



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

A charmed life?



Sir Tom Stoppard

Last November saw the sad loss of Sir Tom Stoppard, a Jewish child refugee who became one of the undisputed giants of post-war British playwrighting.

Born Tomáš Stráussler on 3 July 1937, he was an astonishingly prolific writer, best known for plays like *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), *Jumpers* (1972), and *Arcadia* (1993) as well as scripts for film and TV. He won numerous awards, including an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), three Laurence Olivier Awards, five Tony Awards, six Evening Standard Awards and more than a dozen Honorary Awards. He was knighted for his contribution to theatre in 1997 and awarded the Order of Merit in 2000.

Stoppard was part of an extraordinary generation of British playwrights who emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, including David Hare, David Edgar, Alan Bennett and Howard Brenton. But he stood out from the rest for several reasons. First, from the late 1970s, he became deeply involved with human-rights issues, in particular with the desperate plight of political dissidents in Central and Eastern Europe. Stoppard became involved with Index on Censorship, Amnesty International, and the Committee Against Psychiatric Abuse and spoke out about human rights. Above all, he addressed

Communist state repression in plays like *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour* (1977), *Rock 'n' Roll* (2006) and the TV dramas, *Professional Foul* (1977) and *Squaring the Circle* (1984).

Second, his plays are famous for their intellectual playfulness. He took two minor characters from *Hamlet* and put them centre-stage in his breakthrough play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966). Anthony Grenville wrote a fine tribute to the play for the *AJR Journal* in May 2017, comparing the play with Beckett's classic, *Waiting for Godot*.

Stoppard went on to write acclaimed plays about famous writers and thinkers from Herzen and Lenin to AE Housman and Tristan Tzara. Some of his best plays, like *Jumpers* (1972) and *Travesties* (1974), constantly move between comedy and farce on the one hand, and serious ideas on the other. *Hapgood* (1988), mixes espionage and quantum physics. Many of his plays were brought to life by extraordinary performances by Michael Hordern in *Jumpers*; Antony Sher and then later Tom

Continued on page 2

FASCINATING FEBRUARY

We continue the AJR Journal's 80th anniversary year with a range of articles focusing on the history of the Jewish refugee community.

On page 14, for example, we share a first hand account of a young Austrian boy being betrayed by his non-Jewish neighbour, a story that is both literally and metaphorically moving.

We also bring you news of a huge range of online and in-person events taking place over the coming weeks, including several that are being organised by the AJR's partner organisations.

Meanwhile thank you to everyone who has written to congratulate us on our 80th anniversary or who attended our recent celebration event at Belsize Square – see photo on page 4.

AJR News	3 & 4
Exhibitions & Events	5
Letters to the Editor	6 & 7
Art Notes	8
Spotlighting... Ernest Neuschul	9
The words spoken by pictures.....	10 & 11
Architects online	12
A memorial in Cheltenham	13
The Move.....	14 & 15
Reviews	16 & 17
Obituaries.....	18 & 19
AJR Events.....	20

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

- AJR Team**
 Chief Executive Michael Newman
 Finance Director Adam Daniels
- Heads of Department**
 Education & Heritage Alex Maws
 HR & Administration Karen Markham
 Marketing & Communications Gemma Blane
 Membership & Engagement Debra Barnes & Susan Harrod
- Social Services Nicole Valens
 Volunteer Services Fran Horwich
- AJR Journal**
 Editor Jo Briggs
 Contributing Editor David Herman

For enquiries contact: 020 8385 3070

A charmed life? (cont.)

Hollander and Freddie Fox in *Travesties*; Rufus Sewell, Bill Nighy and Harriet Walter in *Arcadia* and Gwyneth Paltrow giving the performance of her life in *Shakespeare in Love*.

Finally, and most importantly for readers of the *AJR Journal*, Stoppard was a Jewish child refugee. He was born Tomáš Stráussler in Czechoslovakia just before WW2, the son of Martha Becková and Eugen Stráussler, a doctor employed by the Bata shoe company. His parents were non-observant Jews. The family escaped from central Europe and managed to get to Singapore, where his father was later killed when his boat was sunk by the Japanese. Tomáš, his mother and brother had already escaped to British India.

In 1945, his mother married Kenneth Stoppard, a major in the British Army and Stoppard took his stepfather's surname. He settled with his family in England after the war, in 1946. Tomáš became Tom. He later wrote, "English was my only language. Suddenly I was an English schoolboy." In 2024 he wrote, "I was still Tommy Straussler, but English was my only language when Ken [Stoppard] gave me his name three weeks later, and long before he asked for it back Englishness had won and Czechoslovakia had lost."

But the situation was not so straightforward. Stoppard also spoke about being an outsider: "I fairly often find I'm with people who forget I don't quite belong in the world we're in. I find I put a foot wrong – it could be pronunciation, an arcane bit of English history – and suddenly I'm there naked, as someone with a pass, a press ticket." This is reflected in his characters, he said, who are "constantly being addressed by the wrong name, with jokes and false trails to do with the confusion of having two names."

There was another side to his foreignness. In the 1980s, in addition to writing his own works, Stoppard translated many plays into English, including works by Sławomir Mrożek, Johann Nestroy, Arthur Schnitzler, and Václav Havel. He became influenced by the works of Polish and Czech absurdist and then later wrote an acclaimed trilogy, *The Coast of Utopia* (2002), about thinkers in mid-19th century Russia, influenced by Isaiah Berlin's writings on Herzen, Belinsky and Turgenev. It's hard to imagine many other guests on *Desert Island Discs* selecting

Inferno in two languages by Dante as their chosen book.

Stoppard started out writing short radio plays in the early 1950s and wrote his first stage play in 1960 (it was shown on ITV in 1963). On 11 April 1967, following acclaim at the 1966 Edinburgh Festival, the opening of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* at the Old Vic made Stoppard an overnight success. Writing in the *Sunday Times*, Harold Hobson said it was the most important event in the British theatre since Pinter's *The Birthday Party*.

Other triumphs followed. *Jumpers* (1972) places a professor of moral philosophy in a murder mystery thriller alongside a group of radical gymnasts. *Travesties* (1974), one of his best plays, played with the fact that Lenin, James Joyce, and Tristan Tzara had all been in Zürich during the First World War. *The Real Thing* (1982) typically involved a play within a play. The Broadway production starring Jeremy Irons and Glenn Close won critical acclaim. In 1993, Stoppard wrote *Arcadia*, a play in which he explores the interaction between two modern academics and the residents of a Derbyshire country house in the early 19th century, including aristocrats, tutors and Lord Byron. The play addresses the philosophical implications of the second law of thermodynamics, Romantic literature, and English garden design. Vincent Canby of *The New York Times* praised "Mr. Stoppard's grandly eclectic obsessions and his singular gifts as a playwright".

Stoppard gained further acclaim with his script for the film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), starring Joseph Fiennes, Gwyneth Paltrow, Geoffrey Rush and Judi Dench. The film went on to win seven Academy Awards including Best Picture.

The nearest Stoppard came to writing about Jews was his last play, *Leopoldstadt* (2020), set in Jewish Vienna in the first half of the 20th century. Some mistakenly said it was a return to Stoppard's roots but Vienna, home to Wittgenstein, Freud and Stefan Zweig, was very different from 1930s Zlin, the small town in Moravia where Stoppard was born. In 1930 fewer than 300 hundred Jews lived there.

Thanks to AJR member Peter Phillips, whose family originated from Vienna (see his letter on page 6), a large number of his fellow 'Leopoldstadters' were invited to the Stoppard play's debut performance in

January 2020. The AJR helped to facilitate the attendance of these very special guests.

Stoppard's mother died in 1996. "She had no sense of racial identity and no religious beliefs," he wrote in 2024. "Of course there were Jews in Zlin, she said, but they were proper Jews who wore black hats and went to the synagogue and the rest of it, Jews who were Jewish."

The family had not talked about their history and neither Tom nor his brother Petr (later Anglicised to Peter) knew what had happened to the family left behind in Czechoslovakia. In the early 1990s, with the fall of communism, Stoppard found out that all four of his grandparents had been Jewish and had died in Terezin, Auschwitz, and other camps, along with three of his mother's sisters. In 1998, he returned to Zlin for the first time in over 50 years. He said he had no sense of being a survivor: "I feel incredibly lucky not to have had to survive or die. It's a conspicuous part of what might be termed a charmed life."

In an interview in *The New Yorker* in 2022 he was asked why he was reluctant to call himself a Jewish playwright. He replied, "I don't know what that phrase is supposed to mean. ... All my admirations are, as it were, English literature from whatever period, from whatever Anglophone culture; that's what I fell in love with. On occasion, I might be asked to sign something as a Jewish playwright, and I never wanted to do that. I thought: Well, actually, that's not how I feel about myself."

David Herman




TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2026

Please join us for a very special visit, diving into the dazzling world of Gianni Versace. This exhibition at London Bridge showcases over 450 rare and original vintage pieces, celebrating the iconic designer's fearless creativity in colour and fabrics

 roshart@ajr.org.uk

AN OBE FOR BEA

The AJR is delighted to announce that Dr. Bea Lewkowicz, Co-founder and Director of our Refugee Voices Testimony Archive, has been awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours, for Services to Holocaust Remembrance and Education.

Bea, who is an oral historian and social anthropologist, has played a leading role in recording, preserving and making accessible the voices of Holocaust refugees and survivors in the UK. Since co-founding the AJR Refugee Voices Archive in 2003, she has helped to record over 320 video testimonies from Holocaust survivors and refugees, including nearly 100 Kindertransport refugees, making it the largest UK collection of its kind.

Bea has personally conducted more than half of these interviews and has led the creation of testimony-based exhibitions, films and publications. She is also the Project Lead of the Holocaust Testimony UK Portal, a landmark national resource which was launched last year as a joint initiative between AJR and the UK Government, and which provides free access to over 2,500 Holocaust testimonies from UK collections.

Born in Munich to Holocaust survivor parents, Bea has dedicated her career to ensuring that survivor voices continue to inform education, research and public understanding at a time of rising Holocaust distortion and denial.

Announcing her award AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman said: "Bea's work has transformed the way Holocaust testimony is shared in the UK ensuring that the culture, heritage and traditions of the refugees and survivors are preserved and perpetuated. Her unwavering commitment to capturing the voices of AJR members and other survivors, and to education for future generations, makes this honour richly deserved."

Commenting on the award, Bea said: "I



Dr Bea Lewkowicz OBE

am humbled to have been included in the New Years Honours 2026. I am grateful to all the survivors and refugees who were able to share their stories, to my Refugee Voices team and all my colleagues at the AJR, who have supported my journey in collecting, preserving, and sharing testimony".

