other men who were taken to Dachau. On his release, Bernd's parents decided to send him to England on the Kindertransport. In March 1939 Bernd travelled with his mother by train to Hamburg, where he joined other Kinder in boarding the *SS Manhattan* which was stopping in Southampton en route to the US. Bernd's parents met their deaths in Riga or Izbica in 1942.

After the war Bernd enrolled at the London School of Jewish Studies before taking up his first position as a minister. He taught at

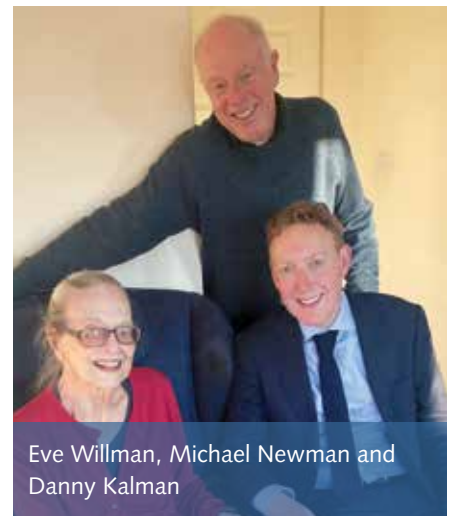
the Jewish Free School and finally at the City of London School for Girls, from which he retired in 1995.

Dr Eve Willman was born on 2 June 1933 in Vienna, to an assimilated Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother. Her father was a GP who met his mother, a dancer at the Theater an der Wien, when he treated her. In late April 1939 they sent Eve on the Kindertransport, together with an older girl who was a family friend. They were picked up by Eve's uncle – a rabbi – at Liverpool Street station and initially taken to Hinckley, Leicestershire, to non-Jewish foster parents. Eve's uncle felt Eve needed a Jewish upbringing and so she moved in with a Jewish family in Cambridge. The Refugee Committee then decided Eve was doing too much housework and moved her to another family in Berkhamsted, before finally allowing her uncle to take her in.

Eve's father survived, hidden by her maternal grandparents in a small place outside Vienna. Her mother was killed in an air raid in 1944. Her father visited her in England in 1946, bringing her teddy bear which she still has. This first meeting after a long time was difficult, especially as Eve had forgotten all her German but she would have followed her father's plan to come and live with him in Vienna if he hadn't died of a heart attack in



Rev Bernd Koschland, Michael Newman and Danny Kalman



Eve Willman, Michael Newman and Danny Kalman

1948. She studied biochemistry in Edinburgh and eventually became a Research Bio-Chemist at London University.

REMEMBERING THE FAMILIES THAT TOOK IN KINDER

A new archive is being created to help remember the British families who opened their doors to Kindertransport children.

'I thanked Sir Nicholas for bringing our new sister into our lives'. Thus said Ann Chadwick who at the age of two gained a new older sister – for life. This new 'sibling' was a Jewish refugee child called Suzie and she came into Ann's Cambridge family having fled the Nazis in 1939. Suzie was one of hundreds rescued by Sir Nicholas Winton from Prague on a series of trains known as the 'Kindertransport'. Thousands more came from Germany, Austria and Poland. A rescue mission to find a safe haven in Britain.

After more than 85 years the hunt is on to find other foster siblings like Ann. Cambridge-based Mike Levy, researcher and author of *Get the Children Out – Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport* says, 'Time is running out to find British foster brothers and sisters whose parents opened their doors, as strangers, to welcome these persecuted children who were not allowed to bring their parents with them. So far we have found 22 British families each with a remarkable story to tell. But there must be many more to record and archive.'

Most stayed throughout the war in Britain and built their lives in the country. Many went to non-Jewish homes. John Rayner was fostered by a vicar and his family in south London but later became a leading British

rabbi. Some stayed for months, most for years and were fully accepted into their adoptive families in all parts of the UK.

Until now no one has recorded the memories of these British rescuers. Can readers help to find surviving eye witnesses from those troubled times – foster siblings of Jewish Kindertransport children (the foster parents themselves are not likely to be alive in 2023)? Mike is helping to create a new and lasting video archive of testimonies from foster siblings. Is there another Ann Chadwick out there?

If you know of a family who took in a Kindertransport child please contact **Mike Levy** on kindertransport4@gmail.com.

DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON'S LETTER FROM ISRAEL



THE ROMAN MOSAIC IN LOD



A chance remark by a fellow-pupil in our weekly French class led us to undertake the brief journey to the town

of Lod in central Israel. In 1996 a huge, well-preserved mosaic floor was discovered there in the course of work to widen a road, and generous American donors Shelby White and Leon Levy provided the money to build a museum, to house the huge mosaic *in situ*, which is dated to the Roman occupation of ancient Judaea. The town of Lod (Lydda) has been inhabited for millennia, and is mentioned in the Bible (the book of Nehemia) as Bikat Ono, where Sanblat of Horon offered to meet the prophet. During the Hasmonean revolt, which began in nearby Modiin, Jonathan the Hasmonean liberated Lod from Hellenic rule. During Herod's rule Lod continued to serve as a metropolitan centre, known by the Romans as Diospolis (city of the gods), and played an important role until the destruction of the Second Temple.

Under Byzantine rule Lod became an important centre of Christianity, serving as the residence of prominent bishops and where one of the earliest churches, dedicated to the town's

patron saint, St. George (of dragon-slaying fame), was constructed. The town is shown on the Medeba map, where it is given its three names, Lod, Lydda and Dispolis. In the seventh century C.E. it was conquered by the Moslems, who built the new town of Ramle close by, so that by today the two towns have merged to form a conurbation. In 1948, following the War of Independence, it became part of Israel.

When fully exposed, the mosaic – one of the largest ever found anywhere in the world – was identified as dating from the late third or early fourth century C.E. It measures seventeen metres long and nine metres wide, and is perfectly preserved almost in its entirety, depicting animals, fish and fowl both local and from Africa. The identity of the wealthy Roman who owned the grand house in which it formed part of the floor of the main reception room is not known.

After its discovery the mosaic travelled extensively, being exhibited in some of the foremost museums in the world, including the New York Metropolitan Museum, the Paris Louvre, the Alter Museum in Berlin and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. The Mosaic Museum in Lod has been built expressly to display the mosaic to its best advantage, with a raised viewing parapet enabling visitors to inspect it at close quarters and from every angle.

During our visit to the museum, our guide, a local Arab resident wearing traditional garb and speaking fluent Hebrew, pointed out the salient details of the mosaic's colouring and composition, as well as demonstrating to us, with the aid of plaques on the wall, the process of layering involved in the mosaic's construction. She mentioned with regret that at the time of the riots two years earlier, in 2020, involving the inhabitants of Lod-Ramle and other towns with mixed Jewish and Arab populations, the exterior windows of the museum were damaged. Fortunately, the interior of the museum remained unharmed.

A series of displays embedded in an interior wall illustrates the history of the town of Lod from ancient times to today. Surprisingly, the final display is set in 1935 and shows a plane of the 'Palestine Airways' landing in Jordan. There is an empty space beside it, and I personally hope that a depiction of the modern town, which is in Israel, will take its rightful place there and that this deficiency will be remedied.

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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.

THE ISLAND OF EXTRAORDINARY CAPTIVES

I was interested to see the brief review of Simon Parkin's excellent book (February), a book which I found a very useful addition to the topic of internment on the Isle of Man in Hutchinson Camp. I would like to add for the information of your readers the following comment on the content of the book:

After 328 pages of the main text there are several useful sections for researchers. There is an illustrated camp plan and there is a lengthy rollcall of Hutchinson Camp for those held at some point between July 1940 up to 1943. With no Isle of Man men's Alien registration cards surviving and as yet no released early camp nominal roll for 1940-41 this has meant that many of those who were sometimes only briefly interned have not previously been listed in an accessible form. A weekly number count held in the Manx Museum archive shows a peak of 1,259 in September 1940 and this list has 1,121 names; if you exclude the small number of merchant seamen and Japanese it is a pretty full list. The roll states full name; d.o.b; profession; release date and has explanatory notes indicating sources. It would have also been useful to include nationality.

