



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

A neglected group?



The naturalist Joy Adamson was among the thousands of non-Jewish people who fled Nazi Europe and are technically classed as refugees

The inspiration for this article came from a letter published in last month's *Journal*, which urged us to remember the non-Jews who escaped to Britain during the 1930s and 1940s.

The letter was written by AJR member, Cameron Woodrow, who wrote: 'My father was a Scottish Presbyterian. My mother was a Czech Roman Catholic. She just happened to have a Viennese Jewish father, but he probably never set foot in a synagogue after he left home and certainly not after he married my Roman Catholic grandmother. He married again after her premature death in 1917, to a Viennese Jewess, but they were both baptised in 1918, so my mother and her siblings were brought up as Roman Catholics. They were only deemed to be Jewish in consequence of the Nuremberg Laws – a minority of a minority. My mother never regarded herself as Jewish.'

Mr. Woodrow's letter about his mother raises a larger question. How many refugees from central Europe were not Jewish?

Of course, I don't wish to minimise the importance of the experience and impact of Jewish refugees. The great migration of the pre-war years was, to a considerable extent, a product of Jews from central and east Europe. Jewishness and the story of Jewish emancipation and the rise of a Jewish urban intelligentsia in central and eastern Europe is crucial to this whole story. Not just in Germany and Austria, but throughout central and eastern

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MAKING IMPACT

At the end of last month we marked Holocaust Memorial Day and the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The impact of first-hand Holocaust testimony was powerfully demonstrated at our event by our member Mindu Hornick. See p.5 for an extract from her speech.

We also took the opportunity to relaunch two groundbreaking resources, the UK Testimony Portal and the 80 Objects/80Lives digital exhibition. We hope that both projects will help to address the climate of rising Jewish-hatred and diminishing numbers of living witnesses. See p.12 for more details.

We hope you find this issue interesting and would welcome 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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A neglected group (cont.)

Europe. And antisemitism is just as central, especially after the rise of Nazism in the 1930s. I am also mindful of a letter Peter Oppenheimer wrote to the *AJR Journal* in June 2020: "You need reminding of the *AJR's raison d'être*: to contribute to the perpetuation of Holocaust memory and the welfare of survivors."

But it is worth reflecting on Mr. Woodrow's letter. It is more than forty years since the Israeli academic Haim Genizi published his book, *American Apathy: The Plight of Christian Refugees from Nazism* which addressed the question of "non-Aryan Christians", Jews who had converted to Christianity, under Nazism, including Christian refugees. Professor Genizi addressed the neglect of these refugees in the growing literature about refugees from Nazi central Europe and curiously this has barely changed since he wrote about it in 1983, even though American organisations such as the American Committee for Christian Refugees (1934) and the Catholic Committee for Refugees (1936) were formed so soon after Hitler came to power.

More recently, researchers at the University of Aberystwyth University have shown that of the refugees from Nazi Germany between 1933-39 10%, were non-Jews. In addition, of course there were such famous non-Jewish refugees as Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Béla Bartók and the artist Piet Mondrian, the film director Jean Renoir and the French film actor Charles Boyer, who all came to America. Then there were those well-known non-Jewish refugees who came to Britain such as Joy Adamson (née Friederike Viktoria Gessner), the conservationist who wrote *Born Free*, the Hungarian art historian, Frederick Antal, and the Czech president Edvard Beneš. Other names included Carl Ebert and Fritz Busch, two of the founding figures of Glyndebourne, the psychologist Hans Eysenck, the physicist Otto Frisch, born Jewish but baptized in the 1920s, the German choreographer Kurt Jooss, the singer Richard Tauber, whose father was Jewish but converted to Catholicism as a young man and whose mother was Catholic and raised Richard as a Catholic, and many, many more.

But these were a small minority of the refugee philosophers, scientists,

businessmen and creative figures who came to Britain in the 1930s and 1940s. The vast majority of these were Jewish refugees. And they represented all kinds of different groups of people. This is a familiar story to readers of classic studies such as Anthony Grenville's *Jewish Refugees from Germany and Austria in Britain, 1933-1970* (2010) and *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (1991), edited by Werner E. Mosse, Julius Carlebach, Gerhard Hirschfeld, Aubrey Newman, Arnold Paucker and Peter Pulzer.

There were, as Grenville shows, 'the bulk of the refugees, the largely anonymous foot-soldiers, as it were, of the emigration from Central Europe.' These varied from Jewish servicemen and women, rabbis, children who travelled to Britain with the *Kindertransport*, shopkeepers who ran businesses like Ackerman's Chocolates on Goldhurst Terrace or bookshops like Breslauer & Meyer in Bloomsbury and Jews who founded cafés, delicatessens and restaurants like The Cosmo, The Dorice and Louis on the Finchley Road, schoolteachers, doctors, architects and lawyers, civil servants like Tom Burgner at the Treasury and Claus Moser at the Government Statistical Service and many, many more.

Second Chance includes chapters on publishers, lawyers, merchants and bankers, engineers and German Jews in British industry, as well as better-known names from the arts, physicists, specialists in German and Jewish studies. In his Preface, Anthony Grenville mentions a few of the more famous names: 'Sigmund and Anna Freud, Paul Hamlyn and George Weidenfeld, Lucian Freud and Frank Auerbach, Richard Tauber and Max Rostal, Elias Canetti and Arthur Koestler, Ernst Gombrich and Nikolaus Pevsner, Karl Popper and Norbert Elias, Ernst Chain, Hans Krebs and Max Perutz, or Emeric Pressburger, Anton Walbrook and Lilli Palmer.' Nearly all of these were Jewish.

I am grateful to Cameron Woodrow for reminding us that not all European refugees from Nazism were Jewish. But I hope he won't mind if I point out that the vast majority were. They fled from Nazism, but also from Italian fascism, Vichy France, and antisemitic dictatorships in Hungary and Poland. I should also add that I am grateful to Mr.

Woodrow for reminding us that not all refugees who came to Britain, Jewish or non-Jewish, were German or Austrian. Many, like his mother, came from Czechoslovakia or from further east, from Hungary, Poland or the Baltic Republics.

The story of the migration from central and eastern Europe is not just a German one. Prague, Budapest and Warsaw were also great creative centres. The distinguished Tudor historian G.R. Elton and the philosopher and sociologist Ernest Gellner were educated in Prague. Karel Reisz, Rabbi Hugo Gryn and Tom Stoppard were all born in pre-war Czechoslovakia. And we shouldn't forget Riga (Isaiah Berlin), Cracow (Malinowski and Isaac Deutscher), and Warsaw (Sir Joseph Rotblat and Dame Marie Rambert); Lvov (Jacob Bronowski) and Galicia (Sir Lewis Namier), Bulgaria (Elias Canetti) and Montenegro (John Plamenatz).

This isn't just about names and lists. We need to recognise the creativity of central and eastern Europe. We should follow Norman Davies's example, in his history of Europe, and make connections between the two halves of Europe, not cut them off.

There are two lessons which emerge from this. First, we should remember the enormous impact of Jewish refugees on mid – and late-20th century Britain. And second, we shouldn't forget the refugees who weren't Jewish and did not come from Hitler's Germany or occupied Austria.

David Herman



TRIP TO YORK

**SUNDAY 27 APRIL
TO THURSDAY 1 MAY 2025**



An array of outings and the chance to spend time with friends old and new.



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DOUBLE HONOURS



Eleanor Angel



Frank Harding with one of the now many AJR blue plaques that he has helped to install

The AJR is delighted that Eleanor Angel and Frank Harding were both awarded an MBE in recognition of their roles as 'Trustees of the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) and for services to Holocaust memorialisation' in the 2025 New Year Honours List.

Eleanor and Frank both retired from their Trusteeships in December 2024, after many years of service. Eleanor has long championed the welfare of our remarkable community as well as the selfless volunteers who help the AJR to deliver our mission. Frank's legacy includes the AJR's wonderful plaque scheme which narrates the stories and contributions of the refugees in perpetuity.

Leading the tributes to their awards, AJR Life President Andrew Kaufman MBE said, "Eleanor and Frank's strong family connections and their outstanding contributions to our venerable association

are widely admired and appreciated and have enabled us to provide our critical and bespoke services to our members. With their support the AJR has grown to become a truly national organisation representing and supporting Holocaust refugees and survivors and their families. Thank you for everything and Mazaltov!"

Eleanor said, "I was stunned and blown away to receive an MBE. The AJR has been a big part of my life and I am so proud to have been involved in the support it has provided over many decades and of the life-changing help it continues to deliver to so many refugees and survivors. It has been the privilege of my life to

follow my dear parents who were immersed in the work of the AJR, in particular my late father, Theo Marx, who served as Chairman. I wish the AJR many more years of continued success."

Frank said, "It is a great honour to receive this award, and I am so grateful to the AJR for nominating me. The culture, heritage and contributions of the refugees have always fascinated me, and I am delighted to have played a role in supporting and recognising them. My late parents, who came as refugees from Germany in the 1930s, would be so proud. May the AJR go from strength to strength."



The mission of the US-based Holocaust Reunion Project is to harness the power of commercial DNA testing, combined with expert genealogical research, both to reunite Holocaust survivors and their children with living relatives and to illuminate the family history that has been lost to genocide.