The New Year Honours List for 2026 recognises the achievements and service of several extraordinary people across the UK. The AJR extends its congratulations to the following people within our community whose names were included alongside that of Dr Bea Lewkowicz:

Stanley Fisher BEM – Services to Holocaust Remembrance

Mervyn Kersh BEM – Services to Holocaust Remembrance

Matt Lucas OBE – Services to drama

Neil Martin CBE – Services to young people, to interfaith relations and to Holocaust Remembrance

Lydia Tischler MBE – Services to Holocaust Remembrance and child psychology

Erno Abelsz BEM – Services to Holocaust Education and Remembrance

Michael Marx MBE – Services to Holocaust Remembrance and Education

Professor Ruth Lengua OBE – Services to Holocaust Education

Michael Mail MBE – Services to Heritage and to Charity

MAZELTOV MICHAEL

AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman is celebrating his own silver anniversary within the organisation.

Over the past quarter of a century, Michael's commitment, deep knowledge of everything Holocaust related, and exceptional leadership have helped shape not only the success of the charity, but also the culture and values that define AJR and who we are today.

Michael's dedication goes far beyond the day-to-day responsibilities of his role. He consistently leads us through times of change and challenges with his passion for excellence, and his practical insight has earned respect of colleagues in partner organisations, parliament, trustees and amongst the staff team.

We are incredibly grateful for his hard work, perseverance and the insight he brings to AJR every day. His amazing commitment sets a standard to which we all aspire, and on behalf of the entire AJR membership, we would like to thank him for a fantastic 25 years of leadership. We look forward to continuing our work together.



Michael Newman was awarded an OBE in HM The Queen's Birthday Honours list 2021, and was subsequently presented with his medal by HRH Prince William

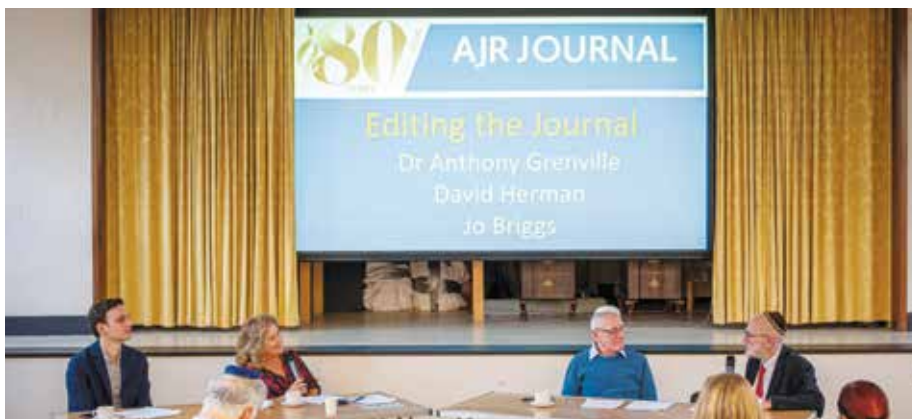


PHOTO ©ADAM SCULLER/PHOTODIARY

CELEBRATING OUR 80TH ANNIVERSARY

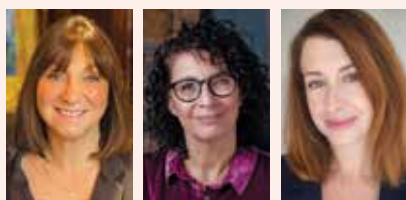
Last month we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the AJR Journal with a fun event at Belsize Square. We began with a discussion about some of the highlights and challenges of editing the Journal. This was followed by a presentation by 3G member and freelance journalist Etan Smallman (left) about the importance of the Journal to his entire family. We concluded the event by reading out just a handful of the thousands of letters received from you, our readers, over the past 80 years.

NEW HODS FOR AJR

We are delighted to announce a couple of updates in the structure of the AJR to help support our growth and achieve greater awareness of all our activities.

Susan Harrod and Debra Barnes have become joint Heads of our newly-created Membership and Engagement department, with Susan continuing to manage outreach and events and Debra overseeing all our work to recruit and support next generations.

We have created a new Marketing & Communications Department, headed up by Gemma Blane. Gemma has been tasked with delivering AJR's new brand strategy and further increasing our awareness. Her team will oversee the *AJR Journal*, e-newsletter, social media, the website and public relations.



From left: Susan Harrod, Debra Barnes and Gemma Blane

2G NEWS

FACILITATED ONLINE GROUP

Former AJR Trustee Gaby Glassman, a psychologist and psychotherapist, is starting a new group on Tuesday evenings commencing 24 February.

07811 353 423 or gaby@glassman.com

LANGUAGE RESEARCH

Nicola Keller would love fellow 2G AJR members to help with PhD research into the impact of language on decisions regarding family Holocaust documents.

Please visit <https://shorturl.at/XKFoT> or email KellerNC@cardiff.ac.uk



GROUP VISIT TO ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2026

Special ticket price of £21.60 includes a welcome talk by the Chaplain and access to all available areas.



roshart@ajr.org.uk

MEET AMY



Join the AJR's Dr Amy Williams and Michael Newman for a presentation about the Kindertransport and the children who came to Barnet on **Thursday 26 February** from 7pm-8.30pm at Finchley Church End Library.

Book your free ticket via <https://shorturl.at/jFgJs>



AN EVENING WITH RICHARD K. LOWY

TUESDAY 10 MARCH

Join us for a special evening at South Hampstead shul with Richard K. Lowy, producer of *Leo's Journey* and author of *Kalman & Leopold: Surviving Mengele's Auschwitz*.

The event will begin with a screening of *Leo's Journey: The Story of the Mengele Twins*, narrated by Christopher Plummer. The documentary recounts the Nazi's T4 Eugenics program and the eyewitness account of Leo Lowy, who survived Mengele's experiments. In 2001 the film premiered on Israeli TV, triggering one viewer's extraordinary realisation that reunited him with 'his Lipa' (Leo) – the sixteen-year-old boy who had protected him in Auschwitz, for who Kalman Bar-On had been searching for 56 years.

After the screening, Richard, Leo's son, will discuss this remarkable story in conversation with Rabbi Shlomo, followed by Q&A.



www.southhampstead.org/events/

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH ACROSS THE UK

The acclaimed international exhibition **Between Life and Death: Stories of Rescue during the Holocaust** has just begun a UK tour, bringing British audiences powerful personal stories of courage, solidarity, and moral choice during WW2.

The tour, which began last month in Southend, is presented by the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS), in collaboration with local partners at multiple locations.

Risking one's own life to save another is one of the most extraordinary acts of courage. *Between Life and Death* pays tribute to those who, during WW2 – despite the threat of imprisonment, deportation, or death – chose to help persecuted Jews. By bringing together the stories of rescuers and survivors from fifteen European countries, the exhibition highlights the complexity of human relationships under the extreme and varied circumstances of the war. Each story is placed within a broader historical context, enabling visitors to better understand the local conditions that shaped the possibilities for survival and assistance.

The British chapter of the exhibition features the stories of Eva Paddock and of Ida and Louise Cook. Eva Paddock (née Fleischmannová) from Czechoslovakia arrived in Great Britain at the

age of three on a transport organised by Sir Nicholas Winton. Ida and Louise Cook, opera enthusiasts from London, helped Jewish refugees in the years leading up to WW2. During their frequent trips to mainland Europe, they secretly transported the valuables of Jewish refugees across borders, giving them the means to begin new lives in the United Kingdom. They also assisted refugees in their first steps on British soil and drew attention to the plight of Jews, encouraging wider public sympathy and support. Much of their work was financed through the fees earned from Ida's novels, published under the pen name Mary Burchell. In recognition of their commitment, the Cook sisters were honoured as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1964.

Over the next few months *Between Life and Death* will travel to Worcester, Redditch, Loughborough, Salford, and Huddersfield, as well as to the Camden, Sutton, and Barnet boroughs in London.

Between Life and Death is a joint initiative of the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, and the Silent Heroes Memorial Centre in Berlin.

For more information see www.enrs.eu/between-life-and-death



INSIDERS OUTSIDERS EVENTS

Insiders/Outsiders, the ongoing project which celebrates the contributions of the 'Hitler émigrés' and their impact on subsequent generations, has a number of events coming up which might appeal to AJR members.



On **Monday 9 February** at **6pm**, to mark the publication of their book *Finding Ella Briggs: The Life*

and Work of an Unconventional Architect, Elana Shapira, Despina Stratigakos and Barbara Penner will introduce us to the life and work of talented Austrian-born Jewish architect, designer and writer **Ella Briggs** (1880-1977). Trained with the Viennese Secessionists, she brought their radical ideas to Gilded Age New York, designed modernist housing for the masses in Austria, was jailed as a suspected spy in Mussolini's Italy, and thrived in Weimar Germany before suffering persecution under the Nazis. Fleeing to London in 1936, Briggs contributed to England's postwar reconstruction. Yet her name is largely forgotten today. To find out more and to book, visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/insiders-outsiders/finding-ella-briggs-the-life-and-work-of-an-unconventional-architect/e-xpvepo.



On **Monday 16 February** at **6pm** Dr. Juliet Sychrava will give an intimate overview of the remarkable

German-Jewish **Cassirer family**, touching on its origins and focusing on some of its most influential members – among them, philosopher Ernst, neurologist Richard, art dealers and publishers Paul and Bruno. In particular, it will look at some of the paintings, photographs and other objects that were significant in the family's life, and what they reveal both about the Cassirers and their times. A personal view from a Cassirer descendant, the talk will draw on family memories as well as published and unpublished material to look back from England today to the family's heyday in early 20th century Germany. For further information and to book, visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/insiders-outsiders/the-cassirers-and-their-circles/e-zkxdpp.

Image: Ernst Cassirer and his granddaughter Irene



On **Wednesday 25 February** at **6pm**, to mark the imminent publication of the lavishly produced

volume, *The Art of the Book: 75 Years of Thames & Hudson*, its main author **Dr. Anna Nyburg** will give a talk about the history of the internationally famous London-based art publishing house founded by refugees from Nazism. In 1949 Walter and Eva Neurath founded Thames & Hudson with a clear aim: to create a 'museum without walls' through books that would make art and scholarship accessible to all. This volume – the most comprehensive history of an illustrated publisher ever undertaken – tells the history of a progressive, groundbreaking company that, 75 years later, remains true to those core founding ideals. To book, visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/insiders-outsiders/thames-hudson-or-danube-spree/e-xpvepo.

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. Please address any letters to editorial@ajr.org.uk.

