



AJR JOURNAL

The Association of Jewish Refugees

Should we rebuild the past?

The great British historian AJP Taylor once wrote that the western allies betrayed Czechoslovakia but Prague survived the war intact. On the other hand, the allies went to war to defend Poland and Warsaw was almost completely destroyed. It was not just these two capitals, of course. Riga and Tallinn were also almost untouched, whereas Danzig and Berlin were devastated by war.



Gedächtniskirche, Berlin - before the War



Gedächtniskirche - today

In December, *The Jewish Chronicle* published an article by Toby Axelrod about a campaign which had just been launched in Germany to raise 65 million Euros to pay for the first full reconstruction of the Bornplatz Synagogue in Hamburg, largely destroyed during Kristallnacht. "There are virtually no traces of the synagogue on the spot where it stood," wrote Axelrod. But the recent discovery of an old Torah crown, engraved with

a dedication to the synagogue's first rabbi, led to the campaign. "The town square has been empty ever since," said Hamburg's mayor Katharina Fegebank, in a statement of support. "We now have a moral obligation to try to heal that wound."

Her statement raises an important question. Undoubtedly, there is a "wound". The question is: Is it obvious
Continued on page 2

FEBRUARY FORWARDS

The first few weeks of 2021 have certainly brought some challenges but there are glimpses of light at the end of the tunnel.

Here at the AJR we have started our 80th year with good news, in the form of honours for some of our colleagues, and also some fabulous online events, with many more coming up - see the list on the back page.

As the days continue to lengthen we will be doing everything in our power to make your days as bright as possible. In the meantime we hope you enjoy reading this issue of the AJR Journal and look forward to receiving any feedback.

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

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Should we rebuild the past? (cont.)

that should we try to heal it? Could it be possible that the best way to preserve the memories of the war and the Holocaust are to be confronted with emptiness, to face up to the many wounds and the devastation they have left?

One of my favourite buildings in Berlin, which I visit every time I go there, is the Gedächtniskirche or Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. Following allied bombing during the war, the original west Tower has remained standing as a ruin and is hauntingly named "*der hohle Zahn*", "the hollow tooth", a mutilated remnant of what was once a beautiful church on the Ku'damm. The original church was built in the 1890s, just a few years before the Bornplatz Synagogue in Hamburg.

The church was badly damaged in 1943. A debate about what should be done with the remains of the church ran on until the late 1950s. Following pressure from the public, it was decided to incorporate the ruined tower into the new design. The new church was consecrated in December 1961, largely restored but also still partly mutilated, a reminder of what had happened during the war. There was no attempt to pretend the church had not been badly damaged. It was partly restored but not completely. The ruins were part of its history, symbolising the larger history of Berlin and Germany.

In his great poem, *A German Requiem*, published twenty years later, in 1981, James Fenton wrote,

"It is not what they built. It is what they knocked down.
It is not the houses. It is the spaces in between the houses.
It is not the streets that exist. It is the streets that no longer exist.
It is not your memories which haunt you.
It is not what you have written down.
It is what you have forgotten, what you must forget.

What you must go on forgetting all your life.

And with any luck oblivion should discover a ritual.

You will find out that you are not alone in the enterprise.

Yesterday the very furniture seemed to reproach you.

Today you take your place in the Widow's Shuttle."

It is a brilliant evocation of the importance of "the spaces in between the houses", "the streets that no longer exist", "what you have forgotten, what you must forget." Or perhaps the best way to remember is by being confronted by what remains, whether it is partly destroyed like the Gedächtniskirche or whether it no longer exists at all, but is just an absence.

There is somewhere else I always visit when I go to Berlin. My favourite street is Fasanenstrasse, also in west Berlin. There is my favourite German café, Café im Literaturhaus, beautiful in summer or winter, a converted belle époque villa, one of Berlin's loveliest spots for Kaffee and Kuchen. A few buildings along is the Käthe-Kollwitz-Museum, home to one of Germany's greatest modern artists. But these are not the only reason I always go to Fasanenstrasse. It was where my mother and uncle grew up before they fled to Britain with their mother as refugees in 1938. Now nothing remains of the once beautiful house. It was completely destroyed during the war. It has now been replaced by the truly hideous Börse Berlin AG (or Berlin Stock Exchange), one of the ugliest modern buildings in Berlin, which conveys no sense of the extraordinary history of the city, let alone of my family's history.