The Holocaust devastated the Jewish community in countless lamentable ways. But its deepest cut was the literal rending of families: the loss of millions of irreplaceable parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins.

Genealogical research and, specifically, commercial DNA testing can unlock mysteries and make crucial connections, often linking survivors to living relatives they did not know they had. DNA matches can also help descendants reconstruct their shattered family trees and reclaim their lost history, often reconnecting lines of communication severed by the Holocaust.

If you are a Holocaust survivor or child of a survivor, you can apply for your free DNA kit at <https://holocaustreunions.org/dna-test>

You can also join the AJR online on **Thursday 13 February at 7pm** (the link is below and will also be in the weekly newsletter) to hear from the founders of the Holocaust Reunion Project, Dr Adina Newman and Jennifer Mendelsohn, who will be joining us from the US. We'll also be joined by AJR member, Jackie Young, a child survivor of Theresienstadt for whom The Holocaust Reunion Project solved the 80-year mystery surrounding the identity of his father as well as locating living relatives he never knew he had.

<https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84167382325>
Meeting ID: 841 6738 2325

Story Collecting

The AJR has recently introduced a new project, 'Story Collectors', to prove the huge value that our volunteers bring to our members.

Each year over 350 people kindly give up some of their free time to help AJR members. Drawn from all backgrounds and age groups, the AJR volunteers are a wonderful bunch of people whom we couldn't do without.

Volunteers help our members in many different ways. Sometimes it's providing members with someone to play cards or board games, while other members like to go out for a walk or receive help with their tablet or

computer, or perhaps need help sorting out old photos. Some people just want someone to chat to.

Our volunteers are very carefully recruited and closely supported in their roles. Someone from our Volunteers Co-ordinators team accompanies every volunteer on their first visit to a client and conducts a telephone debrief after the second visit. Thereafter we touch base at least every six weeks.

We are keen to evaluate our volunteer services fully, and to demonstrate the difference that having a visit or a phone call can make to our members. Although we know exactly how many volunteering minutes are undertaken (4,442 in the last quarter by our Volunteers South team alone, for example) it does not illustrate

the real value to our clients.

For example, one member recently told us: *'I just love that G wants to share his company with me. I don't have much of a life these days, but I really enjoy listening to what's going on in his world. I look forward to his visits – it really brightens up my week.'*

We are now actively calling members to ask them to tell us, in their own words, how they benefit from having a volunteer. And we are also going to be asking our volunteers how volunteering enhances their own lives.

If you already benefit from, or give your time to, AJR's volunteer services and have a story to tell please get in touch with volteam@ajr.org.uk.

MEET ALICE

AJR wishes a very hearty mazeltov to our member Alice Hubbers, who this month celebrates her 100th birthday.

Alice left Vienna on a Kindertransport when she was 14 years old. Her father was at that time in Dachau and then Buchenwald and did not know that his wife had arranged for their daughter to leave for the UK.

Alice travelled with a friend whose father was a printer and helped obtain the necessary documents. Upon arrival in the UK Alice initially stayed in the Dovercourt camp before being hosted by a number of different families in Lincoln, Scotland, Torquay and then London.

She has fond memories of working at Selfridges, as well as other retailers. She met her husband at a party in Maidenhead and they went on to have two sons and one daughter, who between them have given her



Alice Hubbers with Danny Kalman and Michael Newman

four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Alice's parents also managed to get out of Austria, escaping to Shanghai. They returned to Austria in 1946 and Alice was reunited with them in 1947.

Alice, who has lived in Stanmore since 2005, has been an AJR member for many years. She told us that her precious possession during the Covid pandemic was her iPad, as it allowed her to join in with the AJR's many online events.

Alice is in possession of a stack of contemporaneous letters from her family during the war that is currently being turned into an archive.



PRIVATE GUIDED TOUR

FREEMASONS' HALL

COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
WEDNESDAY 26 MARCH 2024



Have you ever strolled through Covent Garden, pondering what mysteries await within the doors of Freemasons' Hall, the renowned Grade II listed art deco masterpiece?

Join the AJR for a private guided tour that will delve into the intriguing history of Freemasonry, from its inception with the founding of the first Grand Lodge in 1717 to its flourishing journey across the globe throughout the centuries. Prepare to be enthralled as you unravel the fascinating story of this 300-year-old institution.

Cost: £12 per person



karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON'S LETTER FROM ISRAEL



CARRYING ON



In my 'Letters from Israel' I have always tried to present that very-much neglected side of reporting on

Israel, daily life. Yes, there has been a war going on, and every day we swallow the bitter pill of news about another soldier who has fallen in battle and watch on the nightly TV news the heart-wrenching funerals and eulogies for these brave young men.

But normal life does go on. The sun shines and people go about their daily business. Some nights people in Tel Aviv and central Israel are woken by sirens and go to safe rooms or shelters due to missile attacks from Yemen. Here in the Jerusalem area we have been less affected.

Israel's existence today is the main reason that Jews are not shunted from pillar to post, as they have been in the past. Yet some Jewish people around the world – who, unlike me, have decided not to throw in their lot with Israel and remain instead in the comfort of the diaspora – are all too easily influenced by the biased foreign media, even publicly criticising Israel for its actions.

The footage from Gaza is not pleasant to watch, of course, but whatever is happening there is the result of Hamas' attack on Israel and its avowed intention to do the same again if given the chance. People here are more affected by the fate of our hostages, and the cruel conditions in which they are being held. The recent return of three young women from captivity made our hearts soar. But my focus in this column on daily life here is not to be taken as any kind of support for the current government, whose downfall is the aspiration of many Israelis.

Within this context, I am glad to share the following account of the reunion of a scattered refugee family, and the belated recognition of an exiled artist.

When my parents immigrated to Israel in 1983, my mother was at last reunited with many relatives. Several members of the Hirsch clan (my mother's maiden name) had moved to Israel from Germany, to work in agriculture or other spheres. What had once been a close-knit group of relatives did their best to remain in contact.

That generation is no longer with us, but we children of those cousins have endeavoured to stay in touch, whether by physical visits or via our 'Cousins' WhatsApp group, through which we all share significant life events.

One of my mother's cousins was Joseph Hirsch, a widely-respected artist and teacher at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, who died in 1997. Known as 'Boujik' in the family, his talent was evident at an early age and he was able to study art, first in Germany and later at the newly established Bezalel Art Academy in Mandate-controlled Israel.

Occasions for gatherings of the cousins are few and far between these days, so it was with great delight that we learned, via

our WhatsApp group, that an exhibition devoted to the work of Joseph Hirsch would be held at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and that a reception for friends and relations would follow its opening.

The exhibition was curated jointly by the Museum's Ronit Sorek and Avishay Ayal, one of our cousins who is himself an accomplished artist and Professor of Art at Haifa University. The exhibition displays some 25 of Hirsch's works in pen and wash (he worked using only shades of grey), presenting his unique and insightful way of seeing the world. It is difficult to categorise his work, which seems to lie on the cusp between surrealism and German expressionism.

Eventually we proceeded to the intimate Hagit Gallery in the wing of the Museum devoted to Israeli art. The exhibition opening was an opportunity to view his pictures and hear tributes from Hirsch's former students and colleagues, as well as catch up on wider family news. Altogether, we feel fortunate to belong to a family containing such talented members.

REMEMBERING AUSCHWITZ

Mindu Hornick MBE, who miraculously survived Auschwitz, was the rightful star of the AJR's annual Holocaust Memorial Day service last month at Belsize Square Synagogue.

Mindu was 14 when she arrived in a

cattle truck at Auschwitz. Her brothers and mother perished on arrival. After eight months of forced labour she was liberated, and eventually settled in Birmingham. Her powerful testimony reflects one of the darkest chapters of humanity.

© ADAM SOLLER PHOTOGRAPHY/GBR/JIC



"I remember looking back. I couldn't see my brothers because of the crowds, but I caught sight of my mother. She was wearing a spotted scarf. I was able to wave to her and she waved back. That was the last time we saw her. When we went through that main gate we entered hell. There were watchtowers and machine guns pointed at us, and all along the side there were skeletons just covered in skin on trollies, and men in their striped clothing, walking around dragging these trollies, and others just walking around aimlessly. And there was a terrible smell, and a grey ash falling. We didn't know what it was, but it felt greasy. What we saw was just unbelievable. It was the vision of hell."

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.

STANISLAW BRUNSTEIN

The October 2024 issue of the *AJR Journal* was good and Denise Fluskey's article on Stanislaw Brunstein was particularly timely for me. I recently asked for a new specialist AJR 2G group to be formed. The news of the Oaks Lane synagogue's exhibition was a must-see event. I got to have a half day holiday break in Newbury Park due to serious flooding on the journey down the A12.

However, the rewards of that difficult journey were immense for me. I met a new 2G acquaintance and other 2G's. Denise kindly and openly chatted there.

I had a brilliant tour of the artist's captivating works and lunch at the nearby carvery was very welcome at break time.