SIR TOM STOPPARD

I was upset to learn of the recent passing of Sir Tom Stoppard and feel I must remind AJR members of his kindness to Viennese Holocaust survivors.

In 2019 I had just published my autobiography *From Leopoldstadt to Loudwater* when it was announced that Sir Tom was opening a new play in London – *Leopoldstadt*. What an extraordinary coincidence! So I decided I had to get tickets for my family as early in the play's run as possible.

The life of Viennese Jewry from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth might have been written for my folk. And Sir Tom wasn't even Austrian but a Czech! I immediately got in touch with the producers, Sonia Friedman Productions, told them my story and asked if I may buy group tickets as I wanted to take my whole family – 4 children, and their spouses, and 11 grandchildren. Sonia Freedman came back to me at once. I could have 20 tickets free, and she would like me to use them on the forthcoming Holocaust Memorial Day and invite other Viennese survivors as well.

But this was not all. She would also like to give us a party after the show where Sir Tom would be present as would the director, Patrick Marber, and most of the cast. This became one of the highlights of my life. Sir Tom and the others stayed on for a couple of hours, chatting to us, answering our questions, and showing us genuine hospitality.

Sir Tom was a wonderful man, the greatest



Peter Phillips with Sir Tom Stoppard (left) after the special preview performance of *Leopoldstadt*

playwright of our time. I thank him for giving me such a wonderful memory and I also thank Sonia Freedman for her generosity in making all this possible.

Peter Phillips, Loudwater

AJR Journal 80th ANNIVERSARY

What an achievement!

The formula of a successful and vibrant enterprise is uncomplicated. It is to understand their customers and consistently supply what they need, what they want, when and how they want it.

In January 1946, the vision of the founding editors clearly understood this and remarkably every one of their successors to this day have done so similarly. There are few enterprises that have achieved such longevity and fewer in such positive rude health.

Ben Uri first appeared in an article in July 1947 reporting on our exhibition of the work of the leading German artist Max Liebermann. Since then, the Journal has reported Ben Uri more than 300 times which illustrates the synergy of both institutions.

Whilst the AJR audience is more specific, and smaller, than Ben Uri's where the editors have succeeded beyond comparison is in engaging second and third generation readership. This mirrors the charity's leadership's strategy for maintaining long term relevance and purpose.

Ben Uri is proud to continue to support the AJR & its Journal as our new, expanded mission of recording the wide refugee and immigrant contribution to British society as a whole, dovetails perfectly with the Jewish (disproportionately high) contribution. I very much share Ben Uri's pride of association.

*David Glasser,
Chair, Ben Uri Gallery, Museum & Research Institute*

Here in New York I just finished reading the *AJR Journal* 80th Anniversary issue and decided I should send congratulations.

Maybe because the UK is smaller and, in some ways, more intimate, makes me feel (as an outsider) as if there's still a sense of community among the Holocaust refugees and their descendants. I don't think the *Aufbau* was able to do that beyond Washington Heights and Forest Hills, and my own parents were disdainful of the 'Aufbaush' (as my father called it) for too much looking back at something that no longer existed.

Tom Freudenheim, New York

I've been enjoying reading the latest *AJR Journal*, with all its special 80th anniversary articles.

I seem to remember that my aunt, Ilse Evans (previously MacDonald, née Goldstein), known as Illy, used to do some secretarial/editing/production work for the AJR. When I was child/teenager, she had a gestetner machine in her flat in Primrose Hill and I have memories of her working on AJR Information copy.

Not only my aunt, but also her twin Anita Leigh, my dad, Henry (Hans Werner) Goldstein, and my grandmother, Johanna – Hanni – Goldstein, were all AJR members. They attended many events, and I think my dad used to drive some members to events, even when he was getting on in age himself. I would love to hear from anyone who remembers them and their involvement with the AJR.



The Goldstein family – Johanna, Hans, Ilse and Anita

This photo of my grandmother, with my father and his sisters, was probably taken towards the end of or just after the war. My grandmother was a very courageous woman who, as a young widow, single-handedly saved all her children from the Holocaust. The other photo shows my Dad with the two girls, taken in Germany in about 1929, not

long after their father had died at a young age.

With my best wishes to all the team at AJR.
Ann Antrich

VESOP SAUCE

As a third-generation descendant of four grandparents who were all refugees from Germany, two of whom were the sole survivors of their respective families, I was thrilled to come across an old advertisement in your January 2026 article *Journalling Through The Decades*.

The ad, located on page 6, was for Vesop Products, a company founded by my grandfather, J.H. Bondi, and his brother, Dr. Jonas Bondi. Both men arrived in this country as refugees and worked tirelessly to rebuild their lives. Through their hard work, they established a company known for its Vesop concentrated liquid extract – a product that could supposedly enhance the flavor of any dish – as well as their kosher potato crisps, which included a distinctive blue sachet of salt. In fact, the family still possesses a bottle of the original extract (although we would not dare to try it after all these years)!

Over the years, I have spent countless hours researching my family's past, driven by a deep interest in uncovering any new information I can find. Unfortunately, I was too young to ask the right questions when those who could have shared their stories were still around. By the time I was old enough to inquire, it was too late. And so, my search continues.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect on my family's history, and for bringing this piece of it back into focus through your publication.

With thanks for all your organisation does.
Danny Pincus, London NW4

MORE FROM ORT

We want to thank the AJR for the opportunity to participate in the very moving Kristallnacht commemoration in November.

ORT, which your correspondent Peter Oppenheimer rightly explained in the



Telephone: 020 7209 5532
robert@jackmans.co.uk

AJR Journal last month, was coined from an acronym of Russian words, but its full title was: "Obshestvo Remeslennogo i zemledelcheskogo Truda", which translates as "The Society for Trades and Agricultural Labour".

The organisation was established in Russia in 1880 to help Jewish men and women to escape poverty by teaching them a trade. Vocational schools and specialised courses gave its students professional skills and access to the most prestigious and in-demand professions – something we continue to do to this day.

ORT also helped survivors and refugees before and during the Second World War. By the end of hostilities, ORT supported students in 16 countries. It trained tens of thousands of survivors and displaced persons from Jewish communities throughout Europe and, by the end of 1947, it had established a network of more than 700 courses located in the DP camps.

Now known as World ORT, we serve 84,000 students – both Jewish and non-Jewish – in 47 schools, universities and vocational training programmes in more than 30 countries. These include Ukraine, Russia, Israel, France, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil and Singapore.

Our fundraising efforts help us to offer a range of summer schools, programmes and awards for our students and educators. Our aim is to empower the next generation and give them the best opportunities so they can positively influence the world around them. We also provide essential emergency humanitarian, financial and emotional support to our ORT community in Ukraine and Israel.

We run three websites that might be of particular interest to AJR members: Music and the Holocaust; Art and the Holocaust; and World ORT and the Displaced Person Camps. This is in addition to our World ORT Archive site, which preserves the historical record of



FREEMASON'S HALL COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2026



Please join the AJR for a private guided tour of the Museum and the Grand Temple followed by an exclusive talk by Museum curator Dr Mark Dennis on 'The Jewish Dimension in Freemasonry'

Cost: £10 per person



karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

our activities and places them into the context of contemporary Jewish history.

If you or your family have any connection to, or memories of, ORT, please do get in touch by emailing archive@ort.org
Jennifer Brunton, World ORT Archivist and Records Manager

ERRATA – VERA SCHAUFELD

Vera Schaufeld's date of birth was 29 January 1930.
Steven Franks, Hertfordshire

HANS BRIESS

Thank you for publishing my little story about Winton's legacy down under (January).

However my father's name was Hans, not Max.

By coincidence my dad had a good friend called Max, His surname was Fleischner – a name he lived up to as he was a meat importer who also ended up in Australia.
Peter Briess, London NW3

AJR CENTENARIANS

Our January issue included details of a historic tea held at the German Embassy London, for nine AJR centenarians.

The full list of these nine extraordinary guests is: Alfred Buechler, Anne Callender, Henny Franks, Alice Hubbers, Suzanne Johnson, Marion Koppel, Kurt Marx, Lilian Rose and Walter Weinger.

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

Whether in his early sketches or in his mature paintings, you can never escape the harrowing depths of observation in the work of the figurative artist, Lucien Freud. An exhibition this month at the National Portrait Gallery, **Lucien Freud, Drawing Into Painting**, curated by Sarah Howgate, the NPG's Senior Curator of Contemporary Collections, brings together 170 of the figurative artist's early drawings, etchings and paintings, some seen for the first time, collated from his 48 sketchbooks, now part of the National Portrait Gallery archive.

They will offer a glimpse into a young artist's visual techniques, long before they developed into the heavy impasto works for which he is so famed. Some will be matched with his subsequent mature paintings.

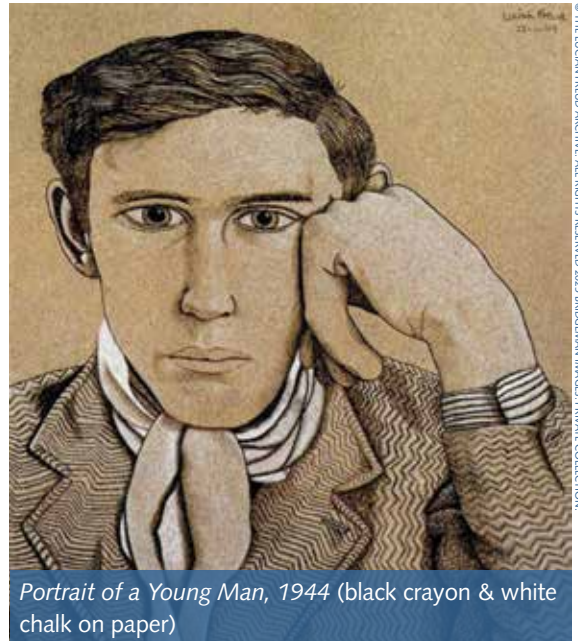
The young Freud drew obsessively and the exhibition is set to include such curiosities as telephone numbers for the gas board or some aristocrat; love letters drafted and perhaps never sent; and even betting tips, all grist to the mill of a maturing artist, which go hand in hand with his serious reflections on art. Everything he did was rooted in his sharp eye for the detail and the liberation he gained from drawing with black crayon, pencil and chalk.

Described as a Realist painter for his portrayals of the human form in uncompromising detail and yellowing flesh tones, Freud was influenced both by Surrealism and Expressionism and was frequently compared with his older contemporary and possibly mentor, Francis Bacon, although unlike him, Freud retained the recognisable features of his

subjects without the fluid distortion for which Bacon is so famed. A key example of Bacon's influence is in Freud's 1963 *Self Portrait* in oil on canvas, in which elements of facial distortion are implicit. One aspect of their relationship resulted in Freud employing a softer, looser style in his painting, less dependent on the exactitude of his early work, which served him well as a pathway to closer observation of his subject.