In my years dealing with internment records I have not come across similar detail which will be a great help in confirming whether or not a relative was held in the camp.

Alan Franklin, Former Librarian of the Manx Museum, Douglas IOM.

REMEMBERING JANUARY 1933

I am a Berliner, or at least I was born there of parents of Czechoslovak nationality. My father was born in Moravia, my mother in Berlin. She used to tell me that before the last free election of November 1932 there had been constant street fights between members of the NSDAP, the Nazi Party, and the KPD Communist Party of Germany. The fights stopped before the elections. Why? A bystander gave vent to that turn of events by painting his surprise on a wall near where we lived in Halensee, near the Rundfunkturm (Radio Tower) a smaller version of the Eiffel Tower. It asked "Wo

sind die Kommunisten?" (Where are the Communists?), to which an observant wit supplied the answer on the following day. "In der SA" (short for NSDAP, the Brownshirts or Nazis). The elections clearly proved that the Nazi Party was leading with nearly 200 seats while the Communists managed only half of that (100 seats). The Communists knew which way the wind was blowing and changed sides.

I was four when the Nazis took over and I do remember the very antisemitic posters by "Das Schwarze Korps" and the "Völkische Beobachter" on the Reklame columns and on display cases mounted on walls of buildings; they showed ugly Jews doing terrible things to innocent looking German youth. Even at the age of 4 I knew that the opposite was true and the Hitler-Jugend song of the day: "Wenns Judenblut vom Messer spritzt dann gehts nochmal so gut" (when Jewish blood spurts from the knife things can only improve) confirmed that.
Frank Bright, Martlesham Heath

JEWS IN SHANGHAI

Like nearly twenty thousand other German and Austrian Jews, my father found refuge in Shanghai after he was released from Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

In Shanghai there has been, for some time, a Jewish Museum which records the life of that Jewish community in the 1930s and 1940s. Amongst its features is a wall on which is recorded the name of every Jewish refugee who found sanctuary from the Nazis in Shanghai. Unusually for such commemorative lists of names, it records survivors rather than those who were murdered by the Nazis.

The museum is keen to gather information on the lives of those individual Jewish refugees in Shanghai whose names are recorded there. I was overwhelmed to receive from the museum's curator a photo of my father's name on the memorial and I hope to be able to pass on to her what I know of my father's life in Shanghai from 1939 to 1947. If any AJR reader wishes to know whether their or their family members' names are recorded in the museum, please

email me and I will let them have details of my contact in Shanghai. I can be contacted via enquiries@ajr.org.uk
Susie Barnett BEM, Billericay, Essex

JEWISH RESCUERS IN HUNGARY

I read with interest the article in your February issue about Jewish rescuers in Hungary in 1944. They did an amazing job to help so many people to escape from the Nazis and the local collaborators.

There were other Jewish rescuers, amongst them Georges Mandel Mantello. He was born in Romania but during WW2 was in Switzerland. He served as first Secretary of the El Salvador consulate in Geneva from 1942 to 1945. He also disclosed to the press the Auschwitz Report and another document describing the deportation of 400,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. He involved several people in his efforts to rescue Jews from west Europe and also from Hungary and Romania. In his position of first secretary of the consulate of El Salvador he issued approximately 10,000 Salvadoran citizenship papers, each good for a whole family. These papers were sent to Hungary and Romania. Tragically, he couldn't save his parents and my grandparents, who were his family too, as the papers arrived after they were deported.

The Man who Stopped the Trains to Auschwitz by David Kranzler is a book describing his efforts to save Hungarian and Romanian Jews during WW2. He was my father's cousin.
Miriam Melcer (née Mandl), London NW11

HACHSHARA IN WALES

I should like to add a small addendum to David Herman's interesting article about Jewish refugees in Wales (February).

My father who arrived on the Kindertransport in February 1939 went soon after, with his cousin Fritz, to a Hachshara (a Jewish agricultural training farm) near Newport in Wales. According to the 1939 Register the farm where they stayed was called Wain-y-Pwll, Llandegveth, Near Pontypool, Monmouthshire. He stayed there

for a few months, milking cows, travelling occasionally into Newport with a lift from the local postman. One day the local butcher visited, collapsed in the courtyard and died. They carried him indoors and put him on the dining table, but no one wanted to collect him so they called in the local policeman, Sgt Griffiths, to deal with the situation which my father, as the only English speaker, had to arrange.

I have been in touch with the current owner of the farm but it appears there are no records from that time – only one poor quality photo that I have of my father and some of the other farmworkers. It would be interesting to know if any other AJR members have information about the Hachshara.
Nick Sigler, London N22

MRS. MCINTYRE'S MISSION

That we got permits to enter Britain in July 1939, as Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany was entirely due to the intervention of an English lady who sponsored us. Beryl McIntyre lived in Hassocks near Brighton and she had a German Jewish au pair, Marianna.

Mrs McIntyre was very involved with The Glyndebourne Opera and, as a result, decided to offer to sponsor Jewish musicians who wanted to escape to England.

Enlisting Marianna's help, she succeeded in bringing over an unknown number of musicians and, having done this, she then asked Marianna if there was anyone that she needed to rescue. Marianna asked if she would sponsor her friend Eva with her husband Leo.

This Beryl McIntyre did, and they arrived in March 1939, upon which Beryl asked if there was anyone else that she could help, and Marianna said that Eva had a sister Alice, who had a husband and a two-year-old boy. I was that boy. With her sponsorship, we arrived in Southampton on the 7th of July 1939, and made our home in London.

My parents stayed in touch with Marianna,

but I did not meet her until many years later, when she told me about Mrs McIntyre and her mission, and mentioned that they had a filing cabinet full of papers to do with her campaign to rescue the musicians. This intrigued me and I contacted the archivist at Glyndebourne expecting to find what further information there was in their archives.

I was very surprised to be told that there was nothing in the archives about this extraordinary Exodus.

Obviously, it is very late in the day to start to delve into this episode, but it would be interesting to know if anyone can throw any light on this enterprise.
Michael Heppner, London N21

PEACE IN UKRAINE

My wife and I went to a service organised by Deal Town Council and attended by the Mayor of Deal, to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. It is good that a small English town without any organised Jewish community remembers the Holocaust.

I am very unhappy that – more than eighty years after that dreadful war in which Ukrainian nationalists participated with the German Nazis in the mass killing of Jews – we are again witnessing killing and destruction. Russia throughout its history under different regimes and political systems treated Jews very badly (pogroms, etc.) No end is in sight to the dreadful military Russian invasion. Will the conflict come to an end because 'the West' is donating more powerful and sophisticated weapons to increase the military potency of Ukraine to do more killing and more destruction?

I have no constructive suggestion other than for all those in power to listen to the concerns of all the people of Ukraine. They may have less concerns about national border lines than about peace and prosperity. We need to listen not just to those whose language and culture is Ukrainian, but to all the people who live within its borders, including the large minority whose culture and language has always been Russian.
John Farago, Deal, Kent

LOOKING FOR?

WORCESTER'S JEWISH REFUGEE COMMUNITY

Yvonne Stollard is trying to gather information about the Jewish refugee community in Worcester during the 1940s-70s and, in particular, about the synagogue they established. She hopes to encourage Worcester Civic Society into placing a blue plaque on the building that was the synagogue, but they need more information.
yvonne@stollard.co.uk

THE GOLDSCHMIDT SCHULE, BERLIN

Are there any AJR members who have connections to the Goldschmidt Schule in Berlin? Bridget King is seeking someone who can help identify whether a photograph in her family's collection is of Erich Rubensohn, a former language teacher there. If anyone wants to have a go, please email her at:
bridget.king@web.de

'THE SECRET LISTENERS' – TRENT PARK

Do you have any connections to the Secret Listeners based at Trent Park House, Enfield during WW2? If you have any memories associated with Trent Park House or know someone who has, Dr. Rachel Pistol would love to hear from you, as part of a project to create a new museum onsite.
rachel.pistol@kcl.ac.uk

HUNGARIAN TRANSLATION

Nicola Keller, daughter of a Hungarian survivor from Budapest, would like to connect with other descendants of survivors and refugees from Budapest. She has a large archive of letters and official documents from WW2. She is learning Hungarian and would like to translate them. Can anyone help either with language learning or translation? She is in Bristol.
nkeller@phonecoop.coop

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Ben Uri has entered a new era this year, partnering major galleries, sharing paintings and exhibiting at the London Art Fair. Over time the Gallery has developed its online and zoom exhibitions from its extensive collection, largely as a result of the pandemic.