As AJP Taylor pointed out, much of Warsaw was destroyed during the war, including the neighbourhood where my father grew up. Nothing remains from his childhood. None of the buildings he knew, none of the people he knew, not one member of his family. Much of central Warsaw has been beautifully restored, but not the Jewish quarter. A few places remain: The Jewish Cemetery at Okopowa Street, some blocks of flats near Waliców Street, Żelazna Street and Grzybowski Square, and a synagogue near Grzybowski Square.

See: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9a/Warsaw_

Taylor was interested in the ironies of modern history. He was a great historian but he was not terribly interested in

memory or absence, the meaning of buildings or whether we should rebuild ruins or keep them as a form of silent testimony.

Another great historian who was much more interested in these questions was the German-born historian Peter Gay, Freud's biographer and a leading historian of 19th and 20th century Europe. In a fascinating memoir, *My German Question* (1998), Gay (né Fröhlich) describes returning to the city where he spent his early childhood before his family fled from the Nazis. He had returned to Europe three times before, but couldn't face going back to Germany. Then in 1961 he returns to his childhood homes (none of which have survived). What he expects is a kind of Proustian moment, that he will be flooded by memories of his childhood. But instead, there is a kind of anaesthesia, a lack of memory. "My past," he writes, "was proving to be a mosaic with central pieces missing."

A mosaic is a picture made up of fragments and as he describes the few memories that come back to him, they are all of fragments, of things broken, wounded or grotesque: an "idiot who wandered the streets of northern Berlin A stunted creature with a gigantic head, awkward gait, and slaving mouth", "the torso of a headless chicken", a photograph of "a German soldier dreadfully wounded in the First World War but still living even though half of his face had been shot away." He then goes on to describe "the ruin of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Church, a "torso", "fragmentary remains". Everywhere, Gay's imagery is of fragments, mutilation, things broken.

What draws Gay to these images? Perhaps it is something about his childhood which was irreparably broken, despite his hugely successful career. How true is this for other refugees? Is there something profoundly untrue about rebuilding synagogues, churches, whole neighbourhoods which were once destroyed? Perhaps we should face up to a painful truth, that the past was broken and destroyed, and shouldn't be rebuilt in its entirety. "It is not the streets that exist. It is the streets that no longer exist."

David Herman

AJR HONOURS

The AJR is delighted to congratulate two colleagues who have received awards in the Queen's New Year Honours.

Carol Hart, AJR's Head of Volunteer and Community Services, receives an MBE for services to the Jewish community during the Covid-19 pandemic. Carol has worked for the AJR for 15 years managing a team of coordinators and over 350 volunteers. Since the beginning of lockdown Carol has put in place new services to ensure the well-being of AJR's members including regular phone-calls, letter writing, socially-distanced garden visits and online support groups for carers.

Carol said, "After the shock of hearing about the Honour, my feeling is of immense gratitude that I have the opportunity to work for a superb charity which supports inspirational members alongside a team of dedicated staff, volunteers and trustees."



Carol Hart

Anthony Spiro, AJR Trustee and Joint President of The Wiener Holocaust Library, is awarded an OBE for services to Holocaust remembrance. Anthony, a long-serving AJR trustee said, "I am enormously honoured to receive this award, which I dedicate to the memory of my parents, Anna and Ludwig Spiro, who fled Germany to make a new life in the United Kingdom. They took an active role as volunteers at The Wiener Holocaust Library and The Association of Jewish Refugees. I am proud to have followed their example.

"The Wiener and the AJR are independent charities yet their work overlaps and they are both particularly relevant today. The Library is the world's oldest institution for the study of antisemitism and the crimes of Nazi



Anthony Spiro

Germany, while the AJR provides comfort, friendship, social care and financial support to its refugee membership."

AJR Chairman Andrew Kaufman MBE and Chief Executive Michael Newman said: "We send our warmest congratulations to Anthony and Carol. This is wonderful news and truly reflects and rightly recognises how devoted they both are to the AJR's mission. Anthony continues to be a source of great wisdom and good counsel, helping to ensure the AJR is in the best possible shape to carry out our services, while Carol has earned her glowing reputation as a conscientious, thoughtful and caring senior manager of the AJR."

THE AJR @ 80

This summer will mark the 80th anniversary of the AJR and, social circumstances permitting, we are hoping to be able to mark this milestone in style.