Critics at the time were impressed with the power of his youthful linear observations. His 1944 sketch, *Portrait of a Young Man* (black crayon and white chalk on paper), suggests the artist's burgeoning intensity. The young man, his rather oversized hand grabbing his face, gazes at you, his mouth in a determined pout, and his entire being given over to some deep interior matter.

Another drawing from the 1940s, *Flyda and Arvid*, is no less dynamic for its comparative simplicity. Flyda is in profile, slightly shocked at seeing Arvid's partly observed face, as though through a window. There is no mistaking the anxiety in her face and



Portrait of a Young Man, 1944 (black crayon & white chalk on paper)

the brooding quality in his.


But even the earliest drawings betray the starkness and visceral rawness of Freud's vision. A girl holds a kitten by the neck as though about to strangle it; a boy seems to lunge out of the frame with unnaturally staring blue eyes and a widow's peak, and grimacing young girls with distorted lips, all bear the hallmarks of the dislocation we will see in Freud's mature works.

Those drawings inspired by other masterpieces include his *Large Interior, W11 (after Watteau)* (1981-3), in response to Watteau's cabinet picture *Pierrot Content* (c.1712). Freud's sketches of the completed painting are shown beside Watteau's painting, as an example of how he used sketches to further develop his *oeuvre*.

From the 1970s onwards, Freud returned to etching, feeling his paintings had probably reached their apotheosis in 1982.

Lucien Freud: Drawing Into Painting at the National Portrait Gallery from 12 February – 4 May 2026.

WHY NOT CONVERT YOUR OLD CINE FILMS AND PUT THEM ON DVDS FREE OF CHARGE?



Contact Alf Buechler at alf@buechler.org or tel 020 8554 5635 or 07488 774 414

JOSEPH PEREIRA
(ex-AJR caretaker over 22 years) is now available for DIY repairs and general maintenance.
No job too small, very reasonable rates.
Please telephone 07966 887 485.

Annely Juda Fine Art
23 Dering Street
(off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578
Fax: 020 7491 2139
CONTEMPORARY PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

SPOTLIGHTING ERNEST NEUSCHUL

The Ben Uri Research Unit is recording the émigré contribution to British visual arts and culture since 1900. It has already published some 3,300 profiles, with hundreds more under research. Here we share their profile of the painter and graphic artist Ernest Neuschul.

Ernest (né Ernst) Neuschul was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Aussig, Austria-Hungary (now Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic) in 1895.

He studied in Prague and then Vienna, where he was drawn to the work of Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka; he avoided conscription by moving to Cracow in 1916. In summer 1919 he returned to Prague, where he continued his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts. He held his first solo exhibition, comprising 39 works, in Prague in 1919, and was hailed as one of the leading exponents of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) movement that rejected expressionism, combining elements of satire and social commentary. In Prague, Neuschul also met the Dutch-Japanese dancer Takka-Takka (Lucie Lindemann, 1890-1980), his first principal model, whom he married in 1922, holding his first solo exhibition in Rome the same year. He designed her costumes, and for the next four years they toured Europe, the USA and Canada as a Japanese dance couple, with Neuschul adopting the name 'Yoga-Taro'.

In 1926 Neuschul joined the radical, anti-fascist, Berlin Novembergruppe, meeting Ludwig Meidner and Arthur Segal. He was elected chairman in 1932. As a confirmed socialist and Communist, he recorded the lives of working people in his painting. 1927 was a key year: he participated in eight exhibitions, six of them in Berlin, and was offered a contract with Neumann-Nierendorf gallery. He was appointed chair of drawing and painting at the Charlottenburg Municipal Art School

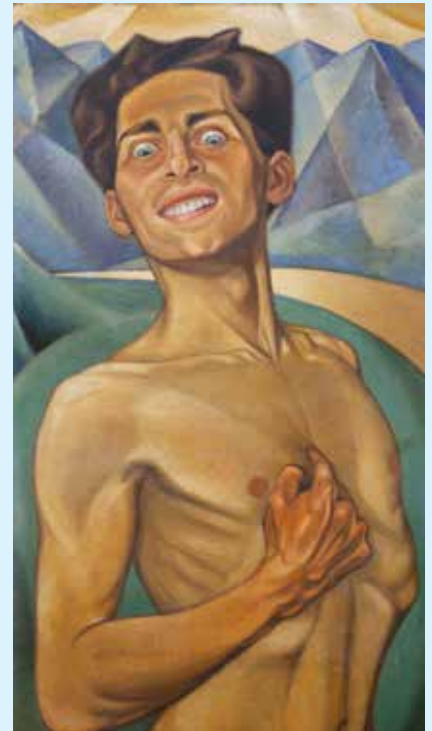
in 1931, and Professor of Fine Art at the Berlin Academy in 1932.

Following the rise of Nazism, Neuschul was dismissed from his professorship and labelled a 'degenerate artist'. In 1933, following an earlier self-portrait, 'The Agitator' (1932), he painted a searching double portrait of himself and his Czech model Mimi Wotzilka (1918–2014) (now Ben Uri Collection). In February 1934, he married a young German woman, Christl Blell, who gave birth to their first son Tyl Peter (later Khalil) in March. Soon afterwards, Mimi joined the household; both women continued to pose for Neuschul and they became lifelong companions.

In 1935, at the invitation of the Moscow Artists Association, the Neuschuls moved to Moscow, where he painted a double portrait of Josef Stalin and Georgi Dimitrov. As Stalin's purges intensified however, Neuschul was warned that it was unsafe, and they returned to Aussig in 1936 where, during his 1937 exhibition, several paintings were slashed and disfigured with swastikas. In 1938 Hitler annexed the Sudeten, and the Neuschuls fled to Prague. In 1939, they were forced to flee again, on the last train out of Czechoslovakia. His mother and other family members, who were due to follow the next day, all perished in Auschwitz.

The Neuschul household was helped by Usti friends Ruth and Didi. The latter, who was already in the UK, found them all sponsors through Lady Gowers, wife of senior civil servant Sir Ernest Gowers. Neuschul was also greatly assisted by David Grenfell, Labour MP for Gower, Wales, a major supporter of Czechoslovak refugees, whose portrait he painted as a sign of gratitude, presenting it at the House of Commons. The Neuschuls lived temporarily in London, Devon and Oxford, before settling, with Grenfell's encouragement, in Mumbles, Swansea, where Neuschul painted local steelworkers, miners and cockle pickers, as well as local worthies.

After the war Neuschul moved to London and, in 1946, settled in Hampstead, anglicising his name to Ernest Norland (although it most commonly appears



Messiah, a self portrait by Ernest Neuschul in 1919

as Ernest or Ernst Neuschul). As a member of the Free German League of Culture, he participated in its first group exhibition at the Wertheim Gallery, London in 1939, showing a powerful, dramatically lit painting of a charwoman scrubbing. He also lectured for the Anglo-Sudeten Club and contributed articles to *Einheit* (Unity), the Club's newspaper, which was published fortnightly from May 1942 until November 1945. In 1944 he had an exhibition at the National Museum of Wales. He then started moving towards simplified figuration and then to abstraction. Despite further solo exhibitions and a 1959 retrospective at the Bezalel National Museum in Jerusalem, he was never able to recapture his earlier success.

Ernest Neuschul died in London on 11 September 1968. In 1988 the Leicester Museum & Art Gallery held his first UK exhibition. His work is represented in UK collections including the Ben Uri Collection, the Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea and Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, as well as the Berlinische Galerie in Germany. A Neuschul research project is currently being undertaken in Brno.

THE WORDS SPOKEN BY PICTURES



'Memorial to the Victims of Nazism' on the site of Fort Nine



One of the slides presented during the seminar

In November AJR member William Baginsky, whose family was deported in November 1941 to the city of Kaunas (Kovno), revisited Lithuania to attend a seminar about the use of photographic and film evidence in Holocaust memorialisation. He shares this report.

I made my third visit to Kaunas in Lithuania in November 2025. It was to attend a two-day seminar 'Aspects of the Holocaust in Visual History' which brought together historians based in universities, museums and other institutions in Lithuania, Latvia, Germany, Poland and France. They are all engaged in research on photographic, film and written evidence of people involved in Nazi deportations – victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

I was invited to attend and contribute because of my family connections with



Fort Nine – the area where deportees were held on arrival

a deportation in late November 1941 of 2,000 people – 1,155 women, 693 men and 152 children from Vienna and Breslau (now Wrocław) to Kaunas. I was joined by two other people with family connections – Nicola Beauman from the UK and Christiane Haase from the USA.

The seminar was organised by Professor Dr Ruth Leiserowitz from the German Historical Institute (GHI) Warsaw and Dr Povilas Dikavičius from the GHI in Vilnius and hosted by the Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum, in particular the director Marius Pečiulis, head of exhibitions Vytautas Petrikėnas and head of education Vytautas Jurkus.

The museum exists to advance learning and education about both the Soviet and Nazi occupations of Kaunas. It's a challenging environment – for visitors certainly, but I think also for the people who work there. The Ninth Fort is located on a hill ten kilometres north of the city centre. The site is large, bleak and very cold in late November. It is estimated that 50,000 people were killed there during the Second World War – mostly Jews from the Kaunas ghetto and from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and France, but also Sinti and Roma, communists and Soviet prisoners of war. The perpetrators were not only Nazis from Germany but Lithuanian 'volunteers', described in a museum publication as seemingly 'driven to kill solely out of blind hatred and stunned by their own "instant omnipotence"'.¹

1 Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum (2022) *The Ninth Fort: From Fortification to Museum*, <https://www.9fortomuziejus.lt/en/home>

When I first visited in 2019 and again in 2024 there was no reference to the massacre of the deportees who arrived there on 29 November 1941, nor were there memorials from either Vienna or Breslau as there were from the cities of Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Munich. This absence is what prompted me to make contact with the museum staff and subsequently others (principally via the *AJR Journal* and American genealogist Stephen Falk) who, like me, had lost family at Fort Nine on that day. It led me to make a formal request to the municipality to erect a memorial. The request has now been accepted and I hope that the ongoing refurbishment of the museum will also make it possible to commemorate, as individuals, those whose lives were lost.