In January the BU's, **Art, Identity, Migration** exhibition showcased 32 works from its Collection during a two-week stint at the London Art Fair at the Business Design Centre. It plans to present this exhibition online in the coming weeks. The Ben Uri Collection represents gifted artists who migrated to Britain from Austria, Dominica, Germany, India, Iran, Latvia, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA.

Today the BU claims to be the first full scale virtual museum and research centre, with its online exhibitions and podcasts, all supported by physical programmes at Boundary Road. It will also join many of the world's greatest art foundation collections as a member of the World Art Foundations. David Glasser, chair of trustees, said this peer group invitation recognises among other things the "academic importance of the BU Research unit, launched in 2018 for the study and digital recording of the Jewish and immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900". In addition to this, the Gallery has pioneered its own arts and health interventions and school educational programmes for many years now.

But with the intensity of Holocaust Memorial Day behind us, and the approach of Israel's Yom Hashoah, the focus of many physical and online presentations, is naturally on the artists who express the anguish of that era. For instance, one of the BU's recent archive exhibitions featured the work of **Martin**

Bloch and Josef Herman, produced in 1949. Bloch's stark, monochrome *Scorched Trees in London City*, with its menacing grey sky evokes a chaotic and broken space of eloquent trees reaching out across a shaky cityscape.

Also in January there was a zoom exhibition of the forceful Expressionist **Boris Lurie**, whose anguish you can read in its title, *My Heart Will Always Reek of Deutschland*. Such reverse sentimentalism might make you reel away from his painting, consisting of glaring blocks of primary colours each shrieking out: *A Jew Is Dead*, with a brooding yellow star at the top left-hand corner; yet the stark message has multiple meanings. Especially with the heart in the title. Lurie is described as a remarkable talent who survived the camps, emigrated to New York in 1946 and founded the No! Art Movement. He juxtaposed the real with the surreal and was considered an outsider. He grew wealthy through speculating on the stock market and property, and never sold a painting in his life.

Equally devastating is **Edith Birkin's** group of skeletal heads wearing brilliant colours. They are imprisoned in a space with bars on the back window. A private collector facilitated the exhibition of her work by buying seven of her vibrant paintings, bringing her poignant memories to life.

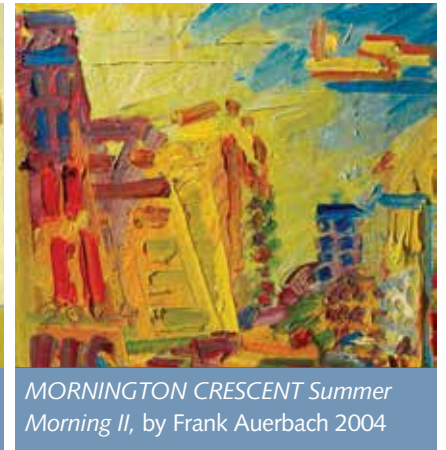
With the Ben Uri's more extensive focus

on immigrants and refugees in general, it acquired Orovida Camille Pissarro's evocative *Refugees*, dated 1947, in 2022 with the support of the Stern-Pissarro Gallery. Her heart-rending evocation of refugee mothers and babies of all nationalities, shows a child in the foreground clutching what looks like a Russian doll.


The BU 's physical exhibition **Joy**, which partnered the **National Gallery's** virtual exhibition, *Fruits of the Spirit*, paired Ben Uri's *Mornington Crescent, Summer Morning II*, 2004, by **Frank Auerbach** with the NG's *Sunflowers* by **Vincent van Gogh** to explore the 'fruit' of Joy. It is not a literal transcription – there are no flowers or fruits in Auerbach's work – but the brilliant golds of Van Gogh's immortal blooms are reflected in the optimism of the eternally energetic Auerbach, famed for his London cityscapes, particularly his local Mornington Crescent. Here we see it again, a joyful plethora of impasto slapped onto his canvas; houses towering and leaning into a cobalt and yellow sky, the very opposite of that saddened mood evoked by Bloch's *Scorched Trees*. Its super Expressionism – how else to describe it – makes you laugh, although Auerbach is also a German-born Jewish refugee who arrived in Britain in 1939, aged seven, and lost both parents in Auschwitz. His vivid colours make an optimistic contribution to the art world, yet in many images you can still sense the dislocation and pain reflected in the work of many artists of his era who were torn from their homelands.



Sunflowers by Vincent van Gogh, 1889



MORNINGTON CRESCENT Summer Morning II, by Frank Auerbach 2004



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**CONTEMPORARY
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AJR FUNDING PARTNER

'45 Aid Society

A page from the original list of 'The Boys'

The fifth of our series on organisations that receive grant funding from the AJR looks at a global online Holocaust education resource which has been created by grandchildren of 'The Boys'.

This initiative, led by historical advisor Rosie Whitehouse and '45 Aid Society Vice Chairman, Philip Burton, is the outcome of an in-depth research project by Holocaust charity, the '45 Aid Society and helped by a generous donation from the AJR. This extensive history archive is now used regularly by over 150 schools around the UK as part of a programme of Holocaust education.

'The Boys' were a group of 700+ orphaned Holocaust survivors who lost their families in concentration camps and who were brought to the UK in five separate groups between 1945 and 1948. They are known as 'The Boys', even though there were over 200 girls in the group.

Many of them settled in the UK, established successful businesses, married and had families of their own. Some emigrated to Israel, USA, Canada and elsewhere.

Until now, detailed information on many of them was limited to that contained in Sir Martin Gilbert's 1996 book, *The Boys: Triumph over Adversity*, and to the autobiographies by some of The Boys themselves. Little detail was known about what happened to them after they were liberated.

This comprehensive resource contains photos, a map of The Boys' birthplaces where they grew up, what happened to them on arrival in the UK and afterwards as well as profiles of all 700+ boys and girls.

AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE
PRAHA V. JOSEFOVSKÁ 7
II.
Praha, 27. 5. 1946.

601	Friedman-ová Edita ✓	19. 8.1929	Uvalova	f	f
602	Friedman-ová Hana ✓	25. 4.1931	Václav Borovita	m	m
603	Goldschil Damiar ✓	19.10.1927	Čestm	m	m
604	Gross-ová Hana ✓	25. 1.1928	Mukačovo	m	m
605	Grossman Josef ✓	13. 8.1928	Užhorod	m	m
606	Halpern-ová Hana ✓	10. 4.1929	Mukačovo	m	m
607	Halpern-ová Hana ✓	27.10.1929	Čestm	m	m
608	Haršková-ová Jarmila ✓	3. 4.1930	Užhorod	m	f
609	Haršková-ová Jarmila ✓	13. 4.1929	Slatinačská Dolá	f	f
610	Haršková-ová Jarmila ✓	7. 6.1930	Mukačovo	m	m
611	Haršková-ová Jarmila ✓	11.1.1928	Tršava	m	f
612	Haršková-ová Jarmila ✓	14.12.1930	Vyšná Haba	f	f
613	Hoffman-ová Hana ✓	28.10.1927	Tršava	m	f
614	Holländer-ová Hana ✓	22. 9.1930	Čestm	m	m
615	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	10.12.1929	Čestm	f	f
616	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	27. 6.1929	Slatinačská Dolá	m	m
617	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	26. 4.1930	Užhorod	m	m
618	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	1. 1.1929	Užhorod	m	m
619	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	31. 3.1929	Mukačovo	m	m
620	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	23. 3.1929	Mukačovo	m	m
621	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	15.12.1930	Mukačovo	f	f
622	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	15. 4.1929	Beruhovo	m	m
623	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	12. 9.1929	Tršava	f	f
624	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	5. 7.1929	Mukačovo	m	m
625	Jakubovitz Hana ✓	21.10.1928	Mukačovo	m	m

The '45 Aid Society team gathered a team of researchers made up of 3rd generation – grandchildren of The Boys – who were managed by Rosie and Philip to undertake extensive research using archives from around the world, including the [Arolsen Archives](#) in Germany, the [British Library](#), the [UK Imperial War Museum](#), the [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#), the [USC Shoah Foundation](#) and [Yad Vashem](#) in Israel, among many others.