Long-serving members may remember high profile celebrations for previous milestones. In 2011, for example, members were invited to attend a reception at the Austrian Ambassador's London residence as well as a series of lunches and teas around the country. In 2001 there was a celebration cabaret at the Grosvenor House Hotel, to mark the 60th anniversary, while activities for our Golden Anniversary in 1991 included a gala dinner as well as a very special commemorative issue of the *AJR Journal* containing messages from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits, and politicians ranging

from Margaret Thatcher to James Callaghan.

While the current climate makes it impossible for us to plan, let alone sell, tickets for, any major gatherings in the near future we hope to make it possible for every AJR member to join in the 80th anniversary celebrations in a safe, yet significant way. Our online programming will play a major role of course, and we look forward to sharing more details in due course.

We are also hoping to find a way of physically honouring some of the people and places who symbolise the enormous contribution of Jewish refugees. This is an exciting project which will involve a number of partners and we hope to give many individual AJR members and their families the opportunity to get involved.

As AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman says: "The AJR's 80-year heritage and that of our members is remarkable. We have

some exciting ambitions for marking this tremendous milestone and look forward to sharing more details as our plans develop."

CALLING ALL FAMILY CARERS

AJR is running three 'Winter Wellbeing' workshops especially for anyone who is caring for others, to help them make time for themselves:

- Emotional resilience and wellbeing**
4 February at 11.30am
- Mindfulness**
18 February at 11.30am
- Creative Writing**
4 March at 11.30

All workshops will last approximately one hour and are free to join – please contact our Family Carers Service Coordinator Caryn Bentley on Caryn@ajr.org.uk or 07951 796 202

The children on the S.S. Manhattan

Berlin radio journalist Matthias Schirmer recently set out to explore the fate of Jewish children who went on a kindertransport on 16 January 1939. His research yielded so much more information than he could have ever thought possible.

The postcard of the ocean liner, the SS *Manhattan* is now quite yellow with age – it is over 80 years old. The ship regularly sailed between Hamburg and New York. On the back Ruth wrote: “.....And I had a cabin!”

Ruth lived in Berlin 82 years ago, in the apartment directly below the one that I now occupy on the second floor of our building. On 16 January 1939 Ruth was just 10 years old when she kissed her granny Jacoby goodbye forever and boarded a train to Hamburg with other children. Her granny died in the Jewish hospital a little later, her Opi died in Theresienstadt and her mother was gassed in the so-called “euthanasia action”. Ruth survived thanks to her aunts, who later watched over her in England. Today at the age of 92 she lives in Wolverhampton.

Aunt Kaethe only went as far as the train station on that January morning in Berlin. She had given Ruth English lessons: “... especially one address in London NW3 which I had to repeat endlessly. I was told, ‘If you get lost, ask an English policeman.’” Ruth can remember some things very well: the Hitler-Jugend boy who warned her on 10 November 1938: “Don’t go to school, it’s burning”. Had the boy been among the arsonists? Ruth remembers the shaved heads of her uncles who lived around the corner. They returned from Sachsenhausen, the concentration camp north of Berlin, after the night of terror.

I found traces of some of the 15 boys and 73 girls who were on board with Ruth on 16 January 1939. But Ruth cannot remember Marianne, who travelled with her on the train. And vice versa.



Postcard of the SS *Manhattan*

Marianne lived only five minutes away, on Kurfürstendamm. Her father hid in the attic in November 1938, and her mother told her, “Come away from the window”. Ruth cannot remember Wolfgang from Schoeneberg either. He thought it was cool that school was cancelled on 10 November. His mother almost fainted with anger and relief when he came home from playing late in the afternoon. Wolfgang’s father was taken to Sachsenhausen that night. He even wrote a postcard from there: “The children must go to England!”

Ulla, Wolfgang’s sister, was also at the train station. And Marianne. And Irene from the Dahlem district. Irene has left the most accurate report: how they met up with other Jewish children in Hamburg, in a house with a kindergarten belonging to the Jewish community. There they met Hildegard. At almost 17, Hildegard was one of the oldest girls, and she remembers that she had to look after the younger children on the trip. She now lives in Canada. The children also met Irma Zancker. She was an educator by profession, one of five adult Jewish escorts. She was banned from her profession, just like the Berlin paediatrician Dr. Erna Davidsohn next to her. Irma’s son was celebrating his 10th birthday at home that very day. Without his mother. Because she was accompanying other children to freedom.