I learned a great deal and gained feelings of reassurance and comfort there despite our different family holocaust histories and stories. My father Abraham only shared the best memories of family life in the Hasidic shtetl in Transylvania. That quaint community life is non-existent, replaced and now hosting royalty.

Stanislaw has preserved great stories and evidence of what was killed off along with half a million innocent Jews, utterly demolished. His work should merit historic memorabilia; as an accomplished artist I respectfully suggest he be elevated among the greatest.
Joan Pollack, Harrow

A LOVE OF ART

I was fascinated to read David Herman's article in volume 24 of your magazine, discussing his father's art and how he switched subject matter from Jewish themes to those concerning the Welsh miners.

A few pages on I read Steven Dorner's letter about AJR members whose homes may contain artworks by Jewish refugees. I grew up with a love of art

imbued in me by my refugee parents, Josef and Ruth Meller. Their German and Austrian friends included a number of artists (a notable one being the Viennese painter and sculptor Ernst Eisenmeyer). My sisters and I inherited works by Eisenmeyer and other painters. I particularly love a moody sunset over the Thames by a woman named Dody Strasser (if I'm reading the signature correctly), which a friend of my mother told me was very special. Others are, sadly, unsigned and I know nothing about them.

Steven Dorner suggests an exhibition of such AJR members' artworks. I'd be interested in exploring this idea, especially if more knowledgeable people than I could shed light on a couple of the pieces now hanging on the walls of my Cambridge home.
Rachel E Meller, Cambridge

JUSTICE AND RESPECT FOR ALL

I was moved by Dorothea Shefer-Vanson's description in your December issue of how Israeli society is supporting its wounded soldiers through medical, emotional and heartwarming engagement from people like her granddaughter. However, I can't help but think of the contrast with what faces the wounded and bereaved people in Gaza. They have lost innumerable family and loved ones as well as their homes (literally), their hospitals, their schools and so much more. The BBC has reported that almost 70% of Gaza war dead verified by UN are women and children.

If sense is to prevail, as Dorothea Shefer-Vanson rightly implores, we in the diaspora have to help Israel understand that such cruel, inhuman destruction of a people is in no-one's interest: obviously not the Palestinians', certainly not Israel's, which will one day be called to explain its actions in courts of international law, and not the Jewish diaspora's which is being pulled apart between its historic bonds with Israel and its rightful commitment to justice

and respect for all humans.
Ruth Goodwin, Strasbourg, France

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Finkelfeffer? Pah! Forget the Finkel. I was born Pfeffer. Where's the "P" before the second "F" in Finkelfeffer? I know. The Brits can't pronounce "Pf" as in Pfeffer. I changed my name in 1961. At school I was Pfeffer, at Oxford I was Pfeffer, our first baby was born Pfeffer. However, we got fed up spelling out P Peter, F Freddie, E Edward, Double F Freddie, E Edward, R Robert. And, on top of all that, my wife has a strange first name too – Davida. Her parents had wanted a boy! I nearly changed back. *The Times* prints out the names of those who passed Solicitors Finals the day the results come out. The news comes out at midnight. My son Richard sat the exam. He'd passed but he's a pessimist. "*The Times* reads Richard Phillips, Rickmansworth", he noted. "There may be others called Richard Phillips even from Rickmansworth. If we'd stayed Pfeffer at least I would have been 100% certain it was me!" One daughter and two granddaughters have now taken Austrian nationality. They too wish I was still Pfeffer. "We keep being asked how many "Ls" there are in Phillips", they moan. You just can't please all the people all the time.

Also, as many of your readers know, Peter Pfeffer translates to Peter Pepper. How would you have liked to be known as "Peter Pepper who picked a pint of pickled peppers?"
Peter Phillips, Loudwater, Herts

I thoroughly enjoyed the article in the January edition. It reminded me of the occasion my late wife Barbara and I went to collect her real birth certificate (she was adopted at birth).

We went to the office in the Strand and on our way wondered what her birth name could be. We joked that it could have been something along the lines of Finkelfeffer.

LOOKING FOR?

It turns out, as we examined the certificate in the Strand, that her name was Strand!

After much research we met her father who was a GI and married her mother Ettie Rappaport who lived on Brick Lane. We remain close to his family in the USA.

Ronny Cohn, Winchester, Hants.

AS SERIOUS AS IT GETS

I refer to a letter in volume 25 from a Mr Lipmann entitled "lack of humility" and wish to express my personal view that I absolutely disagree with the way Mr Lipmann castigates the Israeli Government.

War is always a bloody mess with casualties, deaths and destruction of property and livelihoods. But Israel did not start the war with Hamas but HAD to respond in such a way as to deter Hamas from repeating another attack as took place on 7 October 2023. War is never proportionate, whatever that is supposed to mean. "You killed 1000 so all we can do is kill an equal number" is simplistic nonsense.

Your readers will be well aware that many world leaders and politicians with no actual experience in military matters have expressed similar views to Mr Lipmann but no-one, to the best of my knowledge, has ever put forward any suggestions as to what Israel could and should have done.

This war with Hamas is exceedingly complicated with any number of governments, international agencies (UN) and much of the international media simply believing everything Hamas says despite many governments describing them as terrorists. However, what is abundantly clear to me is that Israelis are fighting for their very lives on multiple fronts and if Israel does not prevail then all Jewish lives in the diaspora are at risk. It really is as serious as it gets.

Name and address withheld

CHARLOTTE & TOMMY LAWSON

Tom Goldman is based in Australia and would like AJR members' help with tracing some relatives believed to live in London.

Tom was born in Oxford on 19 March 1944 to Alfons (Alfred) Benjamin Goldman and Gertude (Trude) Goldman. His father had a brother named Irvine or Irwin Goldman, who in turn had a daughter named Charlotte (Lotte) Lawson, née Goldman. Charlotte's own son was called Tommy.
tom@goldmantravel.com.au

LISBETH KIRKPATRICK née SAMSON

Stephen Schmal hopes to find more information about a family member who came from Germany. Her maiden name was Elisabeth Samson but she often went by Lisbeth. She married her first husband, Heinrich Simon Gutmann, in Stuttgart in 1936 but he died just a few months later. In 1938 she married a British national named Kenneth Garrett Kirkpatrick in Munich, which enabled her to come to England. The last known record of her is from 1945 when, at the age of 33, she was living in Kidbroke Grove, London SE3.
schmals@verizon.net

CHARLOTTE HARTLEY

Anthony Lipmann is searching for Charlotte Hartley, daughter of Philip Hartley (solicitor). Philip was a dear friend from the 1940s of his great aunt Else Pollak (1897-1993) née Guttmann. After the death of her first husband Ernst Pollak in London in 1942 she married Dr Paul Schneeberger and took his name. Her address was 21 Neville Court, Abbey Road, London NW8. Philip travelled to Vienna in 1946 to assist Anthony's mother and grandmother (Evi & Lily Guttmann) to rejoin Else in the UK and remained a lifelong friend of Else. Anthony has a number of letters mentioning Philip's role and would like to pass these to Charlotte or her descendants and learn more about her father.
alipmann@hotmail.com

KINDER FROM DEUTSCHKREUTZ

Christian Neubauer is a historian who is currently researching Jewish children from Deutschkreutz who were transported to England around the turn of 1938/1939. From various Austrian archives he has discovered details of 28 children – see list below – and would like to know what happened to them after their arrival in England. Please contact Christian if you have any information.

c.neubauer@fotomolch.at

The names and dates of birth of the 28 Kinder from Deutschkreutz that Christian Neubauer is researching:

Bruckner, Alexander 2/22/1926
 Bruckner, David 9/4/1929
 Dux, Alfred/ Freddie 1/15/1927
 Dux, Heinrich 11/27/1929
 Dux, Natalie 2/5/1928
 Dux, Katharina 8/8/1924
 Fischer, Josef 12/16/1924
 Fischer, Johanna 12/28/1925
 Goldmann, Edmund 9/28/1923
 Goldmann, Friedrich 3/25/1925
 Goldmann, Rames / Renee 12/10/1927
 Goldmann, Friedrich 12/12/1924
 Goldmann, Sigmund 12/28/1923
 Grünwald, David 7/8/1926
 Grünwald, Leopold 10/24/1924
 Hacker, Johanna 12/3/1927
 Hacker, Melanie 4/22/1932
 Hacker, Paula 6/22/1930
 Kohn, Juli 12/6/1925
 Kohn, Jakob 9/21/1924
 Kohn, Leopold 12/6/1924
 Luria, Bernhard 6/8/1925
 Luria, David 3/24/1931
 Luria, Felix 11/9/1929
 Luria, Wilhelm 4/1/1925
 Moses, Pincas 4/25/1927
 Moses, Anselma 1/4/1930

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ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Medieval women. The phrase conjures up a sense of mystery, shadowy figures from a long-forgotten era. But think of Chaucer's flamboyant, much married Wife of Bath who called for women's sovereignty over men at a time when entrenched religious and cultural mores were beginning to change.