Thousands of hours were spent painstakingly checking and re-checking facts and statistics, creating interactive maps and making sure photos were captioned. The archive, which launched online in autumn 2021, is by far the largest single source of information about The Boys.

The '45 Aid Society launched the archive with a [film](#) called *Introducing the Archive of The Boys* about the creation of the archive, to introduce it to The Boys and their families, and to showcase what it contains. The film explains the kind of information to be found on the birthplaces of The Boys, their journeys to the UK, where they lived on arrival and the people who cared for them.

The '45 Aid Society hopes that the online archive will be useful to many, including families of the Boys, educators, historians and academics and anyone who has an interest in learning about the remarkable stories of the Boys. The archive can be viewed on www.45aidsociety.org/history

Angela Cohen, Chairman of the '45 Aid Society, said of the project: "After all the months of hard work that went into the creation of this incredible archive, I'm absolutely delighted with the result and we are so grateful to AJR for their generous donation towards our project. Our Boys and their families have already expressed their thanks and are hugely impressed with it. I'm delighted that it has already become a valuable teaching tool, enabling children across the UK to learn about what the Boys, like my father Moishe Malenicky, suffered during the Holocaust, to ensure that it never happens again."

Zac Greenberg, grandson of one of the Boys, Victor Greenberg, who worked on the research team, said: "These people that survived, The Boys, their stories don't end with the fact that the Holocaust happened. They're more than just Holocaust survivors. They created a family, established themselves in a country where they knew nobody and didn't speak the language, so ultimately it's a story of resilience and perseverance. I think it's incredibly important to share that because people can learn from it."

Emily Burton, granddaughter of one of The Boys, David Herman, who worked as a key member of the research team said: "the story of The Boys ... is really important for young people to tell."

RECLAIMING

A FUNNY DEBATE

Baddiel & Lucas. It sounds like a new comedy partnership, in the style of Baddiel & Skinner or Lucas & Walliams, but these were the main speakers during a recent AJR event focusing on the issues for those descendants of German-Jewish refugees who can now reclaim German citizenship.

For AJR members with the opportunity of applying for German citizenship because a parent or grandparent fled persecution in Nazi Germany, it is often a hard decision. The arguments for and against were explored in detail during our event, which was held at Westminster Synagogue on 19 January and 'starred' two of Britain's best-loved comedians.

David Baddiel is second-generation – his mother was a child refugee from Nazi Germany – and is considering applying for German citizenship. Matt Lucas is third-generation – his grandmother fled from Nazi Germany – and he already has his German passport. Their discussion was expertly moderated by Karina Urbach, German historian and author of *Alice's Book*.

The packed audience, most of whom were descendants of German-Jewish refugees or Holocaust survivors who have either applied for German citizenship or are thinking of doing so, were treated to a fascinating discussion. The topic was handled sensitively but, as one might expect with such a panel, there were



Matt Lucas and David Baddiel before the debate began

more than a few laughs along the way.

David Baddiel explained how he had always regarded his grandparents as "incredibly German". For example, his grandfather "...never really spoke English properly and believed that Goethe was better than Shakespeare until his dying day". His decision to apply for German citizenship is as much about honouring his grandparents' memories and this important part of his heritage as it is about the practicalities of remaining European.

In contrast, Matt Lucas said that his much-loved grandmother might have been "horrified" about his application but offered that there are other aspects of his lifestyle of which his grandmother might equally disapprove. He recalled the application process for his new German passport as being "both daunting and emotional" but said that the teams at the AJR and the German Embassy had been "incredibly helpful".

Both men acknowledged that the Germany of today is very different to the one their grandparents/grandmother fled. David Baddiel explained how he fully understands his grandparents' anger and sense of outrage at losing their German identity and feels that "...Jews who continue to be angry and want nothing to do with Germany are doing exactly what the Nazis wanted."

The prospect of being awarded German citizenship does not, however, make either man feel "less British". David Baddiel already holds a US passport, so this would give him triple citizenship. Standing up for their Jewish identity in the face of rising antisemitism is also a powerful motive for both comedians. Baddiel, whose best-selling book *Jews don't count* has been published in Germany under the rather controversial title *Und die Juden?*, believes that Holocaust education in Germany goes further and deeper than anywhere else in the world but is still concerned about the increasing tendency for many Germans to see antisemitism as a somehow lesser form of racism.

In response to questions from the audience, one topic for disagreement between the two comedians was which football team to support when England next plays Germany. Matt Lucas, who can be seen regularly at the Emirates Stadium, said that when it comes to



Karina Urbach moderating the debate

CITIZENSHIP

football his allegiance is generally to his club rather than his country. This means that if the German team comprised a high number of Arsenal FC players his natural inclination would be to follow their progress. In contrast Baddiel, who co-sung the popular anthem *Three Lions*, is unequivocal about his ongoing support for England.

Meanwhile Baddiel and Lucas are clearly not the only high-profile Brits interested in the subject of reclaiming European citizenship. Spotted among the audience were actor Nigel Planer, whose father left Germany in 1933, theatre director Robert Fox, who accompanied his wife, a third-gen Jewish immigrant, and eminent British psychiatrist, Sir Simon Wessely, whose father was brought to the UK by Nicholas Winton.

All attendees had the option of touring the Museum of the Czech Scrolls before the event, which is in the same building. The Deputy German Ambassador, Rüdiger Bohn, opened the event, followed by the AJR's CEO, Michael Newman. The event concluded with a request from Toby Simpson, director of The Wiener Holocaust Library, for donations of documents.

The entire event can be watched online on the AJR's YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@TheAJR). For more information about reclaiming European citizenship please contact enquiries@ajr.org.uk.

A 'PACKED BAG'?



Jonny Newton, Head of Government Relations & External Affairs at the Community Security Trust (CST), received his first German passport on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day. He posted this heartfelt message.

Above, on the left – German passports for me and my kids that arrived in the post today.

On the right – the UK identity card given to my late grandfather Hans Nebel (Harry Newton) when he entered Britain as a Jewish Kindertransport refugee from Germany in 1938 as a 17-year-old with his 14-year-old sister Ruth.

Harry's father was in Buchenwald at the time ("father's address unknown"), dying in 1939. His mother was gassed in Auschwitz Birkenau – one of the million Jews industrially killed there – a few years later. He would escape the Alien Internment camp he was placed in by signing up to the British Army, ending the war as an army interrogator and translator at one of the Nazi war trials. He died in 1994.

It was quite apt that my German passport should arrive on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day. I recognise that the Jewish community is split on the ethics of German heritage Jews applying for citizenship of the country that ethnically cleansed them. My dad, Michael, refused to drive a German car for many years. Yet, it was he who started this process following Brexit – he understood

that the rights we had as EU members had been stripped, and I wanted to make sure my children had the same opportunities to live, study and work across Europe that I had (and the ability to skip passport control queues).

Perhaps we both also saw this as a new manifestation of a 'packed bag' too. A concept ingrained into the DNA of many post-Holocaust Jews – the ability to pick up and move if the need ever arose. A lesson hard learnt.

My dad Michael died in 2018 not knowing that his right to apply for German citizenship as the son of someone who had it stripped from him had been granted. It took me two years to pick the process back up – I think it was too difficult for me to finish something that he had started before his death.