In his introduction to the seminar, Vytautas Petrikėnas talked about some of the items found in the trenches on the site – e.g. *kennkarte* (ID documents), a Nivea-cream container, combs, a shoehorn, medicine, eau de Cologne, a Prussian air gunner's badge from the First World War, a ceramic marmalade jar, a water bottle – and some of the questions they raised. Who did they belong to? What did they suggest about the expectations of the people who had been deported? In many ways, these questions foreshadowed issues discussed over the two days about developing a fuller picture of what happened and how from fragmentary evidence.

In late January 2024, a number of newspapers published photographs discovered in Dresden that, along with others about Nazi deportations, were the subject of an international research project,

#LastSeen,² led by Dr Alina Bothe from the Freie Universität Berlin. These particular photographs were of Jews in Breslau between 21 and 25 November 1941 who had been required to assemble in the beer garden of the Schießwerder restaurant with their luggage. They were deported from Germany four days later, on 25 November, and murdered at Fort Nine in Kaunas on 29 November. There were no survivors.

In her presentation at the Ninth Fort museum, Dr Bothe spoke about the aims of the #LastSeen project – to gather information about the people and places depicted and the particular circumstances and to interpret the images and make them available with annotations on the project website, wherever possible with photographs of the individuals outside the context of their persecution. She commented on the nature of the violence depicted in such photographs – structural rather than visible physical violence, people having to obey because there was no other option by this time, and, for example, often having their names exchanged for numbers in the form of tags they had to wear. Dr Bothe referred to the under-researched part that women as well as men played in the process of deportation, often taking on roles that survivors described as dehumanising such as searching luggage and taking away belongings. The photographs, she said, also raised questions about the role of bystanders and the extent to which they enabled deportations. Another subject of discussion was whether photographs showing people about to be deported could be described as staged – professional photographers engaged to present a particular view of what was happening and how the images might later be used by the perpetrators.

In contrast, some of the images were taken clandestinely by Jewish photographers. The photographs in Breslau in November 1941 are thought to have been taken by Albert Hadda, an architect and amateur photographer. Here the photographs appear to have been taken from inside a car or lorry, significant moments are seen in the distance rather than the foreground and the few people who look in the direction of the photographer seem not to have seen him.

There is not enough space here to do justice

2 <https://atlas.lastseen.org/en/home>



One of the displays in the Ninth Fort Museum about Jews deported from France in May 1944

to Dr Bothe's talk or to the presentations of the other researchers, but I want to acknowledge their dedication and that of the museum team, a younger generation who are confronting these difficult and painful subjects in a meticulous, thoughtful and respectful way. Lisa Paduch from the Freie Universität Berlin and involved in the #LastSeen project spoke about visual evidence of deportations from East Westphalia to Riga. Malte Grünkorn, from the University of Flensburg in Germany, talked about photographs of a deportation from Munich to Kaunas on 20 November 1941. Felix Meyer, an independent researcher, showed extracts from, and commented on, a propaganda film discovered in the 1990s, about Dresden's last Jewish residents, approximately 300 women, children and men taken to a so-called decontamination facility before moving on to the Hellerberg camp and later to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Sabine Hillebrecht from Humboldt University talked about the limitations of photographic sources in the context of images of the deportation of Jews from Ioannina – the only images currently known about showing deportations from Greece. And Dr Justina Smalkyte from the GHI Warsaw discussed images of the Lietukis massacre in Kaunas in 1941.

In her personal perspective, Nicola Beaman, whose parents left Berlin for the UK in 1933, spoke about her mother's first cousin, Dr Ilse Abramczyk, a clever, beautiful woman who had written her PhD thesis on Plato, which Nicola brought with

her. Christiane Haase grew up in East Berlin without any knowledge of a Jewish connection in her family until she was approaching her teens. It was not until she was in her thirties that she researched into the life of her great-grandfather Fritz Doctor and discovered how he had died. I spoke about my uncle, my father's oldest brother Willy Baginsky and the woman he married shortly before they were deported, Dorothea Müller, and what I knew about him – for example, from postcards he had written to my aunt and my father between 1939 and February 1941, once they were in England.

Although we told three very different stories, we had in common that we knew little about these family members whom we had never met – what they were like as people – and we discovered how they died years after the event. Yet we felt a strong attachment to them and a profound and lasting emotional response to what had happened to them and the impact on our families. Like the historians, we have pieced together fragments of information and speculated about their meaning. A recurring theme in the seminar was context in interpreting individual photographs and film. In images thought to be staged, was looking away from the camera on the part of a few individuals a sign of resistance? Did individuals respond to the camera in ways that we know from experience people often respond to being photographed? What was out of shot? What was happening before or after the photograph was taken? What were individuals' expectations of what was going to happen? I kept thinking of Willy Cohn's *No Justice in Germany: The Breslau Diaries, 1933–1941*³ – the loss of livelihoods and homes and the malevolent humiliations Jews were subjected to during those years. I kept thinking of the mostly upbeat messages Willy Baginsky wrote in his postcards at the tail end of the years covered in the diaries, the similarly (mostly) upbeat comments other members of the family would add, and the meaning of what they did not write.

3 Published by Stanford University Press, edited by Norbert Conrads, translated by Kenneth Kronenberg

ARCHITECTS ONLINE

The AJR is proud to have helped support the launch of a new database of refugee architects, which will be launched at the Wiener Holocaust Library on Tuesday 10 February at 6.30pm.

From 1938 the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) received a fast-growing number of requests for assistance from architects working in Nazi-occupied Central Europe. The Papers of the RIBA Refugee Committee, specially set up by the institute in January 1939, include documents and correspondence related to more than 200 individuals (mostly architects) who became known to the RIBA between 1938 and 1941.

A result of groundbreaking research on the RIBA Refugee Committee Papers, the new database, which has been created with the help of a small grant from the AJR, will include entries for



Villa Loew-Beer, Brno (architects Rudolf Baumfeld & Norbert Schlesinger). RIBA Collections

each one of these individuals, whatever their fate or their stature. Their lives, their work and their often extraordinary stories will be shared and celebrated through this new international research hub.

More info at <https://wienerholocaustlibrary.org/event/online-database-launch-the-riba-refugee-committee/#>

SURVIVING ST OTILLIEN



St Ottilien monastery in Bavaria

St Ottilien was a Benedictine monastery in Germany which was transformed into a Displaced Persons camp. In 1945 two US Army reporters described the conditions as "Genocide by neglect".

On Sunday 8 February the Northern Holocaust Education Group will present an online talk by **Rachel Kovacs** about St Ottilien, the people who stayed there and the people who helped them. She will deal with the challenges faced in recovering from catastrophes – drawing application to human crises and how courageous individuals, working outside mainstream organisations, can save lives and preserve dignity.

Rachel Kovacs is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Communication at City University of New York and an arts reviewer, journalist, PR professional and Judaics teacher.

Joining the talk is free, and you can secure your place at www.tickettailor.com/events/nheg

HELPING SEPARATED CHILDREN

At the end of 2025, as part of our activities around Mitzvah Day, AJR was proud to partner with the charity Separated Child, supporting its work with child refugees.



AJR staff members assembling the packs for the children

As part of this initiative, AJR members, staff and volunteers donated essential items to make care packages. AJR staff came together at our December staff meeting to pack these essential bags for children arriving in the UK without family support.

Many members of AJR can easily imagine being in this situation because they have lived it. They have lived with having to flee their homeland because of war, terror and persecution. They have arrived in a strange country seeking asylum, alone and with nothing. It is hard to believe that children today are still suffering the same fate, arriving in a foreign country alone and afraid. Unaccompanied children and young people experience the double trauma of separation not only from their homeland, culture and natural environment but also from the adults in their family who gave them love and care.

We hope to build bridges between our Holocaust refugees and today's unaccompanied young migrants, working together to make a difference.

Each bag was filled with practical items to provide comfort, dignity and reassurance during an incredibly challenging time. The activity was a meaningful way for AJR to take part in Mitzvah Day, putting our shared values of kindness, responsibility and community into action.

We are grateful to Separated Child for the important work it does and to all at AJR who took part, helping to make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable children.

A memorial in Cheltenham

Second generation AJR member Simon Burne recently took part in a very special concert in Cheltenham to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz.

It was a great privilege to play the trumpet in the special concert given by the Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) in the Princess Hall of Cheltenham Ladies' College on Sunday 16 November 2025. It was wonderful to spot AJR first-generation member Courtenay Harris in the audience, as well as members of the local Jewish community.

The afternoon opened with *Ontwaking* (Awakening), a pastorelle by Daniël Belinfante (1893–1945). The composer was the first cousin of CPO conductor Stephen Belinfante's father, lending the piece particular poignancy. Born in Amsterdam into a musical family of Sephardi heritage, Daniël Belinfante was part of a remarkable lineage. Another family member was Frieda Belinfante (1904–1995), whose extraordinary



Simon Burne with his trumpet



The Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra during the performance

PHOTO CREDIT © MARTIN FRY

story as a Jewish cellist, conductor, lesbian and Dutch resistance member was recounted in the Channel 4 documentary *Defying the Nazis*, narrated by Stephen Fry. Frieda survived the war and emigrated to the United States, where she became director and conductor of the Orange County Philharmonic Orchestra.

Recently, Stephen Belinfante and his son Sam undertook a research trip to Amsterdam focusing on Daniël and Frieda. Among the music they uncovered was the draft manuscript for *Ontwaking*, composed in 1921. The CPO commissioned Neil Luck to complete and orchestrate the piece, and this concert marked its world première. The gentle, poignant work, with its hauntingly sustained final chord, took on profound emotional significance for me as Daniël was murdered in Auschwitz as were two of my own grandparents, Hugo & Senta Bernd.

The second piece was the glorious Violin Concerto in D Major written by Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897–1957), with the solo beautifully performed by the CPO's president, Lithuanian-born violinist Diana Galvydyte. Korngold was a prominent Austrian Jewish composer

who fled to the United States in 1934 and became a major figure in the film industry, winning two Oscars for Best Original Score (for *Anthony Adverse* in 1936 and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* in 1938). He was the first international composer of stature to score for Hollywood and became a hugely influential figure in the industry. The Violin Concerto in D Major (1945) draws on themes from his Hollywood work, weaving them into a fabric of rich Romanticism that Diana Galvydyte brought beautifully to life.

The concert concluded with Alexander Zemlinsky's Symphony No. 2 in B-flat Major (1871–1942). Zemlinsky was another Austrian Jew who fled to the United States in 1938. In Austria, he had been a composer, conductor and teacher, counting Alban Berg, Anton Webern and, coincidentally, Korngold amongst his pupils. He was also a friend of Gustav Mahler. His Second Symphony, composed in 1897, builds on the traditional Romanticism exemplified by Brahms whilst hinting towards the more expansive work of later composers such as Richard Strauss and Mahler, providing a fitting conclusion to a deeply meaningful afternoon.