At the harbour the children stood in front of the Nazi officials who barked orders at them. Then they climbed up the gangway of that huge steel colossus, the SS *Manhattan*. They knew that the ship would bring them to safety. But they left so much behind. Via Le Havre to Southampton. It is the longer of the two kindertransport routes. Ruth still raves about her cabin. And about the steward who treated her like a lady, not like a Jewish kid. Wolfgang was happy to see England on the horizon – “*das Land der Engel*” - the land of angels, he thinks.

In Southampton a rabbi was waiting at the harbour: a friend of Marianne’s grandfather. He telegraphed to Berlin: ‘Marianne arrived safely’. Her grandfather was probably the most famous Jew in Nazi Germany: Leo Baeck.

Many children’s memories on this trip revolve around food. The ice cream for the older girls, the cocoa spilled out of fear. And the fact that people here eat something very, very strange called “porridge”.

Let us honour those who helped these child survivors: people like Dr. Erna Davidsohn and Irma Zancker, who went back to help the next children escape. Both died in Auschwitz. Let us honour them. And let us tell their very individual stories.

LETTER FROM ISRAEL

BY DOROTHEA SHEFER-VANSON



EDUCATION FOR GIRLS



My grandchildren, who have grown up in a secular environment in Israel, find it odd that

I, their (hopefully) broad-minded grandmother, should have gone to a secondary school for girls. In Israel it is only those segments of the population which adhere to ancient tenets of gender identification that maintain gender-segregated schools for their offspring. In England, where I grew up, the situation was similar but the ideas behind it were different.

Those were different times when I began attending school, back in the 1940s and 1950s. England was recovering from the war and struggling to maintain its place in the world. To my generation of children it seemed the most natural thing in the world to take the eleven-plus exam and be sent according to one's result to either a grammar school or a secondary-modern (comprehensive) school. Naturally, the aspiration of my refugee parents was that I should be accepted by one of the grammar schools, and that was what indeed happened. I passed the exam and was given a place at a nearby grammar school for girls, the Brondebury and Kilburn High School.

Secondary-modern schools were mostly co-educational and were considered inferior.

Secondary education for girls had not been widely available for as long as it had been for boys. Even in secular England, for hundreds of years education had been considered suitable only for boys. If a girl could read and write that was fine, but more important was her ability to maintain a home, sew, cook, embroider and fulfil the requirements of the male-dominated society. That was the way society was run, and there were no religious associations involved, to the best of my knowledge.

After all, women were considered inferior intellectually and were not given the vote until 1918 in England, with most European countries following suit soon afterwards. Early in the twentieth century exceptional Englishwomen such as Henrietta Barnett and Philippa Fawcett campaigned for secondary education to be extended to girls, organised financial and moral support and established the first high schools for girls in London and elsewhere. They may have been influenced by the system prevailing in the USA, but they were certainly pioneers in the context of Britain.

Since Israel's foundation – and even beforehand – the concept of segregation of the sexes was rejected, and most of the country's institutions, including schools, were based on the principle of gender equality. Thus, the age-cohort that parallels mine took it quite for granted

that secondary education should be co-educational. After all, the basic principle underlying society as a whole was that of equality, and only the educational institutions allied with the orthodox Jewish population maintained separation of the sexes. In the 1960s the British education system was radically overhauled, and many of the single-sex secondary schools were dissolved or converted into mixed-gender schools.

The question remains whether either of the two systems yields better academic results and psychological benefits. Studies have shown that girls tend to perform better academically in single-sex schools, though it's not clear what effect co-education has on boys.

Teenage years are difficult enough at the best of times, but it seems to me that restricting youngsters to an environment that bears no correspondence with general society deprives them of the ability to learn to cope with real life. So probably the sooner youngsters learn that the world consists of both boys and girls the healthier it is for all concerned.

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Letters to the Editor

The Editor reserves the right to shorten correspondence submitted for publication and respectfully points out that the views expressed in the letters published are not necessarily the views of the AJR.

BREXIT 'GOT DONE'

Now that Brexit has finally “got done” in principle, I should like to wonder, through your pages, whether refugees other than myself, have thoughts regarding the UK separating from the most historically antisemitic continent in the world. This is, of course, quite apart from political considerations as outlined by your correspondent Greg Lubinsky in the January edition of the AJR Journal.