The application for my family was rather, well, German – officious and bureaucratic. But, handled with grace, sensitivity and patience by wonderful German Embassy staff as they guided me through it. It was only when my wife and I picked up the citizenship documents for myself and our sons that the process moved from the bureaucratic to the emotional. It was tied into my personal grief and probable intergenerational Holocaust trauma, but also the dawning of the rights, responsibilities and value of becoming a citizen of another country – especially when so many in this world yearn and strive and die for the same. I wonder what Harry would have made of this. I know my Dad would have been proud, and relieved.

MUSIC, MIGRATION & MOBILITY

Malcolm Miller reviews a new exhibition focusing on the legacy of émigré musicians who found refuge in Britain from Nazi Europe.

Wednesday 18 January 2023 marked the 120th anniversary of the birth in Hamburg of the émigré British composer Berthold Goldschmidt (1903-1996). That date might have passed one by, except for the fortuitous coincidence that it also marked the start of a brand-new exhibition at the Royal College of Music's recently rebuilt and refurbished Museum entitled *Music, Migration and Mobility*, which runs until 23 April 2023.

At the opening preview on 16 January 2023, which I was fortunate to attend, the select audience included several émigrés and their descendants, including the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, composer Erika Fox and many others, who had donated objects (including scores, documents, recordings and other everyday objects), as well as scholars and interpreters who have in recent years been involved in the process of reclaiming much of the neglected music and musical history of WW2 and the immediate post-war period. To launch the evening, we were regaled by flautist Hannah Gillingham with the expressive *Capriccio for Solo Flute* (1949) by Roberto Gerhard (1896-1970), the Spanish-Catalan-born émigré composer who studied with Schoenberg in the 1920s, and lived in Cambridge from 1939. The music's distinctive blend of Modernist serialism and English lyrical modality embodied the aesthetic found in the works of many émigrés, combining influences from different cultural contexts.

Gabriele Rossi Rognoni, Curator of the RCM Museum, and Norbert Meyn, project curator and singer on the RCM faculty, described how the exhibition had evolved over ten years since the RCM's earlier *Singing a Song in a Foreign Land* project, combining oral histories, performances and recordings. Thanks to a generous grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the new *Music, Migration and Mobility* project was formed, in collaboration with Royal Holloway, University of London and University of Salzburg, led by Norbert Meyn.



Illustration for *Music, Migration & Mobility* by Ciada Peterle 2022 (Instagram @narrativegeographies)

Overall, the exhibition gives a compelling flavour of the rich contribution the émigré musicians made to British musical life. Object-based, and enhanced with sonic accessories (headphones and installations), the exhibition is elegantly put together, its systematic theme-based organisation highlighting the phases of the refugee experience spanning from childhood in Europe, persecution, emigration and acculturation, all the while focusing on poignant and fascinating material. For instance, one encounters a display of objects relating to the background, a gold medal awarded to Peter Gellhorn for outstanding achievements at the Berlin Academy, a copy of the notorious antisemitic *Lexikon of Jews in music* published in wartime Germany, letters from family members to refugee composers interned on the Isle of Man, and a youthful self-portrait of composer Joseph Horowitz who began his career as a promising artist.

Themed displays relate to persecution and journeys, then the experience of internment, with the remarkably lively original poster by Humpoletz from Hans Gal's 1940 camp review *What a Life!*, produced behind barbed wire at Douglas on the Isle of Man. More serious works relating to refugee experience, by Mátyás Seiber (1905-60), Berthold Goldschmidt, Reizenstein and the much younger Joseph Horowitz (1927-2022), form a telling display, whilst another display focuses on the seminal humourist Gerard Hoffnung, with hilarious objects and manuscripts of zany music composed for the Hoffnung Music Festivals in the 1950s, classic

models of musical wit. Installations and headphones allow one to absorb fascinating interviews by émigrés such as the writer and BBC producer Hans Keller, composer Alexander Goehr, and performers such as the violinist Maria Lidka, for whom many works by émigrés were composed. Amongst various interactive maps highlighting international migrations, especially prominently displayed is a map of NW London, drawn from the AJR's 60th Anniversary exhibition 'Continental Britons', created in 2002 for the Jewish Museum, London, which shows the whereabouts of the numerous refugee concert venues, coffee houses, clubs, societies and residences.

Without claiming to be comprehensive, the exhibition promotes an insightful overview of a cross-section of refugee musical experience that supports the notion, expressed powerfully in Daniel Snowman's *The Hitler Emigrés*, that the generation of musicians who came in the 1930s enriched and transformed musical life in Britain. As the first in a series of exhibitions as part of the larger *Music, Migration and Mobility* project, the story of the 1930s-40s refugees has a continued relevance for our own time, both since there is still much to be discovered and enjoyed in the legacy of the musicians, and because more recent forced migrations continue to create challenging social contexts and environments producing powerful new creative expression that deserves ever wider exposure.

<https://www.rcm.ac.uk/museum/exhibitions/musicmigrationmobility/>

'ENGELCHEN'

This month sees the premiere of a musical composition inspired by the heroism of two Sunderland-based sisters who helped 29 Jews escape Nazi Germany.

Musician and composer Alison Cotton, who is not Jewish, was born in Sunderland where she heard about the incredible story of Ida and Louise Cook, who both spent their early years in the city. She explains: "I'd seen the blue plaque for them in the city too. When I was selected as Composer Curator for an event in Sunderland, I just knew that this had to be my subject. It's been fascinating and very moving learning about their lives and the people whom they saved."

Ida and Louise Cook were an eccentric pair: spinster sisters who lived for opera, travelling the world to listen to their favourite performers sing. Yet Ida and Louise harboured a secret. For years, they worked to bring Jews out of Nazi Europe, using their avid opera-going as a cover. In all, the sisters saved the lives of 29 Jews.

Alison's composition, *Engelchen* ("Little Angels") will be performed for the first time on Saturday 11 March in Sunderland. *Engelchen* was a term used to address the sisters in letters written

by some of the people they were trying to save. Alison has taken the time to learn about these stories and has also met up with a number of modern-day refugees in the north east to learn about their journeys and the barriers they have faced.

As well as Alison's performance, the event on 11 March will include a talk on the lives of the sisters by Professor Angela Smith of the University of Sunderland and a poetry reading of London-based poet Hilaire's *The Cook Sisters Contemplate a Final Visit to Nazi Germany*. The poem will be read by local residents.

Alison began performing as a solo artist in 2018, following success in *The Left Outsides*. Her third album, *The Portrait You Painted of Me*, made *The Guardian's* Folk Album of the Month, *The Quietus'* Album of the Week and reached number

37 in its Albums of the Year.

Now based in London, Alison maintains her connections to Sunderland and has enjoyed exploring the remarkable stories of the Cook sisters. She said: "I hope to create a moving experience though my event inspired by the lives of Ida and Louise Cook. A story of such bravery and kindness which is so relevant to the times we live in today."

Alison's work on *Engelchen* was made possible by Sound and Music, the national organisation for new music in the UK. The charity supports a diverse range of talented composers to develop their work; as well as helping audiences to discover and experience new music and enabling children and young people to explore their musical creativity. This Composer-Curator programme is being run in partnership with Sunderland Culture.


<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/engelchen-music-inspired-by-ida-louise-cook-performed-by-alison-cotton-tickets-489649945167?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>



Ida and Louise Cook



Alison Cotton, photo credit Al Overdrive

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SLOVAK HEROES



Dr Bea Lewkowicz, director of AJR Refugee Voices Archive, with the Ambassador

The Ambassador of Slovakia in the UK, His Excellency Robert Ondrejcsak recently helped the AJR to pay tribute to four Jewish women survivors from Slovakia: Trude Silman and Sara-Kraus Lefkovitz from Bratislava, Prof. Gerta Vrbova from Trnava, and Dr Gertrud Friedmann from Piestany.

His Excellency underlined how "...the Slovak government condemns every form and every kind of antisemitism and any kind of violence against any ethnic and religious minorities".

All four women are featured in the AJR Refugee Voices Archive, the AJR's groundbreaking Holocaust collection of testimony, 3000+ photos and 230 filmed interviews with Jewish survivors & refugees from Nazi Europe.