Pages from the 14th century Sisters Haggadah

And change they would, as a visit to the **British Library's** compelling exhibition, **Medieval Women in their own Words** will prove. Women like Joan of Arc, whose unique, signed letter to the citizens of Rion in 1492 requesting military aid, were visionaries, warriors and strategists, prophets, physicians, labourers, businesswomen, writers, musicians and artists. Joan led the French to triumph at the siege of Orleans. Shajar al-Durr was the first woman sultan of Egypt and Syria, and defeated a French crusader army. And the largest cache of medieval gold coins to be found in Britain is probably thanks to the efforts of Margaret of Anjou, who led the Lancastrian side in the Wars of the Roses for her husband, England's King Henry V1.

The British Library is keen to counter the dominating role of medieval men in curating this exhibition. It takes a swipe at conventional narratives by showing how women have contributed to society across the political, religious and creative landscape of their time.

Women used letters and petitions to advocate for freedom and equality. But they also wrote love letters, such as those of Abelard and Heloise. There is even the oldest surviving Valentine's Day letter in the English language, from Margery Brews to her fiancé, John Paston in February 1477. There are also examples of the scents and cosmetics women used.

An astonishing find is an illuminated Hebrew prayer book, the Sisters Haggadah, published in Italy in 1469 featuring illustrations of women

celebrating Passover. It was made for a woman named Maraviglia, who is shown performing seder rituals, normally, at the time, the sole preserve of the man. The book shows both a man and a woman raising the basket containing the seder meal. Jewish girls received equal education to Christian girls, including religious knowledge. Although Jewish girls were rarely taught Hebrew and Aramaic and Jewish rituals, they found ways to take part in Jewish religious life, particularly domestically.

Estellina Conat was the first recorded woman to print a book in Hebrew under her own name. *Behinat Olam Mantua* was published between 1476 and 1480. It is among many painstakingly illuminated books, in which the colours of crimson, gold and ochre leap off their miniscule pages, while projections of colourfully clad and cloaked women of the period float and change above you as you walk around, hearing their words gently drift down.

Their testimonies indicate the powerful contribution they have made to the medieval economy, culture, politics and religion. Many women found religion a source of strength either within the church or in society. A rectangular

painting of female saints, probably made for the church of the Dominican nuns of Dartford Priory, has survived the violence of the Dissolution of the Monasteries during the reign of Henry V111, with the saints' faces defaced.

However, the line between women finding spiritual strength for which they gained power and influence and facing charges of heresy was always a fine one.

Medieval women were keen embroiderers but few signed examples of their work have survived. You can see the only surviving piece of medieval English embroidery signed on the back by its creator. The inscription reads: Lady Joan of Beverly, a nun, made me."

There are certain rituals relating to grief which may strike us as odd today. Among them is a lengthy mortuary roll dedicated to Lucy, the first prioress of Castle Hedingham Priory, a Benedictine convent in Essex. It expresses the community's grief on her passing and was taken to over 122 religious houses in southern England, each adding a memorial message.

Medieval Women: In Their Own Words at the British Library until 2 March.

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MESSAGE FROM THE STARS

It's not often you get the chance to share a platform with Barbra Streisand, Barry Manilow and Arnold Schwarzenegger, but AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman had the virtual pleasure of recently doing just this.

The 8th International Holocaust Survivors Night took place in late December on the fifth night of Chanukah. Held annually, the virtual event is organised by the Claims Conference and broadcast around the world.

This year's theme was hope, focusing on how Holocaust survivors have inspired the world with their strength, resilience and hope – an inspiration the world

desperately needs. Holocaust survivors were asked to share what gave them hope during the Holocaust or what gives them hope today. Messages of hope were shared by survivors from more than a dozen countries, by dignitaries and government leaders, celebrities, as well as children and young adults.

The UK was well represented at the event. Alongside Michael's contribution, messages were broadcast from Lord Eric Pickles, Paul Anticoni of World Jewish Relief, the Umbrella Group Chairman Michael Hilsenrath, and AJR first generation member Heidi Argent who recalled how, having been rejected by all but one of her friends for being Jewish, a conversation with that childhood friend inspired her with hope during some of her darkest days, a sentiment she still carries with her today.

But the undoubted highlights of the event were the heartfelt messages recorded by over a dozen celebrities, including the aforementioned global superstars. There is not enough room here to do them all justice, but we thought you might like to read the transcript of Ms Streisand's words, who said "I want to send a special message to Holocaust survivors around the world. You, your life and your resilience are a beacon of hope to us all. We thank you for the inspiration and the example you have given us – an example that we desperately need in the world right now. I know these are very stressful times for all of us, please try to be strong."

You can watch a recording of the full event www.claimscon.org/survivorsnight2024/



UNCLE HANS IN EXILE

AJR member Evelyn Toynton is the author of three novels and a biography of Jackson Pollock. Her latest book, *They Were Good Germans Once*, is a memoir of her German-Jewish refugee family. This is an extract from an earlier essay about her uncle, which appears in a slightly different form in the book.

Physically, my father's elder brother was a perfect specimen of the old-fashioned patriarch. Larger, louder, fiercer than anybody else, he dominated every family gathering, his laughter as thunderous as his rage, and both somehow unmistakably German in cadence. To show up ten minutes late, to oppose the most minor of his dictates, was to witness what looked like the beginnings of apoplexy.

But he was hardly a patriarch in the grand moral sense. While others in the family devoted themselves to good works, he took no apparent interest in serious causes. At the age of fifty, claiming that his two brothers worked hard enough for three, he quit his job in a brokerage house to lead his idea of the good life, touring the Serengeti Plain and the Indian subcontinent and taking up residence in Europe every summer. When in New York he appeared to spend most of his time in restaurants, although he frequented museums also, and occasionally auction houses.

When I was seventeen, my uncle took my sister and me to Europe for a Grand Tour. On our last night in Paris we dined with an ex-colleague of my father who told us how he and his wife had been hidden during the War in a barn by Polish farmers. Their infant daughter was locked in a closet; her spine and legs never grew properly and she still needed crutches and a brace. It was the first time I had heard a story like that from someone who had actually lived it. Walking back to our hotel I said reproachfully to my uncle, "I don't see how you cannot hate the Germans."

He grabbed me without warning, shaking me ferociously and screaming that they hadn't known, they hadn't known, nobody had told them what was really going on; the Nazis were only the scum, the German people had hated them too, but what could they do, they had the guns; it was my precious English who had invented concentration camps ... offering up all the mad justifications for the Germans that the Germans themselves – though I did not know this at the time – were wont to give. The words poured out in a flood, as though they had been lying in wait for decades; as though, at three in the morning, when he could not sleep, these were the arguments he conjured up to ward off the horror. He seemed hardly to pause for breath, or to notice I was there.

Finally, abruptly, he released me and marched off in the direction of our hotel. But I had learned a certain measure of prudence. When we arrived, a few days later, in Nuremberg, where my father and uncle had been born, I pretended not to notice the scars on the cheek of the obsequious hotel clerk who greeted Hans by name.

My uncle took us to see the Gymnasium he and my father had attended, from which he had nearly been expelled for dangling his feet out a window; the narrow street where they had lived with their parents; their grandfather's incongruously lacy, French-looking villa, just inside the city's old wall, where my great-grandfather had entertained Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria. We went to the Albrecht Dürer Haus and the Biergartens, where the professionally jolly waiters laughed with Hans about our failure to drink up, and we gagged over headcheese and something concocted from pigs' bladders. We accompanied him to his tailor, and to the shop from which he always bought his old-fashioned shirts with the detachable collars. We made excursions to the opera house in Munich and to Neuschwanstein and Herrenchiemsee, the castles of the mad King Ludwig.

But never did we go to Dachau, from which my mother's father had carried his

dying brother in 1938, both of them so ill with typhus that the Nazis didn't want them there anymore; and from which my favourite cousin had rescued her husband in 1939 by bringing his medals from the 1914-18 war to a police station that was imperfectly Nazified and persuading the police to intervene. We were pretending that German history was all Schiller and Kaiser Wilhelm and Friedrich Barbarossa, that Nuremberg was simply a great medieval city, not the home of Der Stürmer, the site of those vast rallies in the thirties, a place that had given its name to certain infamous laws restricting the rights of Jews and half-Jews, quarter-Jews and Jews married to Gentiles in Hitler's Reich. The Tourist Authority of the Federated Republic, whose brochures so assiduously promoted the same impression, should have given us an award.

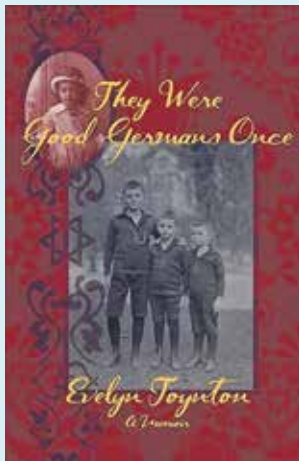
Yet the longer we stayed in Germany, embroidering our lie of omission, the gloomier my uncle became, sinking further and further into silence, until even I began to feel a little sorry for him. He would sit in a café, staring out over the square, and sigh heavily; he would gaze morosely down certain alleyways we passed, or at certain windows of old buildings, removing his glasses and rubbing the bridge of his nose like someone wiping away tears. Was he grieving for the victims of genocide or only the ordinary passing of a childhood world?