The Move

The *AJR Journal* welcomes first-hand testimony from anyone who personally experienced the Holocaust. We are grateful to Lilian Kauders for sharing her father Rudolf's evocative account (translated by Dr. Karin Millett) of being relocated from his family's tiny but proudly loved council flat in the 20th district, then one of Vienna's poorest neighbourhoods.

The neighbour who lived above us was always wandering around with his head hanging low and his shoulders slouched. He was a sad looking character, with sunken cheeks that accentuated his protruding cheekbones and his skin had an unhealthy yellowish-greyish pallor. Mr. Kröpfl kept his head down even when speaking to people, though he did turn his eyes upwards in a sort of intent gaze, which was how he appeared on this particular day when he rang our doorbell to ask if he could borrow some salt. Mother invited him to come in and sit down at the table. She carefully wiped down the oilcloth with a damp rag before putting on a fabric tablecloth and then gently placed two open-faced sandwiches on the table in front of him. When she saw how quickly he devoured the sandwiches and downed a bowl of white coffee and a piece of apple strudel, she decided to also warm up some left-over spinach for him.

'What a very lovely, large apartment you have' he said, letting his eyes roam around furtively to take in the details. After a short pause he added 'I have only one room.' 'Well' my mother quickly responded 'but there are five of us here!' However, I was unable to resist boasting proudly, like a prince in his palace: 'Yes, we have five rooms, a bedroom, a kitchen, a small adjoining room, a hallway and a lavatory.' What I decided was not worth mentioning was the fact that we did not have a bathroom, that what we used instead was a long, grey metal basin that was affixed to the hallway wall with a couple of hooks. 'Rudi, don't be so cheeky', my mother said, but just a little too late. 'You are so lucky. You have a nice home and a good family. I am all alone' the poor man muttered with a hangdog expression, before swallowing the last mouthful of food.

'Pardon my asking, but are you happy?' he asked loudly and somewhat abruptly. 'Yes, very' said my mother, and took a deep breath. 'How did you actually meet your

husband?' he wanted to know. With only a momentary hesitation my mother said: 'We were both tram conductors. There were many men who tried to court me, but he was the only one for me. He wrote poems to me. I wrote poems to him. I married a poetic tram conductor.' The neighbour raised his head for the length of time it took him to utter just one sentence: 'I'm also a poet, by the way.'

'Me too' I shrieked with delight and crawled out from my place under the table. 'What was your most recent poem?' The guest began to recite: 'The raccoon tiptoes on padded feet/ through the forest dark and old'. 'Lovely', I interrupted appreciatively. 'How does it go after that?' He had not quite decided, he said. He would need to think further about it. Writing poems is not something that one does in the blink of an eye, he said. I was keen to help him and suggested: 'Seeking something good to eat/Because it is bitterly cold.' He doesn't entirely reject my suggestion, the verse is not bad, he says, but he is still thinking about these first two lines and hoping to find something that might rhyme better. 'When I finish the poem, an out of work artist friend will draw pictures to go with it, and then we will submit it for publication. Sometimes the poems are published and then we share the honorarium.' 'Do you publish in *Schmetterling* (Butterfly) or *Papagei* (Parrot), I asked eagerly. I really liked illustrated rhymes a lot. However, I didn't wait to hear his answer but ran into the bedroom to find the box that was filled with my notebooks and drawings and rummaged around until I found what I was looking for. I ran back into the kitchen with a sheet of paper and laid it on the table, anxiously awaiting Mr. Kröpfl's opinion.

On the sheet of paper there were two square cartoon pictures and one long rectangular one. The first frame showed a man with a moustache that looked like a black nailbrush. There was a piece of

sausage hanging out of his large rucksack. In the background there was a dog sniffing the air. Under the picture I had written: *A rucksack stuffed with sausage links/ Sports our hero Mr. Binks/Spot's fine nose detects the treat.* The second picture showed the dog leaping through the air, latching on with her teeth to the visible piece of sausage, with the comment below the cartoon: *Leaps and grabs the dangling meat/and hurries away on canine feet.* In the long rectangular frame, Mr. Binks was shown, with an empty rucksack, turning around to see the dog running off with the sausages. In the bottom right-hand corner there was a long chain of Frankfurter sausages, one end of which was firmly clamped in the dog's teeth. Under the picture I had written in my finest calligraphy: *Bolts and drags the treat behind/at least a hundred links we see.*

Mr. Kröpfl studied my cartoon for quite a while, then raised his eyes towards the ceiling and said: 'A hundred sausages...a person could live on those for quite some time, maybe as long as two months!' This image of an excess supply of food succeeded in arousing the interest of even my mother. 'How could a person get his hands on so many sausages?' My answer was: 'He's the butcher who made them and he is delivering them to the kiosks that sell grilled sausages.' For some reason, I found this very funny at the time. I started laughing out loud and couldn't stop. 'And what do you find so funny about this?' asked my mother, putting a halt to my laughing. Mr. Kröpfl weighed in to say quite earnestly: 'Poets certainly do not have it easy.' I was happy that he had at least acknowledged me as an artist.

'Unfortunately, neither the *Schmetterling* nor the *Papagei* have accepted any of our work' he said, returning to my earlier question and the issue of his own poetic endeavours. Then he sighed, stood up and left the apartment. 'The salt!' I shouted after him and ran down the hall after him,



The Beer-Hof apartment block in Vienna



A Vienna apartment c.1930 in typical tenement-style housing that lacked central heating or dedicated kitchens.

with my mother right behind me.

Our neighbour then started coming by every few days to borrow something or other: a little cup of sugar, a pinch of salt, a drop of vinegar or oil, a tiny piece of bread, a lump of lard. And when he came, he was always hungry. My father felt sorry for this lonely, starving man, a poet whose talents were not fully recognized. 'In the long run a man can't live off a half-finished poem about a raccoon, or anything else!'

Then we lost track of our neighbour for a while. Until one day, ten years later, when I was in my second semester of chemical engineering, he showed up again in our apartment. Almost all of our furniture and our belongings had already been moved to the ground level room that was to be our new abode in the second district, a place that bore a striking resemblance to a cowshed.

My family stood gathered together in our now empty apartment in the Engerth Strasse that we had been forced to vacate. My mother had swept and washed all of the floors. I stood at the window, looking down to the street below. The sparrows were squawking and squealing in the treetops, making the usual deafening racket that we had all come to know and love so much.

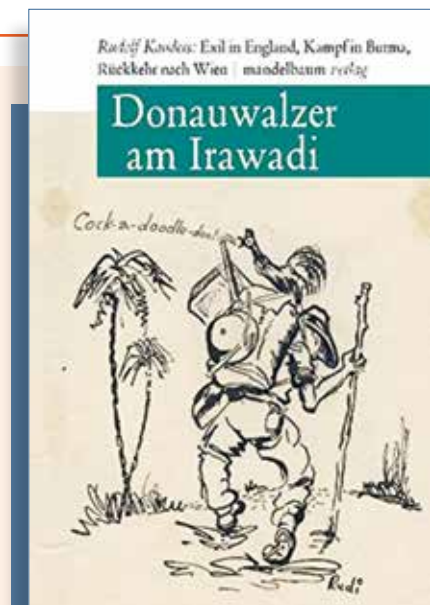
In Unkenpfahl, that ancient site/ there lives a magician erudite... This verse from the Schmetterling kept going through my head. But even my once favourite verse could not drive out the deep sadness that took hold of me when I thought about all of the beautiful memories of our time here in the Milk Block.* I felt my eyes fill with tears.

Then Mr. Kröpfl appeared in the door of the apartment. His chin was up and his

back was straight. He did not seem in the least bit embarrassed, triumphant or hostile. He did not bother to greet us with the 'Heil Hitler' salute. He apparently didn't think we were worthy of that. He just said: 'Okay then, finally my new apartment!' and looked around in every corner of every room. Then he murmured: 'That's the way it is in life. One man's pleasure is another man's suffering.' Strangely enough, we were not even really angry with him. He had moved heaven and earth to get us out of the apartment so that he could have it for himself. We left our now former home in single file, with me bringing up the rear. When I suddenly turned around, I saw to my amazement that Mr. Kröpfl, who had been standing so upright, had lowered his head and resumed his stooped shoulder stance, looking exactly as I remembered him from all those years ago.

When we were children, my father had knocked together a pushcart to take us around, but my mother had never used it to go shopping, mostly because it was so clumsy and shabby that she would have been embarrassed to be seen with it. Now she took it out on the street without any hesitation.

Overnight, my father had lost his secure job as a tram conductor and we had been driven out of our apartment. It had taken many trips with the pushcart completely laden with our dismantled furniture and all of our household goods to move us to our new home. The heavy load was at least two meters high and made secure with ropes. Father pulled and the rest of us pushed or put our weight against the load when it started to shift and threatened to topple. Sometimes the whole pile of stuff fell over anyway, mostly when we were trying to maneuver the cart between the pavement and the road. Each time this happened,



The original version of this story has been published in a book *The Recollections of Rudolf Kauders, Illustrated Anecdotes and Stories*

father turned around, looking surprised and said 'oops', but he never showed any irritation or anger. As we were taking over the last load to our new place, I suddenly found it all very funny and started laughing so hard that I couldn't stop. 'Why are you laughing in that silly way?' His tone was neither angry nor reproachful, just puzzled. I was embarrassed and said: 'It's like that time at the graveyard, when everything was so sad, I just had to laugh.' Both of us then lapsed into a pained silence that lasted until the pushcart capsized for the last time, just as we reached the courtyard, almost at our destination, and just before we were able to get it over the threshold into our damp ground floor apartment in the second district. When my father said 'oops' once more, I remained deadly serious. My mind summoned up an image of Mr. Laufers smashed crockery shop – he himself had disappeared – as well as the vandalized house of prayer in the Engerth Strasse, not too far from the Hellwag Cinema.

Notes from Editor

The nickname 'Milk Block' refers to the greyish-white paint of the Beer-Hof, a well-known council block of flats of the 1920s.

The 'aryanisation' of the Kauder family's small council flat was fiercely opposed by Rudolf's Jewish father, a tram conductor, who went to court, and made a number of submissions, thus winning time – seven months even, before the eviction finally took place in January 1939.