Remembering and Rethinking: The International Forum on Collecting, Preserving & Disseminating Holocaust Testimonies

April 19 & 20, 2023 • Lancaster House, St James's Park, London

The conference will bring together archives, museums, and other institutions which hold collections of Holocaust testimonies and feature Holocaust testimonies in their (digital and non-digital) spaces as well as educational resources and next-generation participants. With declining numbers of Holocaust survivors and refugees, the conference will facilitate conversations between world-renowned experts to re-evaluate and access the many ways Holocaust testimonies have been collected, displayed, and curated since the end of the Second World War, and reimagine their future usage.

Keynote Speaker: **Robert Williams**, Finci-Viterbi Executive Director USC Shoah Foundation

To book a ticket, please register at: bit.ly/TestimonyConference

Award-winning volunteers

Several of the AJR's wonderful volunteers were honoured during the JVN Celebration of Volunteering Awards, in January.

Almost 400 guests from the Jewish and wider community attended this year's awards ceremony, held at the stunning Grove Hotel in Hertfordshire in memory of JVN's founding director Leonie Lewis.

AJR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Vera Gellman, for her dedication to the AJR Pinner Outreach group.

AJR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
David Collins, who makes sure that our visually impaired members can still keep up-to-date, connected and informed via an audio version of the *AJR Journal*.



AJR YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Noemi Van Hoof, for helping to keep our volunteer services going during the major challenges of 2021-22.

AJR TEAM OF THE YEAR
Pinner Outreach, for being one of our first Outreach groups to get back up and running once COVID restrictions allowed and for always making a scrumptious

tea for the members (represented by Vera Gellman, Alan Solomon and Carol Winston.)

Fran Horwich, AJR's Head of Volunteer Services, said: "All our volunteers deserve recognition for the wonderful help and support they provide for AJR members but it was lovely to see a few of them receiving these very special awards."

WHY TESTIMONY MATTERS

Interview with Sir Erich Reich 2015



Ahead of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, PM Rishi Sunak praised the courage of Holocaust survivors and announced that parliament will soon legislate to build the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, so that "...testimonies of survivors will be heard at the heart of our democracy by every generation to come."

The many survivors and refugees I have interviewed in the last 20 years for the *AJR Refugee Voices Archive* would be so pleased to hear this pledge. I recall one particular interviewee, the journalist John Izbicki who, as an eight-year-old boy in Berlin, watched Nazi storm troopers ransacking his parents shop on Kristallnacht. Knowing his parents were in the shop, he shouted and cried uncontrollably. His parents survived and the family made it to safety in the UK but John's vocal cords had been severely affected and his voice was permanently changed.

The PM's commitment to the importance of testimonies hopefully means that voices like that of John Izbicki – who said at the end of his interview 'Look back to the past and don't let it become the future' – will continue to be heard.

When Holocaust testimony moves to the political centre stage, it is a good time to take a step back and think about the history, complexities and dissemination of Holocaust testimony, and the institutions which collect and preserve them.

The AJR's 'International Forum on Collecting, Preserving & Disseminating Holocaust Testimonies' this April will address all these issues. Please book via:

www.bit.ly/TestimonyConference

Dr Bea Lewkowicz

SEEING AUSCHWITZ



In the unlikely space of the former Christie's auction house on Old Brompton Road, a small group of AJR members recently viewed Auschwitz through one hundred photographs, sketches and testimonies at the thought-provoking *Seeing Auschwitz* exhibition.

As the daughter of someone whose parents and siblings were murdered at Auschwitz, this was an opportunity to help decide if I felt ready to visit the camp itself (the answer is no, I'm not ready).

After the visit some of us opted to 'decompress' and share our thoughts at a nearby pizzeria. Gaby Koppel said, "I was BBC producer of the national event for Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001 and 2005; the research involved left me all too familiar with the grim material. But, just when you think you've reached saturation, something like this comes along which is quite transformative in the way one sees things. I wouldn't have thought to visit the exhibition alone, but I am really glad I went as it gave me new insight into the photographs and the way they were taken – and it was wonderful to have some like-minded people to process the experience with afterwards."

Laura Davis said, "I found the exhibition very interesting and the audio guide was very good. It was a very informative exhibition for an audience who may not be Jewish for them to learn about the Holocaust in pictures."

Sam Churchill said, "I found the exhibit extremely powerful in magnifying the tiny moments of humanity that were captured in the Auschwitz Album, which was the primary source material."

Joel Hockman said, "The *Seeing Auschwitz* exhibition depicts the horrors of Auschwitz in a unique way and I am grateful I was able to share this with fellow AJR members. It was lovely to connect with other 3rd Generations and to hear about their family history".

Sadly, this excellent exhibition has since closed its doors in London but is currently touring South Africa with other cities planned.

www.seeingauschwitz.com

Debra Barnes

LOOKING BACK AT 1938

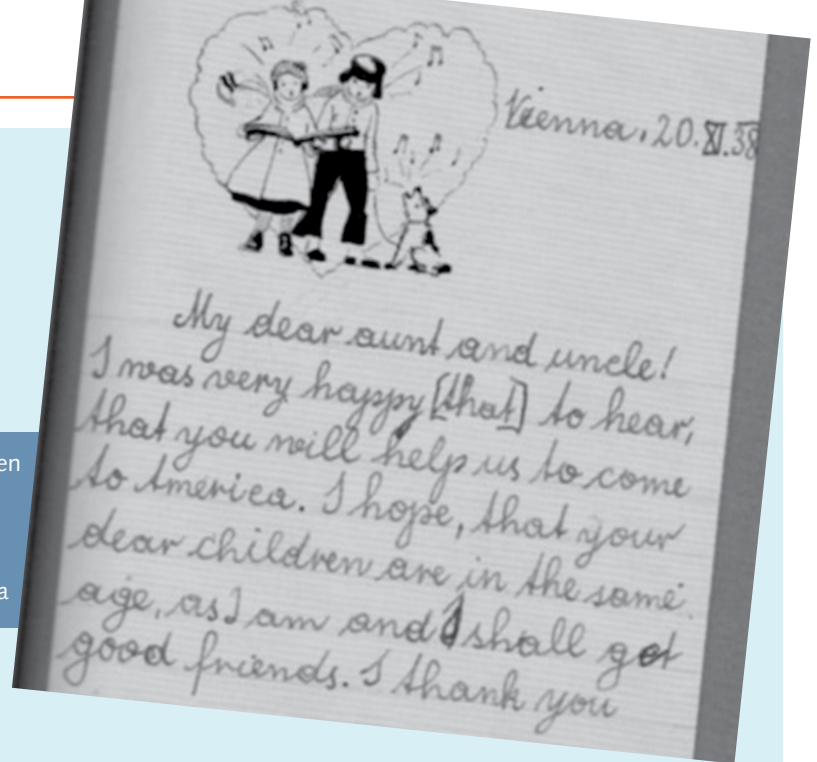
In the timeline of the Holocaust, the year 1938 was a momentous one. Particularly noteworthy events included the Anschluss (85 years ago this month), the abortive international conference in Evian on refugees, the Jewish emigration office in Vienna set up by Adolf Eichmann, Neville Chamberlain agreeing at Munich to let Hitler dismember Czechoslovakia, and of course the November pogrom.

Against that background, the historian Barbara Schieb and documentary producer Jutta Hercher have adopted an unusual approach in their book: *1938* (published in German by Elisabeth Sandmann Verlag, Munich). Taking letters, eye-witness accounts and newspaper reports written during that year, as well as later reminiscences and relevant illustrations, they show how those political events affected the everyday lives of vulnerable ordinary citizens.

For example:

- In March, Royal Dutch Airlines puts on extra flights from Vienna to Prague and Budapest, but demand from asylum-seekers far exceeds its normal capacity.
- Fritz Altmann is negotiating with the Nazis; they offer to release his wealthy industrialist brother from Dachau, if he transfers his foreign assets to them.
- In his moving memoir, *The World of Yesterday*, Stefan Zweig writes that 'the conscience of the world remained silent in 1938'.
- In a letter to the well-known Austrian author Hilde Spiel, then a

Letter written by 11 year old Gerda Feldstein, from Vienna



correspondent in London, the Viennese composer Erich Zeisl wonders who will look after the elderly relatives, if they cannot emigrate with their families.