Emil Landes, London N6

EU REALITY

George Donath (January) is mistaken when he states that the European Commission ‘rules Europe by default except on the very few occasions when member states agree’. The Commission, like the British civil service, only has the power to propose, whereas political decisions are made by the Council of Ministers. This is the most powerful European institution; it is entirely composed of democratically elected politicians, accountable to their electorates, and Mr Donath fails to mention it even once.

To overcome the problem of slow decision-making by the Council, the charge levelled by Mr Donath, the EU instituted, back in the 1990s, the system of qualified majority voting, whereby it was no longer necessary for every state to consent to every decision. Brexiteers then shifted their ground and castigated what they had asked for as an attack on ‘national sovereignty’. Mr Donath is also mistaken when he calls the European Parliament ‘toothless’. Since the first elections to the Parliament some forty years ago, it has acquired considerable powers. The Brexit agreement, for example, could not come into effect unless it was ratified by the Parliament. Nor is it possible for the executive to try and remove the European Parliament from the decision-making process for weeks on end, as the Johnson-Cummings cabal did in autumn 2019 by having the monarch prorogue the Westminster parliament.

The relationship between member states

and European institutions is widely misunderstood in Britain. This is well illustrated by Greg Lubinsky (January), when he claims that Brussels’s greatest mistake was the decision by Germany to admit one million refugees, many of them Syrian. This was a decision made unilaterally in Berlin, a decision in which Brussels played no part and which was followed by no other European state. Apart from its lack of logic, it saddens me to see a letter so devoid of compassion for those fleeing the slaughter in Syria published in a journal founded for those fortunate enough to escape the Holocaust.

Anthony Grenville, London NW6

THANK YOU AJR

I am a newcomer to the AJR, having joined only a couple of years ago. Since that time, I have come to appreciate the Association more and more and am very glad indeed I made contact and heard back from Michael Newman.

My initial desire was to find advice about reinstatement of German citizenship, my mother having left Germany for Palestine at age 6, with her parents and sister. (I have applied and am now awaiting a decision on my German naturalisation application). However, the AJR provided me with surprisingly rich resources which have proved of immense value in this year of Covid-19. The printed *AJR Journal* has been of considerable interest; and the AJR e-newsletter has become the major focus of my social life during 2020. I have much enjoyed many online events organised by the Association and am repeatedly impressed by the range and quality of these offerings. Noteworthy among the online groups have been Rebecca Clifford’s appearance discussing her very impressive book, *Survivors: Children’s Lives After the Holocaust*; Selma Van de Perre’s wonderful presentation of *My Name is Selma*; Gabriel Josipovici’s discussion of his work; the Kristallnacht Service; and Deborah Barnes’ inspiring talk about her novel, *The Young Survivors*. Having started that list, I find that every event

I have attended has been stimulating, moving and full of interest, and the ones I missed provide a resource of riches on the AJR YouTube channel. My reading has been extended to books I might otherwise have missed, including Thomas Harding’s wonderful *Legacy*, Gaby Koppel’s excellent *Reparation* and Bryan Cheyette’s informative, *The Ghetto*.

However – and equally important – participation in these AJR events has made me feel a welcomed part of a community, for which I am so very grateful.

I am attaching a recently found photograph of my late mother as a small child, caught breaking curfew in Germany. I now understand much more about her life.

Jacqueline Hopson, North Devon



Betty Langer, Jacqueline Hopson’s mother

SILENCE BETWEEN GENERATIONS

I read with interest David Busse’s article in the January edition of the *AJR Journal*. He wrote about his parents who came to live in England escaping the Nazis. The sentence that resonated for me was “.... until the age of eight I had very little notion of being Jewish”. My own parents narrowly missed the camps, arriving here in London in 1939. For years I wondered why they never spoke about their parents and siblings – many of them were imprisoned and killed. My parents settled eventually in Cumbria, where I was born. Surrounded by non-Jews allowed them superficially to escape their profoundly tragic history and so bury the past. This silence on the subject meant I too had no sense of my Jewish roots. It raises

the question: do we gain something by speaking about our painful memories? They carried their pain nobly but I suspect they were never able to catch up with their inner world. I am convinced it is better to face the pain and work through it. It is only now, many years later, am I able to see the broader picture and consequently understand my dear departed parents.