The rest of the family, too, had emigrated with their leather-bound volumes of Goethe and their prized recordings of Beethoven's string quartets, but none of them indulged in this shameful nostalgia for Germany. Perhaps they disapproved of it as I did, finding it undignified or worse: to them, it was a point of honour not to keep pining for a country that had spurned them. For that was what my uncle was like—a spurned and stricken lover, unable to believe that his beloved had turned on him with such viciousness, trying to cast the murderous facts in a more palatable light.

It is possible to imagine him – the eldest son of the eldest son, destined to inherit



Uncle Hans



Evelyn Toynton's family memoir is widely available



Uncle Hans took the girls to Albrecht Dürer Haus in Nuremberg but made no mention of the terrible laws made in that city

the Frenchified villa and the best Meissen and his father's decorations for bravery – feeling a special allegiance to the country his father had fought for. And it is possible to discern, in his lifelong fascination with the heroic past, some strain of romanticism that made him more susceptible to the Teutonic myths than any Jew should have been. Apart from that, it is difficult to see why he, of all the family, should have clung so desperately to the idea of Germany. They had all thought of themselves as Germans, after all, that being the only identity they'd been taught. None of them had been given religious training, celebrated Jewish holidays, attended a synagogue except for weddings and funerals – even weddings, as in my uncle's case, were often civil affairs, since many of the family married gentiles. They had prided themselves on their assimilation; Germanness had pervaded their lives; and suddenly permission was withdrawn, they were not allowed to be German any longer. Yet, of all of them, Hans was the one who wound up sitting in a crowded café in Nuremberg in a state of such palpable loneliness that he seemed to be surrounded by vast and desolate space. He was the one trying, in the city of his birth, to buy the friendship of waiters with extravagant tips.

Unlike my uncle, my father had never talked to us about Germany, never even told us stories about his childhood. Maybe he hadn't wanted to burden his American children with the weight of his history. He had been so fervently American in many ways, so busy with civic projects, so concerned with what lay ahead rather than behind, that

I had scarcely thought of him as an immigrant. But in the final weeks of his life, desperately ill with bone cancer and partly delirious, he, too, began returning to Germany, inquiring about trains to Stuttgart, imagining I was visiting him from Heidelberg, where their younger brother had gone to university. Once, it being winter, I arrived at the hospital in high leather boots, and pointing at them, he said faintly, "So wie die SS."

More and more, my father and uncle spoke together in German, whispering things I could not understand. Watching them, I felt an enormous loneliness, although whose it was I could not be sure – whether my own, at seeing my father die in a foreign language; or my father's, at the approach of death; or some distillation of how the two of them must have felt once, the old loneliness of being cast out from everything they had known.

On almost our last ride back from the hospital, at two in the morning, Hans said to me, "Do you know what I am? The Generation of the Desert. Do you know about them?" I didn't. "They are the ones who wandered in the desert for forty years but could not get to the Promised Land, the ones who kept saying to Moses, 'Why did you ever bring us out of Egypt? Things were so much better in Egypt.' Your father got to America, he made it to the Promised Land, but I never did."

It could be argued that my uncle did not deserve much sympathy, being one of those German Jews who were guilty, after all, of every sin of which their co-

religionists accused them: arrogance, snobbery, betrayal of their heritage, selling their birthright for a mess of second-rate mythologies and sentimental poems. What did they suppose they were doing, trying to out-German the Germans, distancing themselves so scornfully from the vulgar Ostjuden who actually had the poor taste to practice their religion? They should have seen that they were only parroting the antisemitism of their world, that their snobbery amounted to hating what they were.

It is easy to accuse them of cowardice, hypocrisy, monumental self-deception, but there were the Germans, offering them that dangerous choice – saying, in effect, "It's a terrible thing to be Jewish, but we won't make you be; we'll let you be German instead: enlightened, cultured, dignified, prosperous too. We'll give you this world instead of the other one." And then they stripped it away from them, leaving them with nothing at all. When I remember my uncle in Nuremberg, I seem to recognise the expression on his face, incomprehensible to me then. It was bewilderment at the vagaries of history, at what had been done to him, which was so much less than what was done to so many others, and yet enough to leave him marooned for life.

On 26 February Evelyn Toynton will give a Zoom talk on Jackson Pollock to AJR members and on 27 March she will give an in-person talk at Norwich Synagogue about her family memoir. See back page for more details. Evelyn's book *They Were Good Germans Once: A Memoir* is widely available.

EMBRACING NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN TESTIMONY

Dr Bea Lewkowicz, Director of *AJR Refugees Voices and Project Lead Holocaust Testimony UK*, introduces two new projects which bring Holocaust testimony to new audiences.

In recent years Holocaust educators worldwide have hotly debated the future usages of Holocaust testimony. These discussions involve looking at the potential benefits of social media and AI, as well as questions about the danger of these new technologies for Holocaust distortion and denial.

It is clear that for archives of Holocaust testimonies, such as our own *Refugee Voices* archive, new technologies can provide better access to the many hours of recordings, while social media platforms can increase the educational reach of the collected testimonies and radically expand our audiences.

The AJR has recently launched two innovative projects which exemplify how new technologies can help to 'activate' archives: the **Holocaust Testimony UK portal** and the digital exhibition **80 Objects/80 Lives**. The portal is a database driven website which provides easy access to entire, unedited interviews which have been recorded by different institutions in the last 45 years, offering a wonderful resource for researchers as well as family members of interviewees.

The 80 Objects/80 Lives exhibition focuses on the micro history of 80 different objects, each belonging to a different Holocaust survivor. It has been created using footage from recorded interviews with 80 different UK-based Holocaust survivors and refugees, 68 from our own *Refugee Voices* archive and 12 recorded for the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Each exhibit focuses on one particular object which has been treasured by its owner, with a video clip lasting from 30 seconds to two minutes. The language of

social media facilitates a close encounter with the story behind the object, allowing viewers to zoom in on the special meaning it holds for its owner.

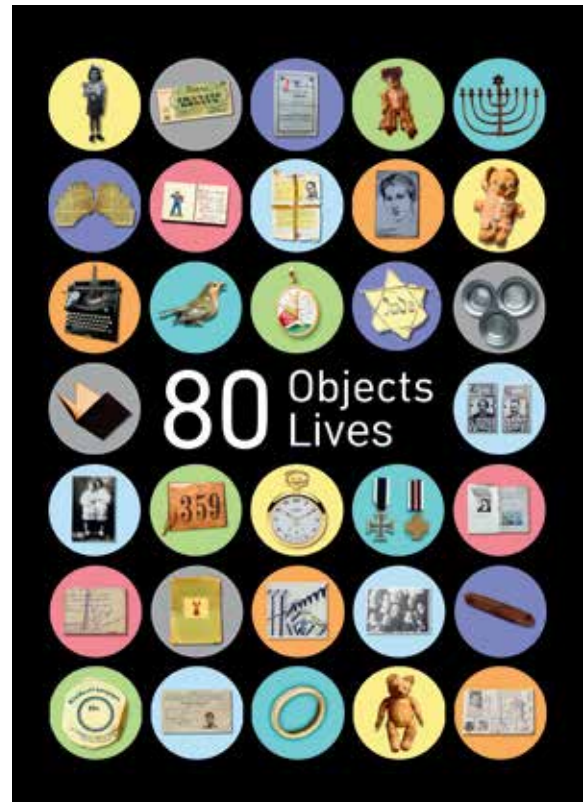
The objects include (among others) a Kiddush cup (Henry Wuga MBE), a spoon (Peter Summerfield BEM), a grinder (Susan Pollock MBE), a doll (Gerta Regensburger), teddy bears (John Hajdu MBE and Eve Willman MBE), a Kindertransport visa (Kurt Marx BEM), a ring (Ruth Sands), a watch (Michael Heppner), and a false birth certificate (Gertrud Friedmann).

Some objects are remnants of a lost world, while others, such as a passport with the letter J, a yellow star (Laszlo Roman, Tom Keve, Fanni Bogdanow), a bowl from Bergen-Belsen (Zahava Kohn MBE), a powder box from Lodz ghetto (Helen Aronson BEM), act as material witnesses of atrocities and persecution.

These 80 items – be they artefacts, photographs, documents or household items – create a tangible link to the lives of each testimony giver; to the 'before' of a disrupted past and the traumatic experience of discrimination, exclusion, persecution, emigration, and survival. The objects are the carriers of memory, helping the interviewees to feel better connected with their lost family members, communities and other possessions, as well as with specific moments in their own life journeys.

The chosen objects are presented in eight sections, according to broader themes:

1. Objects from Before.
2. Autograph Albums
3. Objects of Persecution
4. Objects of Emigration
5. Objects of New Lives
6. Camps and Ghetto Objects
7. Protection and Refuge Objects
8. Liberation and Post-War Objects.



Interviewee Peter Summerfield BEM, who escaped to the UK on one of the last trains from Berlin in 1939, and who is featured with his spoon in the section on 'Objects from Before', tells us why the spoon is important to him:

'The spoon was hidden in the hand luggage and that's why it survived. When we reached England we just had our hand luggage and nothing else. It has sentimental value for me. It is just a spoon but it has a lot of meaning attached to it'.