REVIEWS



Nuremberg, 2025, stars Russell Crowe and Rami Malik

NUREMBERG

Directed by James Vanderbilt
Walden Media and Bluestone Entertainment

Holocaust cinema has long been shaped by an ethical imperative: to bear witness. From intimate survivor narratives to harrowing recreations of the camps, many films ask audiences to remember by confronting suffering directly. *Nuremberg* (2025) takes a markedly different approach. Rather than returning viewers to the sites of atrocity, it situates them in the aftermath, where genocide must be translated into evidence, testimony, and law. In doing so, the film proposes a challenging and timely argument: that remembering the Holocaust is not only a matter of mourning the dead, but of defending historical truth under pressure.

The film's focus on the Nuremberg Trials, that began in November 1945, shifts attention away from victims' lived experiences and toward perpetrators' accountability. This emphasis on legal process risks emotional distance, but it also reframes remembrance itself. The Holocaust is recalled here not through narrative immersion, but through indictments, affidavits, and cross-examinations. Memory is not assumed to be self-evident; it must be structured, argued, and proven in public.

Yet *Nuremberg* is careful not to suggest

that law alone carries this burden. One of the film's most arresting moments comes when visual evidence from the liberated death camps is presented in the courtroom. The sudden intrusion of grainy, unbearable footage ruptures the procedural rhythm of the trial. Judges, lawyers, journalists, and even defendants – figures accustomed to abstraction and euphemism – are confronted with images that resist legal containment. Mass graves, emaciated bodies, and stunned survivors overwhelm language itself.

The effect is decisive. The film shows how these images force the courtroom to “sit up and take notice,” stripping away any residual moral ambiguity. For the prosecutors in particular, the footage functions as a catalyst. Faced with the undeniable reality of the crimes, they become even more determined to secure convictions, scouring international law for precedents and loopholes that will prevent the defendants from escaping responsibility. *Nuremberg* suggests that while law provides the mechanism for justice, it is the confrontation with atrocity that gives that mechanism its urgency.

This tension – between emotional shock and legal discipline – lies at the heart of the film's contribution to Holocaust remembrance. The film does not argue that images alone are enough. Without institutional authority, even the most horrific evidence can be denied or dismissed. At the same time, legal language without moral confrontation risks becoming bloodless. Remembrance, the film implies, depends on the uneasy fusion of both.

The portrayal of the defendants deepens this unease. Nazi leaders are shown not as grotesque caricatures, but as composed, articulate men adept at exploiting procedural gaps. They debate definitions, invoke obedience, and retreat into legal formalism. This depiction is disturbing precisely because it is plausible. By refusing to portray evil as alien or irrational, *Nuremberg* insists that the Holocaust was enabled by systems, hierarchies, and people who understood the rules of the modern world.

The film's ending complicates this insistence on justice in a striking way.

Rather than closing on the moral clarity of the verdicts, *Nuremberg* lingers on Hermann Göring's suicide and his successful evasion of the gallows. The focus on this final act introduces a jarring sense of anticlimax. Justice, so painstakingly pursued, is suddenly incomplete. For the prosecutors and reporters who have invested years in the trial, Göring's death feels like a theft – not only of punishment, but of narrative closure.

This choice risks centering attention on the perpetrator rather than the crime, and the film seems acutely aware of that danger. Göring's suicide does not feel triumphant or defiant so much as deflating. It exposes the limits of legal justice and the unsettling fact that even the most elaborate systems of accountability cannot guarantee moral satisfaction. The enormity of the Holocaust, the film suggests, cannot be balanced by a single execution, however deserved.

In this sense, the anticlimax is the point. *Nuremberg* ends not with catharsis, but with disquiet. It reminds us that justice is necessary but never sufficient; that verdicts do not resolve history; and that remembrance cannot depend on punishment alone. The real achievement of the trials lies not in the fate of individual defendants, but in the permanent inscription of their crimes into law, record, and collective memory.

Ultimately, *Nuremberg* argues that remembering the Holocaust is an active, fragile process. It must be defended against denial, sustained by evidence, and pursued through imperfect institutions. By refusing both sentimental closure and moral simplicity, the film leaves its audience with an uncomfortable but vital lesson: that remembrance, like justice itself, is never finished.

Jo Briggs

MEMORIES IN FOCUS

By Pinchas Gutter
Azrieli Foundation

Author Pinchas Gutter's photographic memory has proved invaluable in writing this moving memoir from his prosperous childhood in Lodz, Poland where he was

born 1932 to a fulfilling old age. His poignant story is published in the Azrieli Foundation's programme to preserve and share the memoirs of those who survived the Nazi genocide of European Jews and later settled in Canada. Here an estimated 40,000 made their home.

As Pinchas explains, his purpose is to show the pathos of his life. "That of a boy who finds himself, at the young age of eight, in the maelstrom of iniquity and then somehow manages to live through that and goes on to build a life afterwards out of the ashes of that horror". He aims to show despite the terrible trauma inflicted, it is possible to live through and lead a fulfilling life, and this outcome is shown in the book's dedication. It is: "To my wife, Dorothy, my three children, Tanya, Jan and Rumi, my daughter-in-law, Lauren, and my grandchildren, Daniel, Adam and Lara".

The book captures Pinchas's story in his own words and gives a colourful description of his early childhood and sense of belonging to the community's Yiddish culture. Born into a loving middle class religious Hasidic household he recounts how, on his father's side, they had been winemakers for generations. He enjoyed a comfortable life being part of a large extended family with lots of uncles, aunts and cousins. Tragically, before he was eleven he had lost almost his entire family.

But, as he explains: "I remember them and the life we lived before the war extremely well. It is both fortunate and unfortunate to have such a vivid memory." The way of life was colourful and enjoyable and he affectionately recalls his mother's delicious cooking and the apartment where he lived with servants. As conditions rapidly deteriorated after the outbreak of war, he recalls his parents' heroic struggles to keep body and soul together after their move to Warsaw, and how the ghetto was "apocalyptic hell".

His parents had only two children, Pinchas and his twin sister Sabina. Tragically the ten-year-old was separated from Sabina and his parents when deported from the Warsaw ghetto to the killing site of Majdanek. Losing her was so traumatic he blotted out

all recollections although as very small children they did everything together. The painful loss of his twin was like the loss of part of himself and by writing about her, he gives back part of her life and creates a lasting memorial to her.

Soon he became a slave labourer and was sent to a series of concentration camps. Shutting himself off from the surrounding terrors, he always tried to avoid being noticed. He miraculously survived in any way he could and was finally liberated when not quite 13.

After the war, he did well but found it difficult to settle, journeying from England to France, Israel, Brazil and South Africa and his experiences in the different countries are interesting. Although he suffered nightmares and flashbacks, the power of his photographic memory and ability to recall and retell the story shines through. It enabled him as an 85-year-old to get under the skin of the boy he once was, provoke thought and promote education.

Janet Weston

PillarCare 

Outstanding live-in & hourly care in your home at affordable rates



 Care Quality Commission

020 7482 2188 | enquiries@pillarcare.co.uk

Write Your Life Story Record a Family History

Whether you have begun writing, researched your ancestors, or never put pen to paper, we offer a personalised service to help you preserve your precious memories for future generations.

www.wordsbydesign.co.uk
tony@wordsbydesign.co.uk
01869 327548


OXFORD



TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2026

DR BEA LEWKOWICZ
IN CONVERSATION WITH
PASTOR
COURTENAY HARRIS

The amazing story about how they found out they were related!

All AJR members and guests are welcome – there is no coach travel from London



karendiamond@ajr.org.uk

CHAOS CONQUEROR

Do you need help with decluttering, downsizing or organising and storage solutions?

Contact **Jo Sovin,**
Chaos Conqueror

07905 581 794 jo@josovin.com
www.josovin.com

Impeccable references provided

www.fishburnbooks.com

Jonathan Fishburn

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

He is a member of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association.

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

SWITCH ON ELECTRICS

Rewires and all household electrical work

PHONE PAUL: 020 8200 3518
Mobile: 0795 614 8566

OBITUARIES

Sir Peter Bernard HIRSCH

Born: 16 January, 1925, Berlin
Died: 12 September, 2025



Sir Peter Hirsch was one of the extraordinary generation of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany who made such an important contribution to science in post-war Britain. He transformed our understanding of material science and had a huge impact on our knowledge of crystallography.

Hirsch was born in Weimar Berlin to Jewish parents, Ismar – who worked in the textile industry – and Regina (née Less). When he was nine, his parents divorced and his father died two years later, in 1936. In 1938, Peter witnessed Kristallnacht. He was named Kurt but anglicised his name to Peter when he arrived in Britain on 1 January 1939 on the Kindertransport to join his older brother, Hans, and his mother, who had found work as a domestic servant. His stepfather followed soon after.

He studied natural sciences and physics at Cambridge and joined the crystallography department of the world-famous Cavendish Laboratory where he was awarded a PhD (1951). His PhD research on X-ray diffraction from cold worked metals was the beginning of pioneering work in transmission electron microscopy and its application to the study of materials. His postdoctoral career at Cambridge included appointments as Assistant Director of Research in Physics in 1957, University Lecturer in Physics in 1958 and a Readership in Physics in 1964. In 1965 he co-authored *Electron microscopy of thin crystals*, which became a standard work in the field. In 1966 he moved to Oxford University to take up the Isaac Wolfson chair in metallurgy, where he remained until he retired in 1992.

He was known for being passionately dedicated to his work. One colleague reminisced in his speech, during the January 2025 centenary celebrations for Sir Peter, that even when he was on holiday he was still mentally in the lab: “I’m ringing from a call box so my wife won’t find out. Now, how is that experiment going on?”. Even after he retired, he would often come into the department and work with students and colleagues. In 2001 his department began hosting the biennial ‘Hirsch Lectures’ in his honour.

He received many awards including The Hughes Medal, for his distinguished contributions to the development of the electron microscope thin film technique for the study of crystal defects and its application to a very wide range of problems in materials science and metallurgy; The Wolf Prize, in the field of physics for his development of the utilization of the transmission electron microscope as a universal instrument to study the structure of crystalline matter; and The Royal Medal, in recognition of his distinguished studies of defects in crystals and especially of his elucidation of the process of work hardening. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1963 and was knighted in 1975. Between 1982 and 1984 he was the chair of the UK Atomic Energy Authority.

Later in his life he gave a talk to the Oxford University Chabad Society on his and his family’s experiences before and during World War II. You can watch it in full online: ‘*A Family Scattered: A Family’s Experience in the Holocaust*’ (www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3haTxuyv30)

In 1959 he married Mabel Kellar (née Stephens) who had two children from a previous marriage. She died in 2016. Hirsch is survived by his stepchildren.