Yvonne Saville, London NW7

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The telephone directory was perhaps a popular resource for refugees who either needed or wanted to change their names (Audrey Rosney - January).

My father was born Heinz Gelb and came from Berlin in 1939. After a period in an internment camp on the Isle of Man he joined the Pioneer Corps but was told to change his name beforehand.

He used the telephone directory and went to the "G"s - he wanted to keep his initials as he had a number of handkerchiefs with the initials H.G. on them. The first H.G. he came to was Harold Gordon and he looked no further.

Peter Gordon, Nottingham

STOLPERSTEIN-RUN IN BERLIN



One of our grandsons now lives in Berlin, in the district of Prenzlauer Berg. He is very athletic and has, together with a friend, set himself the goal of visiting all Stolpersteine in Berlin by running to them and taking photos of them.

I came to England in 1939 on a Kindertransport from Berlin. My parents also succeeded in getting visas to England. They

came originally from Breslau and had emigrated in 1936 to Austria after they were forced to sell their farm because they were, as Jews, no longer welcome in Hitler's Germany. In November 1938, following Kristallnacht, they were expelled and had to leave their farm in Carinthia.

Since Berlin had been their last German address and also because I met my husband in 1957 at the Free University, Berlin has a very special significance for us. We feel that we are 'guest-Berliners'. It makes us very happy that our grandson Josh has chosen Berlin as his residence and that he feels at home there. So his decision to visit the Stolpersteine and thus to connect with his Jewish past is very gratifying.

We think that some of you will have come from Berlin and have Stolpersteine there. If you would like Josh to visit them please email me (ruthschwiening@gmail.com) and I will pass your message on.

Ruth Schwiening, Market Bosworth

BEN HUR

The article about Miklos Rosza and the film *Ben Hur* (October 2020) reminds me of the story that, as the famous chariot race would be very difficult to film, there would be no rehearsal so the race would only be run once and so become the substantive one. After the race the director went from one cameraman to the next to enquire if everything had gone according to plan. As he ascended the ladder of one, the cameraman shouted down: 'ready when you are.'

Rudi Leavor BEM, Bradford

LONDON CLUBS

In response to your article about *Stammtische* (January) there used to be a club nearly next door to Finchley Road tube station and there was also the Jewish Ex-Service Club down the road from Swiss Cottage towards town. I do not remember the street names as I am 94 years old and it was a long time ago! Does anyone else recall these clubs?

Sonja Sternberg, Manchester

LOOKING FOR?

VIENNESE MANCHESTER

Julian Borger seeks information about any Viennese Jews who (like his own father) secured escape in 1938-39 by advertising in the *Manchester Guardian* for tuition or employment.

julian.borger@theguardian.com

MADELEINE WHITELAW

Jane Aspden is seeking links to Madeleine Whitelaw, b.1940-42. Madeleine was a professional violinist/possibly pianist, playing with various ensembles and occasionally giving concerts for the AJR.

Jamesrjb@talktalk.net

HEDI DAVIS / POMPAN / REICHLER

Keiron Pim seeks information on Hedi Davis (previously Hedi Pompan, née Reichler.) Her sister Friederike (Friedl) was married to Austro-Hungarian novelist and journalist Joseph Roth (1894-1939). Friedl died in the Shoah, Hedi escaped to London as a refugee.

keiron.pim@gmail.com

GERMAN HANDWRITING

Can you read *Kurrentschrift*? Simon Steyne's father fled Prague in March 1939; by 1941 he had received 50 letters from his grandmother. Simon can read German, but not the handwriting, and is happy to pay for assistance or make a donation.

steyne.sb@gmail.com

RABBI SCHMUCKLER

Keith Graham is looking for any information about his Great-Grandfather, Rabbi Schmuckler, who lived at Humboldtstrasse 24, Leipzig, and was the Rabbi at Chevrah Mishnayoth Shul.

kgraham@hwca.com

BOURNEMOUTH HOTELS

For her new book on Jewish hotels Pam Fox seeks information on Mr E. Rubinstein ('Ruby'), manager of the Ambassador Hotel during the late 1940s/early 1950s.

pamfoxvirginmedia.com

ART NOTES: by Gloria Tessler

It is like a love letter written across 100 years of mutual solitude – the young acolyte and the great Master. Tracey Emin pairs 25 of her own paintings, some seen for the first time, with 19 oil and water colour paintings by her hero-mentor, the sensitive and withdrawn Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. Speaking about him at the opening of the show Tracey Emin/Edvard Munch: The Loneliness of the Soul, at the Royal Academy, Emin reveals her passion for the Expressionist painter since she was 17.