As Sara Bloomfield, Director of the United States Holocaust Museum, commented: "Each artefact is a witness [...], a testament to lives interrupted, and a call to remember."

The aim of 80 Objects/80 Lives is to make the history of the Holocaust more relatable by focusing on everyday objects using the language and imagery of social media. We hope that it will be further developed into a teaching resource for schools.

You can see the full exhibition here: <https://www.holocausttestimony.org.uk/80-objects>

If you would like to tell us about your treasured object, please write to the *AJR Journal*.

Dr Bea Lewkowicz

TWO TIMES 105

The AJR was delighted to have been able to recently wish a very happy 105th birthday to not just one but TWO of our members.

ANNE CALLENDER, who joined the AJR just three years ago, becoming our oldest-ever 'new' member, was born in Berlin. In 1939 she came to England on a domestic visa and, with just enough English to get by, spent her wartime firstly as an au pair and then domestic servant in Cambridge. With half a day off a week and one Sunday a month, it was a pretty miserable time.

However, Anne was a very determined young woman and rented a room while working various different jobs such as in an antiques shop, in a dressmakers, and looking after children. It was while she was working in a library, translating the Gideon Bible, that she met her future husband, who was an officer in the RAF. Together they settled down and had two sons. She now has four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Anne lives a very independent life in north west London, playing bridge regularly and seeing family and friends whenever they can pop over from all different parts of south east England. She describes her only vices as liking a small tippie of Tia Maria when she can, and watching too much TV.

LORE LUCAS moved to London in 1936 and saw her late mother and sister for the last time just one hour before the sirens sounded, marking the start of WW2. On the same day she met her future husband, Reinhold, whilst she was filling sandbags, along with other refugees, as part of the new war effort. She had wanted to be a doctor, but due to the war could not, and she trained to be a nurse in Geneva.

Lore moved to Glasgow where she got married in 1946, thereafter helping her husband in his business, and raising their son. A big sadness to her is that



The AJR's Niki Goorney visited Lore Lucas at her care home to deliver her 105th birthday gift

her husband died in 1979, before their son's wedding, never meeting their daughter in law or granddaughter.

Lore always enjoyed helping others, especially fellow Holocaust refugees. After she was widowed she resumed her work in the care sector, looking after new born babies and the elderly. She joined up with the WRVS and assisted them till well into her nineties, driving her personalised number plated car every week to the Southern General Hospital, where she helped with the teas and coffees. On her 90th birthday, she was invited by the late Queen to attend a garden party in Holyrood House. In the same year, James Murphy, her MP in Glasgow, invited her to tea in the House of Commons.

Lore is known for having beautiful fingernails and still has a manicure once a week. She was, until very recently, highly computer literate and sent emails all around the globe. When she first moved into her care home in Watford she was frustrated at the poor Wi-Fi and complained to the provider, BT, telling them that just because she was 99 (as she was at the time) there was no excuse for her not to have a proper connection. BT spun into action and soon afterwards, she was connected. Lore actually became the star of the BT AGM that year: they featured her in a film shown to



AJR's gift to Anne Callender

shareholders and staff, emphasising the importance of customer service.

Lore's 105th birthday was celebrated with a tea party attended by family, friends, her Rabbi and HM Lord Lieutenant for Hertfordshire. Like Anne, she also received a visit and a gift from the AJR to mark this very special milestone in what has clearly been a very rewarding life.



REPORTING HISTORY AT NUREMBERG

Soon the media will start commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals, which began in November 1945. The German writer and literary agent Uwe Neumahr has written a gripping new account, told through the stories of the many great writers who came to witness the trials.

Neumahr's book, *The Writers Castle*, starts as the trials of Nazi war criminals begin, with some of the world's most famous writers and reporters gathered in the ruined German city. Cramped together in the press camp at Schloss Faber-Castell, where reporters sleep ten to a room, complain about the food and argue in the lively bar, they each try to find words for the unprecedented events they are witnessing. Here, tensions simmer between Soviet and Western journalists, unlikely affairs begin, stories are falsified and fabricated – and each reporter is forever changed by what they experience.

Neumahr builds an engrossing group portrait of the literary luminaries at Nuremberg, allowing his readers to observe history at the very moment it was being written. Some of his focus is on the Holocaust refugees who attended as journalists or worked as interpreters and translators. Among them was Willy Brandt who, with his Norwegian passport, wrote for Scandinavian papers. The future West German chancellor fraternised with the future East German Stasi boss Markus Wolf, carrying a Soviet passport. Wolf would years later plant the spy Günter Guillaume in

Brandt's Bonn office, leading to Brandt's resignation.

Thomas Mann's daughter Erika Mann attended the trials with her partner Betty Knox, a former burlesque dancer from Kansas turned journalist. Mann was now an American citizen, sending her anonymous or unpublished dispatches to the London *Evening Standard*. Calling herself 'Mildred', she presented herself as an American journalist when interviewing Germans, as they were likely to speak more openly. Her brother Golo, also a U.S. citizen, was a radio commentator for a station in Frankfurt and went to Nuremberg several times.

Peter de Mendelssohn, by now a British citizen who had been working for Britain's information service, covered the trials for the *New Statesman* and the *Observer*. He complained to his wife and fellow writer Hilde Spiel about his unpleasant time in Nuremberg.

Robert Jungk, remembered for his book about atomic scientists *Brighter than a Thousand Suns*, had fled from Berlin in 1933; he reported on the court proceedings for the Swiss weekly *Weltwoche*. Robert Weltsch, who had emigrated to Palestine from Prague in 1938, covered the trials while he was London correspondent of the leading Israeli daily *Haaretz*. Alfred Döblin, author of *Alexanderplatz* and a French citizen since 1936, was not present, but nonetheless, under the name 'Hans Fiedeler', wrote a brochure about the trials that included fictitious quotes. And among the interpreters were Judith Kerr's mother Julia, and the artist and writer Wolfgang Hildesheimer; he had left Hamburg in 1934 for London and Palestine.

Well aware that the trials would attract worldwide interest, the Allies had to

find somewhere to house the many journalists. They found what became known as the 'press camp' in the nearby village of Stein, where they requisitioned a villa (reserved for married couples and women) and a nineteenth-century Schloss that had been the home of the Faber-Castell family; to this day they manufacture a wide range of stationery, including some two billion pencils a year.

Neumahr's lively and engrossing book tells us that the proceedings were covered by some 250 writers from many countries (c.100 US and 50 from the UK), plus photographers, filmmakers, as well as artists and cartoonists, including David Low.

Many of the writers are familiar names, including the American broadcaster Walter Cronkite; the novelist John Dos Passos; the Russian war correspondent Ilya Ehrenburg; Martha Gellhorn, the U.S. war correspondent who married Ernest Hemingway; Erich Kästner, author of *Emil and the Detectives*; Walter Lippmann, a renowned American political commentator at the time; and Rebecca West, who sent her dispatches to the *New Yorker* and the *Daily Telegraph* – and while there embarked on an unhappy-end affair with an American judge.

Neumahr notes that the Allies segregated not only the women, but also, at first, the handful of accredited German writers, censoring their work and banning them from the U.S. army's PX shop. Most writers attended the opening sessions in November 1945, but few sat through the protracted proceedings until the verdicts were pronounced in October 1946.

Martin Mauthner

IN HONOUR OF THE PROSECUTOR

Jack Fairweather's new book tells the story of how one extraordinarily brave man sought to bend the arc of history towards justice. Jack introduces it here.

Imagine a history of the twentieth century in which the Holocaust is only a footnote to WW2. Where the encyclopaedia entry for Auschwitz describes the flourishing chemical industry in the nearby town but omits the gas chambers. Where school textbooks describe Hitler as "gifted in a variety of ways" and claim that "no more than a hundred people knew about it."

This isn't an abstract thought experiment – it's West Germany in the years following Hitler's defeat, when the Holocaust was all but forgotten and the Allies sanctioned the return of millions of former Nazis to forge a new country to serve as a bulwark against Communism. It was time, in the words of West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in 1949, to "let bygones be bygones."

This is the world to which Fritz Bauer returned. He was a former district judge from Stuttgart, who, as a gay Jewish man and outspoken critic of Hitler, had been lucky to survive the Nazis.



Fritz Bauer

In 1949 he returned from exile with a radical idea that he knew would set him against his fellow Germans.

He'd watched the Allies impose their vision of justice on Germany, and he knew it hadn't gone far enough. Robert Jackson, the American chief prosecutor at Nuremberg, declared in 1945 that only Hitler and his inner circle should be considered responsible for the Nazis' crimes. Twenty-two men were convicted the following year, and a few thousand more in follow up trials and through denazification proceedings.

The Allies, whose attention was shifting to the Cold War, believed justice had been served. But Bauer knew that Hitler had enlisted the German people in a national effort to persecute, plunder and finally kill Europe's Jews. Eight and a half million Germans had joined the Nazi party. 250,000 had served in the SS that had operated death camps like Auschwitz. Hundreds of thousands had participated in the vast bureaucratic machinery of industrialised murder. And yet most of these people had simply slipped back into German society and resumed their lives as if nothing had happened.