David Herman

Edgar RING

Born: 27 December 1930, Berlin
Died: 29 October 2025, London

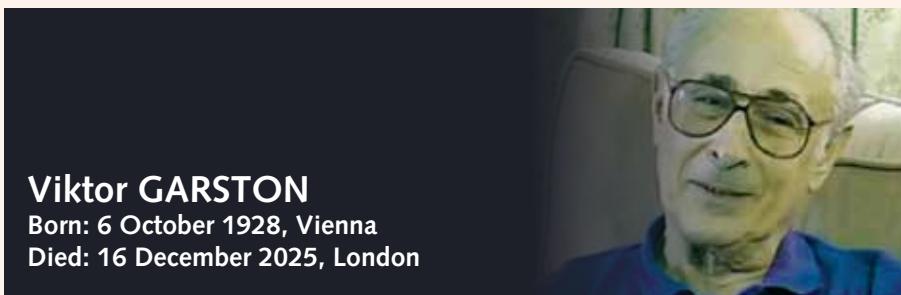
Edgar Ring was born in Berlin in December 1930, young enough to not fully understand the horrors of the rise of Nazism around him, but he did have to wear a yellow star and was excluded from school.

His father died when he was three and his mother met her second husband on a train from Czechoslovakia. It’s a lovely story where his mother stuffed the papers of her fellow traveller down the back of the seat to avoid German border guards. One thing led to another and Edgar travelled to England where ‘Uncle Ferdi’ became ‘dad’.

On arriving in the UK, aged 7 years, he was immediately sent to a boarding school in Kent to learn English, then later to Tenby for prep school, telling stories of shooting rabbits in the farmer’s field to supplement the school’s rations!

On leaving school he tried to join the RAF but was turned down on his test flight when he discovered the ground wasn’t quite where he thought it was, causing him to land heavily. Instead he did an electrical apprenticeship and began his career, first in telecoms, then as an electrical contractor, running the southern region for William Steward.

In 1962 Edgar married Sylvia and moved to Canons Park before moving into their current home. The next few years were exciting: Ellen was born in 1966, Ben was born in 1971, around that time the family got their first caravan. They enjoyed many carefree holidays and Edgar was always up for adventure, leading the rest of them on hikes and going through all the bureaucracy to have a motorboat on the Swiss lakes. It is still a mystery how the caravan caught fire one night before the family drove off to spend Christmas in a muddy field.



Viktor GARSTON
 Born: 6 October 1928, Vienna
 Died: 16 December 2025, London

Perhaps it was just who he was, or a result of his formative years in England, but Edgar was a man of remarkable resilience who set a high bar for himself and others, and who saw life in black and white. Even after having cancer he accepted the doctor's word that it was cured and never outwardly worried about it coming back.

Edgar was always at his best in a crisis. The day Ellen's goldfish bowl ruined the dining table that came from Berlin he couldn't have been more understanding. But he had high standards, once putting Ben's shoes in his bed when he had forgotten to put them away under the stairs once too often.

He became a freeman of the city of London and joined a livery company, becoming its master in 2000. He learned to fly and over time became better at judging where the ground was. However he never learned to cook. So when Sylvia went into hospital for heart surgery, Edgar phoned her up to ask how to make an omelette.

After retirement Edgar and Sylvia embarked on a life of travel. From road trips to cruises they were always off somewhere new. Most of the time these were great experiences, but a few years ago, after he'd been helicoptered off and dropped in Spain and Ellen had to go and rescue him, it was decided that maybe they should take it easy. They partially listened but carried on taking cruises until just a month before Edgar passed.

Having been brought up as an only child, Edgar deeply loved his family which grew to include eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. We will all miss him terribly so I will give the final words to him, taken from his favourites, the Two Ronnies – "It's goodbye from me, and, sadly, it's goodbye from him".

Ben Ring

Viktor was born into a poor religious family in Vienna. His father Moses' (Moritz) first wife had died in the flu epidemic of 1919, leaving him with three teenage daughters: Marta, Lisl and Frieda.

With his second wife, Berta, a Hungarian, he had three more children: Lily, Richard and Viktor. The gap between Viktor and Marta was 23 years.

Young Viktor did well at school and was popular with his teachers. However, on the Monday after the Anschluss one of his teachers arrived at school wearing Nazi insignia, proudly announcing that he had been a secret member of the Nazi party for years. Shortly afterwards, Viktor's father was among a group of Jews ordered to scrub the symbol of the former Austrian state from all street corners, and Jewish shopfronts were defaced. Viktor's family was evicted, moving to another block to share a flat with another family.

Viktor's sister Lisl was a qualified bookkeeper who had married Karl in 1936. Karl was an excellent handbag designer who had helped to set up handbag factories in several countries. Straight after the Anschluss Lisl came to London, where she set about finding jobs and sponsors for relatives, friends and complete strangers.

She got a job for her sister Frieda and her husband George as cook and butler. She found a sponsor for Viktor so that, aged 10, he travelled alone by train to London on 15 March 1939. His brother Richard followed later, on the last Kindertransport from Vienna. Sadly, Lisl could not help their elderly parents, or Lily, who was a little sickly. They were deported to the Lodz ghetto and murdered in July 1942.

During the war Viktor attended boarding schools in Slough and Maidenhead, then

completed his school certificate in Hendon, living with Lisa and Karl, who had opened a handbag repair shop, which did very well due to the shortage of new merchandise in the shops. After adding a range of fancy goods like powder compacts and bookmarks the business really took off, with a huge order for bookmarks from W.H.Smith.

Karl then designed a range of kids' handbags in plastic and took them to Simon Marks of Marks & Spencer. Being close to Christmas, sales were so good they struggled to meet demand. Karl then showed M&S some ladies handbag designs, which were also successful. The business moved into larger premises in Muswell Hill, employing 150 staff.

The handbag industry was very competitive, with small profit margins, so when Karl was given the opportunity to make beach and bedroom mules for M&S, he jumped at the offer, retraining all his staff. By this time, Viktor had joined as foreman, Lisl as an accountant, and Richard as office manager, making it a proper family business.

All went very well until cheap imports from the Far East began impacting UK manufacturers. In 1985 the family sold to a management buyout team who kept the business going for a few years, but eventually the site was developed for housing.

Meanwhile Viktor had married Sylvia and settled in Watford. They enjoyed sixty years of a very happy marriage and were blessed with a daughter, Jane-Elizabeth, six children and nine grandchildren.

In December 2021, as part of the AJR's '80 Trees for 80 Years' project, an oak tree was planted in the Peace Garden at Cassiobury Park, Watford, to honour Viktor and his late siblings and their families.

Jo Briggs

IN PERSON EVENTS

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

DATE	TIME	AREA	CO-ORDINATOR
Monday 2 February	Lunchtime	Brighton	Ros Hart
Tuesday 3 February	Morning	Ealing	Ros Hart
Wednesday 4 February	Afternoon	Glasgow, with Dr Amy Williams, Kindertransport scholar	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 5 February	Afternoon	Pinner	Karen Diamond
Monday 9 February	Lunchtime	Hampstead	Ros Hart
Wednesday 11 February	Lunchtime	Edinburgh	Agnes Isaacs
Thursday 12 February	Lunchtime	Birmingham	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 18 February		Edgware/Stanmore	Ros Hart
Thursday 19 February		Kinder Lunch With speaker – the Kindertransport History of Lowestoft	Susan Harrod
Monday 23 February	Lunchtime	Kingston	Ros Hart
Tuesday 24 February	Lunchtime	Liverpool	Michal Mocton
Tuesday 24 February	Lunchtime	Oxford	Karen Diamond
Wednesday 25 February	Lunchtime	Leeds with Danny Kalman – Chair of AJR Kindertransport Special Interests Group	Michal Mocton

CO-ORDINATOR DETAILS

Susan Harrod
Head of Membership and Engagement
susan@ajr.org.uk
020 8385 3078

Agnes Isaacs
Scotland and Newcastle Co-ordinator
agnes@ajr.org.uk
Tel: 07908 156 361

Ros Hart
London and South East England Co-ordinator
roshart@ajr.org.uk
Tel: 07966 969 951

Karen Diamond
London and South East England Co-ordinator
karendiamond@ajr.org.uk
07966 631 778

Michal Mocton
Northern England Co-ordinator
michalmocton@ajr.org.uk
07966 886 535

ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Monday 2 February @ 4pm	Hungarian Group – with the Hungarian Ambassador to the UK, His Excellency Dr Ferenc Kumi in conversation with Michael Newman. https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86908005662	Meeting ID: 869 0800 5662
Tuesday 3 February @ 4pm	Christina Hilsenrath – The fascinating history of the Bath Jewish Burial Ground https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87112850999	Meeting ID: 8711 285 0999
Wednesday 4 February @ 4pm	David Barnett – The short, very remarkable but highly controversial life of Edwin Montagu https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86476638418	Meeting ID: 8647 663 8418
Monday 9 February @ 4pm	Joe Mendel – American Presidents in 'bits and pieces' https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81640818063	Meeting ID: 816 4081 8063
Wednesday 11 February @ 4pm	Martin Winstone, Holocaust Educational Trust – Britain and the Holocaust, Part 1 https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84012804502	Meeting ID: 8401 280 4502
Thursday 12 February @ 3pm	Kinder Contact Project with Dr Amy Williams talking about the Kinder Lists https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81676886379	Meeting ID: 8167 688 6379
Monday 16 February @ 4pm	Sheila Hayman – Mendelssohns and Mischlinge: one family's journey in and out of the Third Reich https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85452459536	Meeting ID: 854 5245 9536
Wednesday 18 February @ 4pm	Book Discussion (no speaker) – It is Half A World Away by Mike Gayle https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84645705147	Meeting ID: 8464 570 5147
Tuesday 24 February @ 4pm	Bob Sinfield – No Laughing Matter (What's so funny about the news?) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/87963731364	Meeting ID: 879 6373 1364
Wednesday 25 February @ 4pm	Jenny Nemko – Building Trust for Future Generations https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81081417976	Meeting ID: 8108 141 7976

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

SCAN
HERE TO
CONNECT
WITH US



Published by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), a company limited by guarantee.
Registered office: Winston House, 2 Dollis Park, Finchley, London N3 1HF
Registered in England and Wales with charity number: 1149882 and company number: 8220991

jewishrefugeesajr Telephone 020 8385 3070 www.ajr.org.uk

For general enquiries please contact: enquiries@ajr.org.uk
For press enquiries please contact: gemma@ajr.org.uk
For AJR Journal enquiries please contact: editorial@ajr.org.uk

• Designed and Printed by **FBprinters** | Tel: 020 8458 3220 | Email: info@fbprinters.com •

The AJR Journal is printed on 100% recycled material and posted out in fully recyclable paper envelopes.