What drew them together? How far is Emin truly influenced by Munch's work – or does she simply see her own reflection in his personal expression of pain? And what would Munch have made of his effect on one of the most controversial figures on the contemporary artistic landscape? In her own words, Emin describes Munch as “pioneering, innovative and skilful at an emotional level”. His work involves loneliness

and anguish, just as hers does, but she personally does not find the creator of the famous *Scream* dark and moody, but “fluorescent”. She admires the colour, not the gloom in his work, the “real emotion” in his paintings and sees him as a “friend in art.”

So in this unusual pairing across the century, I wonder whether it is a question of the Emperor's new clothes. Not that Emin's subjects wear any; her defiant and tortured nudes are just that, scratchy, *louche* versions of herself; a massive vagina, huge smudges of red, words on canvas, scrawled female bodies, some not recognisable as such.

She chose Munch's work to accompany her own – and we are asked to read the empathy between the two as they explore their mutual themes of grief, loss and yearning. What links them is probably Munch's blatant expression of sorrow and lack stemming from the death of his mother when he was only five, followed by that of his adored sister. Such early trauma was intensified by a series of doomed love affairs. It was as though Munch was forced into an unstoppable cycle of love turning to sorrow.

The subjects in his late art after *The Scream* are often solitary and evasive; some with a look of death upon them,

if they are there at all. Munch can portray individual isolation even in group portraits. He presents death in a face as though it has already left this earth. You immerse yourself in these works and they can break your heart. But Emin has not picked any of these. She has chosen sketchier, scratchier versions, almost as though she is not looking at him but at herself. Of course Munch's presentation of life's dark side is present in her choices; for instance she has matched his *Crouching Nude*, 1917 with her 2019 orgasmic version: *It didn't stop – I didn't stop*.

But the difference is that his nude has the actuality – the ‘thereness’ of pain, sketchy as it may be, in both face and body. Emin's version has shape, movement and raw energy, but the emotion is sexual, shouty and self-regarding. His two figures, the man and the woman in *Consolation*, her head in her hands, his demeanour, gentle with masculine concern, contrasts with one of her better works, *You Kept it Coming*, in which the male figure seems to be crushing the female.

Some of her work, including *You were here like the ground underneath my feet*, and *Because you left*, both 2016, remind us of Emin's use of art to express her inner psychological life. Although the RA claims that the two artists – “though separated by time and history, explore the same emotional landscape in their works with remarkable intensity,” it left me feeling that Emin was defining herself through sexual trauma, while Munch was exploring the trauma of grief itself. *Until February 28*



Tracey Emin-Edvard Munch exhibition at the Royal Academy

Annelly Juda Fine Art

23 Dering Street
(off New Bond Street)
Tel: 020 7629 7578
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**CONTEMPORARY
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE**

TRIANON AND THE JEWS OF HUNGARY

It's now over 100 years since the Treaty of Trianon was concluded between Hungary and the Allies. But although it helped to bring an end to World War 1, the Treaty has had long lasting effects on Hungarian Jews, as Janos Fisher explains.

Trianon resulted in a huge reduction in the size of Hungary. The hurt caused to Hungarians by this loss led to revisionism in Hungary, which to some degree is still present today. In the hope of regaining the lost territories, Hungarians cooperated with the Nazis which, in turn, made the always present antisemitism in Hungary really come to the fore: Trianon was often blamed on the Jews.

The lost territories had large communities of Jews. Most of them considered themselves Hungarians: their culture was Hungarian not Romanian, Croat,

This map shows how Hungary was broken up as a result of the Treaty of Trianon.



Serb or Slovak. A good example of this is Transylvania: in Cluj, Kolozsvár even today, even after the efforts of the Ceausescu regime, there is a very active Hungarian theatre and cultural life. The Hungarians living in Romania and, undoubtedly, also the Jews living there, would still prefer to live in Hungary. The Orban government of today is actively helping Jewish life in Serbia; (for example a large part of the cost of restoring the magnificent Subotica synagogue was provided by Hungary). This then will, in a roundabout way, stoke the Hungarian minorities' wish to re-join Hungary.