- The Nazis force Hannes Schneider, a ski instructor in St Anton, to emigrate because he refuses to exclude Jews from his ski classes.
- In a lecture in the United States, Thomas Mann's daughter Erika suggests that, among the émigrés, it is women who realise more quickly than men how shameful it will be to live in a fascist country.
- Hans von Dohnanyi, a judge in Leipzig (his son Klaus becomes a minister in the governments of Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt), is among those who in 1938 plot to overthrow Hitler, and ultimately pay with their lives.
- Hoping to reach Palestine, Boronia and Karol Zelcer flee with their granddaughter Marietta from Vienna to Warsaw, where they end up in the ghetto; they manage to place Marietta in the care of a strict Catholic woman who presents the girl as her own child. The grandparents perish, but the Red Cross helps Marietta's parents find her after the war. Her daughter Monica Dugot becomes an American authority on restitution claims.
- In Vienna, Gerda Feldstein, aged eleven, writes a letter in English to her aunt and uncle in Los Angeles, thanking them for helping Gerda and her parents

to settle in the United States.

- On 18 September, Thomas Mann and his family sail from Boulogne to New York; a week later a huge crowd in New York hears him end a speech: 'Hitler muss gestürzt werden!' – 'Hitler must be toppled.'
- In November, the grandparents of Linda Rachel Sabiers, a Berlin-based writer, flee from Koblenz, ending up in the Pension Neumann in La Paz, Bolivia.
- On 10 December, the future writer Lore Segal, aged ten, leaves on the first Kindertransport from Vienna; her father urges her to ask all the people she meets to help her family 'to get out'.

A decade ago, one of Germany's leading cultural figures, Florian Illies, published *1913: Der Sommer des Jahrhunderts*. It became an international bestseller after it was translated, with backing from the German government, as *1913: The Year Before the Storm*. Perhaps Berlin should consider supporting an English translation of *1938*, as part of its continuing campaign to educate citizens about the Holocaust. The authors of *1938* themselves express the hope that the texts and illustrations they have selected will encourage today's readers to look carefully at what happened then, when reflecting on the refugee crisis, and the nationalism, racism and antisemitism, that beset us today.

Martin Mauthner

REVIEWS

PLEASE WRITE SOON: AN UNFORGETTABLE STORY OF TWO COUSINS IN WORLD WAR II

Michael Rosen

Illustrated by Michael Foreman
Scholastic

The extraordinary struggles of ordinary people during wartime and the strength of family bonds, courage and love are portrayed in this moving new book by children’s author Michael Rosen. Beginning in September 1939, it tells the story of two cousins, Solomon – known as Solly – in London who exchanges letters with Bernie in Poland.

Bernie is soon in immediate danger, with his parents only too aware that Jews are unsafe in Warsaw. So he is sent east to relatives in the Russian occupied side of the country in the hope that life will be safer. Unfortunately, the teenager is soon arrested and sent to a forced labour camp in Russia, experiencing extremely harsh conditions. All the time he is anxious about the fate of his beloved parents, Mami and Tatte. He had poignantly said goodbye to them when they waved him off at the station in their black coats, his mother with tears in her eyes.

Meanwhile Solly is evacuated after experiencing devastating bombing in the capital. The children are greeted by people at the station, choosing which evacuee to have, something he finds strange. He tries hard to fit into a new school and adapt to life in the English countryside living on a Herefordshire farm, quite a contrast to town life. His mother stays behind to nurse the injured so both boys find themselves without their parents. As the cousins exchange sporadic letters they try and keep their spirits up, trading jokes and observations about the world changing around them and talking about football and marbles.

Then Bernie grasps the opportunity to join the “Anders’ Army” (Polish armed forces in the east commanded by General Władysław Anders) fighting against the Nazi regime. His

correspondence tells of experiences in Iraq and eventually Italy. Here he fights alongside the British at the famous but devastating Battle of Monte Cassino where 75,000 soldiers died. Throughout he remains anxious about his parents after hearing nothing, while sinister reports about Nazi camps for Jews filter through. Solly tells Bernie about the 1943 Bethnal Green Underground Station tragedy where 173 people died, including 62 children, one of the worst civilian disasters in the war. This is also highlighted in the afterword at the end by Lieutenant General James Bashall CB, CBE who writes movingly about the importance of Remembrance.

Author Michael Rosen has a gift for

explaining quite complicated situations simply and clearly, including fear, separation, hardship and anguish, seemingly effortlessly covering much ground in a few pages. The narrative was inspired by his own family history and dedicated to his father’s cousin Michael Rechnic, whose real-life experiences during World War II provided the inspiration for Bernie’s story.

Throughout, the book is wonderfully illustrated by Michael Foreman in black and white with a splash of poppy red bringing the drama to life. The publication is aimed at children but for families to share, and adults will find it equally touching.

Janet Weston



We are hugely proud and appreciative of all the AJR members who went out of their way in January to share their family stories for Holocaust Memorial Day.

The many examples included **Ruth & Werner Lachs**, who took part in Greater Manchester’s HMD service and who are pictured here with the Mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham; **Ruth Briggs**

who, together with her granddaughter Jemima, was interviewed by her local MP Boris Johnson for his social media feeds; and **Mindu Hornick**, who enraptured a hall full of Birmingham University students.



OBITUARIES

Zigi SHIPPER BEM

Born: 18 January 1930, Lodz
Died: 18 January 2023, London



Zigi came to England as a 16-year-old boy to meet the mother he thought had died and whom he had not seen for 12 years, during which he had endured some of the most horrific events in history.

Born in Lodz, Poland, Zigi spent four and a half years in the Lodz Ghetto followed by ten months in several concentration and labour camps, as well as a death march, before being liberated by British troops on 3 May 1945.

On the death march, Zigi was terribly ill and would never have survived without the help of his friends, all of whom would also have been starving, exhausted and sick. It would have been so easy to have just focussed on their own survival but, because Zigi was Zigi, they were never going to leave him and instead, they made sure that he reached the end of the march alongside them.

After he was reunited with his mother, she would often cry about having left him but, in typical Zigi fashion, his only

thoughts were for her. He would comfort her and tell her that had she stayed, or taken him with her, they both might have perished.

Zigi has always been a force of life – the sort of person that everyone wanted to know, to talk to, to be with and to have as

their friend. He lit up every room he entered and was loved by everyone he met.

He was well-known to celebrities such as Steven Spielberg, footballers such as Steven Gerrard and politicians such as Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Boris Johnson, many of whom regarded him as their friend. Zigi would have kvelled if he had known that Rishi Sunak would be mentioning him at PMQs within a few hours of his passing!

Zigi attended several Royal Garden parties, was one of the seven survivors whose portraits were commissioned by the then Prince Charles and was one of two survivors invited to accompany Prince William and Princess Catherine when they visited Stutthof Concentration Camp in

while, he strengthened relationships with the partner organisations with which we today continue to work closely, and can claim joint credit for bringing into the AJR the Reunion of Kindertransport (RoK). He played a role in assisting members with compensation claims by a volunteer lawyer while liaising with the Claims Conference. We send our sincerest condolences to Ernest's widow, Nicole.

The Prince and Princess of Wales
@KensingtonRoyal · Follow

In 2017, we had the honour to meet Holocaust survivor, Zigi Shipper on our visit to Stutthof. We were sad to learn earlier today of his passing. He will be truly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. W&C



The Prince and Princess of Wales were among the first to pay tribute to Zigi as news of his passing spread

2017. At the following National Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration, he spotted the Royal couple taking their seats and made a bee-line towards them, breaching protocol. As members of the security services approached, Prince William said "It's okay, it's Zigi".

Zigi loved his life in this country and all the opportunities that it gave him. It was here that he met his wife, my mum, Jeannette in 1948 and, 75 years later, their proud legacy is two daughters, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

After the death of his beloved wife in July 2020 Zigi, who had already been diagnosed with Alzheimers, took an immediate downward turn. He simply couldn't live without his Jay.