Bauer's idea – incomplete and seemingly impossible – was to use the justice system to force a national reckoning. He wanted to prosecute Nazis in the courts to hold their crimes up to scrutiny, expose the roots of Nazism in German culture, and, if possible, expunge them.

What were the chances of Bauer ever achieving that?

Chancellor Adenauer's chief of staff and closest advisor, Hans Globke, had played a leading role implementing the Nuremberg Race Laws. He was hired for the express purpose of re-integrating former Nazis back into society and promulgating a narrative that the Germans were the real victims of the war. The CIA was backing a network of compromised officers and ex-SS men who they believed would help them battle the Soviet threat. What the CIA had inadvertently done was create an organisation of former Nazis with blood on their hands who were dedicated to drawing a veil of silence over the past. And in their



rush to rebuild the justice system, the Allies had stacked the courts with the Nazi-era judges who enforced Hitler's racial laws.

Even if Bauer succeeded in bringing cases to court, would his fellow Germans be prepared to listen to him, a Jew, a camp survivor, and – should it ever emerge – a gay man? Any one of those identities might incite his countrymen to ostracise him, or vilify him, or worse.

We often take for granted our knowledge of the Holocaust as it's commemorated each year, taught in schools and universities, told in books and film.

But to follow Bauer's journey is to realise a different future was possible; one in which the genocide of Europe's Jews is not seen as the defining event of WW2 or of our collective human history.

Bauer's relentless pursuit of Nazi war criminals like Adolf Eichmann and the extraordinary trials he staged helped to give survivors the platform to share their experiences. And by doing so, Bauer broke the silence surrounding the Holocaust. I hope his triumph can both inspire us and serve as a reminder that each generation must struggle with the meaning of the Holocaust.



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REVIEWS

TRACES OF MEMORY: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ELSE DORMITZER (1877 – 1958)

By Sandra Alferts

Academic Studies Press

Traces of Memory tells the story of a remarkable writer and activist who survived Theresienstadt and spent much of her life fighting antisemitism. She left behind a rich testimony of her life thanks to her ghetto diary and poems kept during her two-year incarceration.

Else Dormitzer grew up in a prosperous household in Nuremberg and in 1898 married Sigmund, a lawyer who soon had a distinguished practice and became a leading local citizen. They had two daughters, Elisabeth and Hildegard, enjoying a rich social life including giving multi-course dinner parties with lively conversation. Despite her domestic responsibilities Else increasingly turned to writing, producing at least 29 children's books, writing articles and lecturing round the country promoting Jewish life and women's rights.

But the city was soon affected by severe Jewish persecution with the rise of Nazism and life changed insidiously. Nuremberg had become Julius Streicher's centre of propaganda after the launch of his newspaper *Der Stürmer*, long before Hitler came to power in 1933. The couple's apartment was ransacked on Kristallnacht in November 1938 and Sigmund badly injured. Property was also confiscated forcing them to emigrate at the behest of family. They joined Hildegard in Hilversum, the Netherlands, recuperating after years of persecution and fear. Unfortunately before long Jews were forced to move to Amsterdam and at first the couple evaded deportations which began in July 1942. By next spring Else and Sigmund reluctantly agreed to go to Theresienstadt where a rosy picture was painted, otherwise "respectful treatment" would cease and they faced transport to Poland.

Once they arrived things deteriorated quickly and they discovered the camp's façade was a hoax. There were meagre rations, exhausting long work hours, dire and unhygienic living conditions plus fatalities. The gruelling census night of November 11, 1943 was never to be forgotten. Days later Sigmund died after a starvation diet and on a postcard Else alerted the outside world by signing herself as "Widow Else Dormitzer".

Else strived to make the most of camp life where amazingly she gave 275 talks on social cultural subjects. Despite an age exemption she worked in the post office, pushing carts of coal and peeling potatoes to avoid deportation. But by April 1944 she was hospitalised for 10 weeks with an illness caused by vermin. She underwent several operations and prolonged treatment although tragically almost all the care givers were sent to Auschwitz that October.

Indomitably Else continued writing about everyday life and compiled poetry which she shared publicly and was published immediately after the war in a small book entitled *Pictures from Theresienstadt*. The poems are translated from German by Cornelius Partsch aiming more for the exact meaning rather than retaining the original rhyming. Following liberation Else had arrived back in Hilversum after a very difficult journey to join Hildegard's family in July 1945, it would be intriguing to know how they had survived. By December she travelled to London to see Elisabeth, involving herself with Belsize Square Synagogue. The next April Else gave her first presentation *Life in Theresienstadt* after working on three German-language testimonial reports which form one of the most fascinating aspects of the book.

Janet Weston

THE MEMORY KEEPER

By Jackie Kohnstamm

Canongate Books

After the war, many of the great books about the Holocaust were by survivors or refugees whose families had fled from Nazi-occupied Europe, including books by Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel and Tadeusz Borowski. More recently, some very

different books started to appear: family memoirs published by the children of Holocaust survivors and refugees, trying to find out the hidden past of their parents or grandparents.

Jackie Kohnstamm's powerful family memoir begins in 2005. She is at her computer, looking up the district in Berlin where her grandparents, Mally and Max, used to live and reads that two *Stolpersteine* have been placed on the pavement outside their apartment block on Bleibtreustrasse, number 12. She goes to Berlin in search of the story of her grandparents. Who was killed, who survived and why did some members of her family leave it too late to get away?

Max Rychwalski (1864-1943) ran a business in Berlin and he and his wife Amalie (1878-1942), known to the family as Mally, lived in an apartment block off Ku'damm. They had three children: Ernst, Charlotte and Hilda (Jackie's mother). Jackie grew up in a world of secrets about the past, something familiar to many members of the Second Generation. She learned not to ask too many questions; now, after the deaths of both her parents, she at last has the chance to find out the twists and turns of the story of her family.

First, and perhaps most fascinating, she finds out that her uncle and aunt both left Germany in 1933, after Hitler came to power. Ernst escaped to the Netherlands and then moved to Palestine. Charlotte, the glamorous sister, escaped to Paris, and after two disastrous marriages, managed to survive the war. Hilda, the youngest, also managed to escape, to London. She had been working for a Jewish dentist in Berlin and when he left for England, he invited her to come with him and work in North London, where she married her future husband in 1945.

But at the heart of the book is the story of Max and Mally. As their children left, they stayed behind in Berlin, and as Jackie tracks down boxes and folders of letters between them and their children, scattered around Europe, she discovers the terrible fate of her grandparents and other members of

the family, some deported to Riga, others to Theresienstadt and Treblinka.

The grandparents were classic, assimilated middle-class German Jews. As Jackie's researches show, they just couldn't bring themselves to leave, much to their children's growing frustration, even anger. Jackie Kohnstamm tells the story beautifully. The story accelerates in 1938, as it becomes clear that Max and Mally are trapped and will never escape, and then comes the shocking *denouement* as they are deported to Theresienstadt.

The Memory Keeper is part detective story, part family tragedy, always compelling. It will resonate powerfully for so many readers of the *AJR Journal* and you will find it impossible to put it down.

David Herman

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– for all Kinder and their
descendants

KINDER LUNCH

THURSDAY 20 FEBRUARY AT 12PM

With special guest Dr Amy Williams, who has recently discovered the Kindertransport Lists. The lunch will be at a north London venue, full details to be advised on booking.

✉ susan@ajr.org.uk

AJR

AJ RAMBLERS CLUB



Our next walk will take place on:
MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025 at 11am

Meeting at a London DLR station

There is no charge to come for a ramble.

✉ karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

SPOTLIGHTING

GEORG EHRLICH

The Ben Uri Research Unit is recording the émigré contribution to British visual arts and culture since 1900. It has already published some 800 profiles, with hundreds more under research. Here we share their profile of the Sculptor, printmaker and painter Georg Ehrlich.

Georg Ehrlich was born into a Jewish family in Vienna on 22 February 1897. He studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts) before serving in the Austrian army during WW1. From 1919 he lived and exhibited in Munich and Berlin, returning to Vienna in 1923. In 1928 he completed his first sculpture commission, a monument to the blind organist Josef Labor, and over the next decade exhibited in over ten cities, including three times at the Venice Biennale. After the introduction of antisemitic legislation Ehrlich's work was confiscated from galleries in Mannheim and Nuremberg. In 1937, when his work was featured in the regime's *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition in Munich, he fled to England with his wife Bettina (née Bauer), a painter and illustrator. Bettina's sister, Mira, who was already in England, helped to organise their passage.

Ehrlich was awarded a Gold Medal at the Paris World's Fair in the same year and arrived in England with a considerable reputation as an expressionist printmaker and as an international prize-winning sculptor. In July 1938 his bronze *Italian Boy* (1935) featured in the Exhibition of 20th Century German Art at the New Burlington Galleries, staged as a riposte to the Degenerate Art show, where it was acquired by German émigré entrepreneur and art collector Erich Goeritz and presented to Tate in 1942. In 1939 Ehrlich held a solo

exhibition at the Matthiesen Gallery, the first of many London shows, prior to his internment between June and December 1940 in Hutchinson Camp on the Isle of Man. He participated in the camp's first art exhibition, showing sketches and photographs of his sculptures.

Back in London, Ehrlich became a member of the Free German League of Culture, which offered cultural support to anti-Nazi German refugees throughout the war, and the left-leaning Austrian Centre, serving as director of its fine arts section. He attracted patronage as a portrait sculptor, including a private commission from the then director of the National Gallery, Kenneth Clark, who later supported the Ehrlichs' applications for naturalisation in 1947. Ehrlich produced bronze portraits for other well-known personalities, including composer Benjamin Britten and tenor Peter Pears. He also exhibited with Ben Uri Gallery and produced a portrait sculpture of the young daughter of Ben Uri board member and collector J. E. Posnansky (later gallerist Gillian Raffles).

Ehrlich received numerous public commissions, including for the pietà *The Bombed Child* for the victims of air raids; the small, classical war memorial *Pax* in the Garden of Rest in Coventry; and the double-figure *Young Lovers* in Festival Gardens, London. His *Recumbent Boy* was included in the Festival of Britain in 1951. Ehrlich also became part of a new Hertfordshire council initiative in which architects were encouraged to work with muralists and sculptors.

According to *Observer* critic Neville Wallis in 1953, Ehrlich 'emerges perhaps second only to Epstein today in his compassion for suffering humanity'. Ehrlich exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy of Arts and was elected an Associate in 1962; he was also a member of The London Group. In



Georg Ehrlich's *Two Sisters*, bronze, 1945-46

1964 the Arts Council mounted an exhibition of his work, which included *Two Sisters* (1945-46), originally cast as a private memorial for his wife Bettina for her sister who died in 1944 (one version is in the Ben Uri Collection).

From 1962, Ehrlich lived in Austria, Germany, Italy and Switzerland, passing away in Lucerne on 1 July 1966. His work is represented in many UK collections, including the Ben Uri Collection, the British Museum, Leicester Museums & Galleries and the Tate.

OBITUARY

Martin LUBOWSKI

Born: 2 July 1931, Berlin

Died: 6 December 2024, London



Martin Lubowski was one of hundreds of children who were rescued from Nazi persecution in Germany thanks to the groundbreaking work of the Jewish educator Anna Essinger.

In 1933, due to the impending Nazi threat in her homeland, Essinger moved her school, complete with its 66 mostly Jewish pupils, to safety in England, re-establishing the institution in Otterden, Kent.

The new school was called New Herrlingen School, after the school left behind in Germany, but came to be known as Bunce Court. During the war Essinger also established a reception camp for some of the children who came to Britain on what became known as the Kindertransport, some of whom continued at the school.

After the war Bunce Court School welcomed child Holocaust survivors who returned from the camps. These children were the last pupils to join the school, which closed in 1948, by which time Essinger had taught and cared for over 900 children, most of whom called her 'Tante

Anna' or 'TA', regarding her as a loved aunt rather than their school teacher.

The Bunce Court School alumni were devoted to the school and organised reunions for 55 years after it closed. Speaking at one such reunion, Martin Lubowski said: "Tante Anna was wonderful but fierce! We all had to do manual work in the house and gardens as well as our academic work. I worked in the garden and Tante Anna gave me a book on flowers for my birthday. I thought it was for girls so I asked if she would change it for a dictionary, which she did. I can't believe I had the guts to ask her!"

Martin was just seven years old when he arrived during the war, together with his twin brother Gunther. Their parents, older sister and many members of their extended family were all murdered during the Holocaust. The two boys were eternally grateful to their parents for trusting Essinger to give their twin sons a safe and productive start in life.

The twins very much enjoyed their time at the school, which held a political evening every week but regarded religious education as just another curriculum subject. As a

consequence Martin and Gunther did not have a barmitzvah and, like many of the Bunce Court children, turned their backs on religion, though not their cultural affiliations. Martin became a fervent Zionist, spending several years on a kibbutz and in the Israeli army.

After seven years in Israel he returned to London. He met Yola Omnès, his partner of 50 years, at a concert at the Royal Festival Hall. Yola had come from France and the two of them set up home in Belsize Park. Gunther, who spent several years in Canada after the war, lived close by until his death 13 years ago at the age of 80.

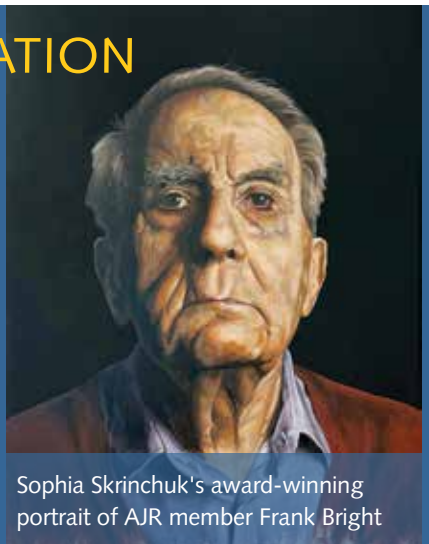
In June 2018 the AJR unveiled a special commemorative plaque at Bunce Court in honour of Anna Essinger. Martin was among a number of old 'Bunce Courtians' who attended the event, telling us that "I feel I am walking on holy ground whenever I visit Bunce Court."

Martin is greatly missed by his partner, Yola, his relatives overseas and his many personal and professional friends.

Jo Briggs

IN FRANK APPRECIATION

The AJR has learned recently that this compelling portrait of the late AJR member Frank Bright was the national winner in the 2023/24 Arts Society A Level Art Competition. The portrait was painted in acrylic by Sophia Skrinchuk, a former pupil at Northgate High School in Ipswich. Frank, who survived Auschwitz but lost both his parents in the Holocaust, regularly gave talks at Sophia's school and was awarded an MBE for his services to Holocaust education. Frank passed away in August 2023 but his legacy will remain for many years.



Sophia Skrinchuk's award-winning portrait of AJR member Frank Bright



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IN PERSON EVENTS

Please note to attend in person meetings you must contact the co-ordinator listed for exact times and venue.

DATE	TIME	GROUP	CO-ORDINATOR
Monday 3 February	Lunchtime	North London	Ros Hart
Monday 3 February	Afternoon	Leeds	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 4 February	Lunchtime	Manchester, with special guest Marc Cave from the National Holocaust Centre	Michal Mocton
Wednesday 5 February	Lunchtime	Muswell Hill	Ros Hart
Thursday 6 February	Afternoon	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Monday 10 February	Lunchtime	South Manchester	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 11 February	Lunchtime	Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs
Wednesday 12 February	Lunchtime	Edgware	Ros Hart
Sunday 16 February	Afternoon	Exhibition on Screen – Van Gogh: Poets and Lovers	Agnes Isaacs
Monday 17 February	Afternoon	Hampstead, with special guest Judith Kasriel talking about Dmitri Shostakovich	Ros Hart
Wednesday 19 February	Lunchtime	Birmingham	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 19 February	Afternoon	South Herts/Radlett	Ros Hart
Thursday 20 February	Lunchtime	Kinder Lunch	Susan Harrod
Monday 24 February	Lunchtime	Brighton	Ros Hart
Monday 24 February	Morning	Central London	Karen Diamond
Tuesday 25 February	Lunchtime	Sheffield	Michal Mocton

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ZOOMS AHEAD

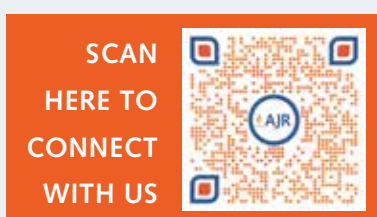
Details of all meetings and the links to join will appear in the e-newsletter each Monday.

Monday 3 February @ 3pm	Film: The Google Boys https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87656452892	Meeting ID: 876 5645 2892
Wednesday 5 February @ 4pm	A virtual tour of Willesden Jewish Cemetery https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85487855180	Meeting ID: 854 8785 5180
Monday 10 February @ 4pm	Edward Green, former Jeweller to Queen Elizabeth II, talking about modern auction houses https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86593577155	Meeting ID: 865 9357 7155
Tuesday 11 February @ 4pm	Noel Russell https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83633197688	Meeting ID: 836 3319 7688
Wednesday 12 February @ 4pm	Book Discussion (no speaker) – The Little Red Chairs by Edna O'Brien https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88623245876	Meeting ID: 886 2324 5876
Thursday 13 February @ 7pm	The Holocaust Reunion Project: DNA testing for Holocaust survivors & descendants https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84167382325	Meeting ID: 841 6738 2325
Monday 17 February @ 4pm	Quiz Time https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89260281911	Meeting ID: 892 6028 1911
Monday 24 February @ 4pm	Anna Levin, author of Dark Skies, a celebration of the starry sky and darkness https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82708851822	Meeting ID: 827 0885 1822
Wednesday 26 February @ 4pm	Evelyn Toynton – Jackson Pollock: The American Painter https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89875094635	Meeting ID: 898 7509 4635

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 Mon @ 10.30am	Get Fit where you Sit (seated yoga) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85246889439	Meeting ID: 8524 688 9439
Every Tues @ 11.00am	Shelley's Exercise class https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88466945622	Meeting ID: 884 6694 5622



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