Zigi spent the last 25 years of his life talking about his experiences to schools, colleges and even prisons. At the end of his talks he would say: "Who is going to speak for the people who did not survive? Who is going to tell their story?"

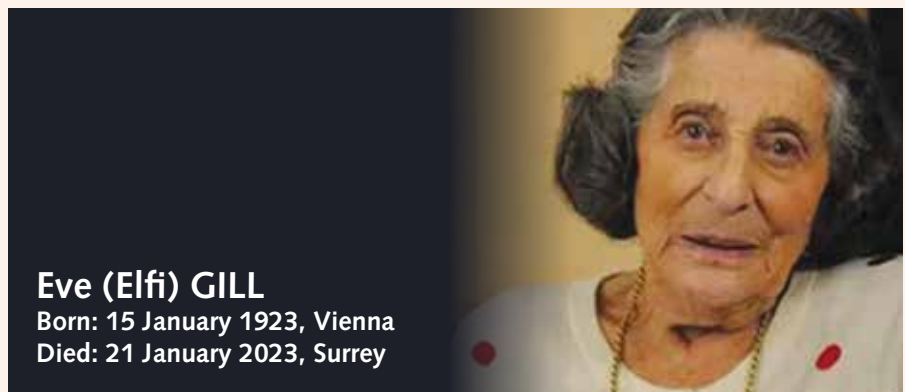
We will ensure that Zigi's Story will continue to be heard and that our children will tell his story when we are no longer able to do so. And Zigi's message was simple – Do Not Hate.

Michelle Richman and Lu Lawrence (nées Shipper)

Ernest DAVID

The AJR was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of Ernest David, our former Executive Director, who served the AJR for four years until May 1998.

During his tenure, Ernest greatly developed the Social Services provision and facilitated the creation of some of the original regional groups. All the



Eve (Elfi) GILL

Born: 15 January 1923, Vienna
 Died: 21 January 2023, Surrey

Eve passed away after a short illness, having made it to her 100th birthday less than one week beforehand. Her lengthy old age had been spent in remarkably good health, her mind as agile as that of someone at least half century younger. It seemed as if she might just go on for ever.

Eve was a good friend of my late mother, Eva Cato, and until her death in 2008 they would speak by phone almost daily. They had met in 1949 when my mother came to London, introduced to each other by my grandfather, and remained lifelong friends.

Eve, then Elfriede, was one of Britain's Kindertransport refugees. Raised in Vienna, she spent a happy childhood as the only child of Jakob Gottfried and Gisela Gruenwald, until the Anschluss of March 1938 changed everything. Her father was arrested and sent to Dachau, then to Buchenwald. The family shop was Aryanised. On the eve of 'Kristallnacht' their flat was requisitioned, and they were informed they had to leave. Helped by a cousin in Shanghai, her parents escaped using Chinese visas and Eve's name was put down for a Kindertransport. Initially reluctant, she travelled here as a 16-year-old in March 1939 and was taken in by a family in Glasgow as a de facto maid. The experience was not a happy one. The family treated her badly, neglecting her physical and emotional needs. Although her hosts tried to stop her leaving by withholding her papers, Eve did move out and finally settled with a Mr and

Mrs Lochhead, who treated her kindly and with whom she stayed in touch to the end of their lives.

In 1948 she managed to get a visa for her parents, and they arrived in London from Shanghai, where they had spent the war. Despite difficulties in readjusting to a relationship that had been suspended for ten years, they resumed life as a family. Eve started a long-lasting career in advertising, going on to become a media executive in her agency. In 1957 she married accountant Dennis Gill, with whom she spent 47 happy years, although they were not able to have children. She lived her married and then widowed life in Cheam, Surrey, feeling very settled in Britain and always grateful to this country – and especially to Scotland – for taking her in as a refugee.

Until ten years ago, Eve was not interested in speaking publicly about her experiences of Nazi Austria and the Kindertransport. The emotional difficulty of returning to those times in the retelling was a barrier she did not want to cross. Yet in 2013, invited by Sutton Council, she did start speaking to school students and became a very popular speaker who was much in demand. Her direct manner, her articulacy and perceptiveness made her an accessible and impactful speaker who left a strong impression on those lucky enough to hear her. For those who did not, she can be found in *AJR Refugee Voices* and on YouTube. Her public role in keeping the memory of the Shoah alive was of a piece with her private life: in both she took a genuine interest in the people around her and was loved by many loyal acquaintances, friends and family.

Vivienne Cato



**AJR Annual trip
 JOIN US
 THIS YEAR IN
 WINDSOR**

**MONDAY 15 MAY –
 THURSDAY 18 MAY 2023**



Coach travel from London to Windsor (where our hotel is based), plus three nights' accommodation. To assist members travelling from outside London we are also offering an extra night on Sunday 7 May based in the London area, with dinner at a kosher restaurant, as an added option.

The itinerary will be a full four days of visits to attractions in Windsor and surrounding areas, returning to the hotel each evening. Please bear in mind that this is a busy itinerary and a fair amount of walking, getting on and off the coach, early starts, steps and sightseeing will be involved.

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

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

Please email either Ros Hart roshart@ajr.org.uk or Karen Diamond karendiamond@ajr.org.uk to receive full details and a booking pack.

IN PERSON EVENTS

DATE	TIME	IN PERSON MEETING	CO-ORDINATOR
Thursday 2 March	2.00pm	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Monday 6 March	2.00pm	Muswell Hill	Ros Hart
Wednesday 8 March	12.30pm	Northern Region Purim Party	Michal Mocton
Thursday 9 March	2.00pm	Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs
Tuesday 14 March	10.30am	Wanstead/Ilford	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 15 March	11am	York	Michal Mocton
Wednesday 15 March	2.00pm	Newcastle	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 16 March	2.00pm	Bushey	Karen Diamond
Monday 27 March	2.00pm	Hampstead	Ros Hart
Tuesday 28 March	11.30am	Wembley	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 29 March	12 noon	Kingston	Ros Hart
Wednesday 29 March	12 noon	Norfolk/Suffolk	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 29 March	12.30pm	Glasgow Pesach Lunch	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 30 March	10.30am	Radlett	Karen Diamond

CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

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ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Wednesday 1 March @ 2pm	Alistair Hodgson – The de Havilland Sea Venom: the story and restoration of the wooden jet aeroplane https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86862860882	Meeting ID: 868 6286 0882
Monday 6 March @ 4pm	Janos Fisher – Hungarian Jews who influenced History or Art https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89346587208	Meeting ID: 893 4658 7208
Tuesday 7 March @ 2pm	Jonathan Bergwerk – The incredible story of Rabbi Hugo Gryn (an Auschwitz survivor) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83039193416	Meeting ID: 830 3919 3416
Wednesday 8 March @ 2pm	Laura Nicholls – Roaming Romans: Artefacts found in Bath that originated elsewhere https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86330767360	Meeting ID: 863 3076 7360
Thursday 9 March @ 11am	Kinder Contact Project https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85692418499	Meeting ID: 8569 241 8499
Monday 13 March @ 4pm	David Allen – The Life of Agatha Christie https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88572493575	Meeting ID: 885 7249 3575
Wednesday 15 March @ 2pm	AJR Book Discussion (no speaker) – The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87353388756	Meeting ID: 873 5338 8756
Wednesday 22 March @ 2pm	Irene Kyffin – Yiddish theatre in London https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86313035912	Meeting ID: 863 1303 5912
Monday 27 March @ 4pm	Dr Ann Featherstone – A brief history of Pantomime https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82794580805	Meeting ID: 827 9458 0805

KEEP FIT WITH AJR

All AJR members & friends are invited to take part in these online exercise and dance classes throughout the coming month.

Every Monday @ 10.30am	Get Fit where you Sit (seated exercise) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Every Tuesday @ 11.00am	Shelley's Exercise class https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622	Meeting ID: 884 6694 5622
Every Wednesday @ 10.30am	Dance Yourself Fit with Jackie Turner https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86302485494	Meeting ID: 8630 248 5494

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