Jews made up a sizable percentage of the population in some of the "lost" towns at the time:
Munkacs 45%, Beregszasz 28%, Nagyvarad 25%, Ungvar 31%

The total number of Jews in the "lost territories" was put at 460,000.

As for the wish of Jews living in these lost territories, a good example was the proclamation of the Budapest Izraelita Hitkozseg, addressed to Jews the world over. It was a cry for help: *Don't let Hungary lose what the Trianon Peace Agreement decrees. Help to save it!*

The help did not materialise, the minorities of Hungary got their independent states and Hungary shrank by two thirds. The consequence of this was the ever-present nationalistic wish to regain all that was lost; this, in turn, led to an alignment with Germany which then led to the near annihilation of Hungary's Jews in the Holocaust.

A Hungarian Poem

In 1957 AJR member Janos Fisher spent six months in a refugee camp for 750 men, in Skegness. As part of his English lessons there he helped to translate this poem, written by Miklos Radnoti, whom he describes as one of the greatest Hungarian poets of the 20th century.

Miklos Radnoti was born in 1909. Many of his poems were written against war, expressing bewilderment at the causes and reasons for it, yet still displaying an undefeated optimism. He spent four years in labour camps before being killed by the Nazis on a death march in 1944. His body was exhumed from a common grave and in his pocket they found his last poems.

May Festival

A daffodil sings in the grass
And, breath catching, gasps like a fugitive,
But no pursuers follow, only girls
Who, like fiery flowers, encircle it.

One girl falls to her knees,
Shoulders brown, but legs still winter white,
And on cheap music her naïve soul floats up,
Grey like the clouds above.

Boys crouch and glow like embers,
Lips mouthing awkward words of love,
And small success conceit of manhood brings;
But, if they must, with ease they kill.

Perhaps they can be human,
Because humanity is in them; only
The mind worthy of mankind is slumbering. But say
That all is not without some hope.

ONE 'HMD' OPINION

As this issue of the *AJR Journal* went to print final preparations were being made for the 2021 Holocaust Memorial Day, using the theme *Be the Light in the Darkness*. We will invite the HMD Trust to review the full programme of activities in our March issue. In the meantime we provide food for thought with this opinion piece by one of our regular contributors, Frank Bright.

Three years ago I went to an HMD event at Suffolk University where the main speaker was Sudanese, who concentrated on the help he had received in Ipswich. He was the product of the HMDT's programme of foisting on us "subsequent genocides" which have nothing to do with us, which should have a day of their own, not the day reserved for our dead, persecuted and robbed.

In 2019 the HMDT's theme was *Torn from Home*. The Trust offered plenty of examples of "subsequent genocides" but nothing about the Jews from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Iran and as far as Afghanistan, who numbered c.850,000 until 1948, when the whole area was made *judenrein*. They were forced to flee in what they stood up in and to leave everything behind, were never allowed to return and were never paid a penny in compensation.

Our Holocaust lasted for over 12 years and cost the lives of six million Jewish men, women and children, let alone all the other Jews who were robbed of all of their livelihoods, homes and possessions. How do the people of Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur and Bosnia fit into that?

The HMDT's list of prominent survivors includes a Hungarian footballer who survived because his club hid him. But he is a completely unrepresentative example of the 564,000 Hungarian



The HMD theme for 2021 was *Be the light in the darkness*

Jews who had no team mates to hide them, including over 434,000 shipped to Auschwitz. Likewise the Danish girl who, together with her parents, was taken by Danish fishermen to Sweden. There she continued her education while their Danish neighbours looked after the home to which the entire family ultimately returned. To her it was just a matter of an inconvenience and not of wasted years. Good luck to her but she never even saw the inside of a ghetto, never starved in a slave labour camp. How can she possibly make a contribution to Holocaust education? She is surely a very exceptional case who can only foster the belief in any newcomer to the subject that the Holocaust has been exaggerated.

Particularly annoying to me is the inclusion of Bosniaks into the HMDT list of "subsequent genocides" because the Bosniak converts to Islam fought against the Allies and in so doing killed both Serb and Jewish civilians. There is no denying that Srebrenica was horrific, but it was a massacre, a retribution - not a genocide. It is an abuse of language and diminishes the meaning we rightly attribute to our dead.

In January 2020 I went to the University of Essex to play a small part in the annual Dora Love Prize Competition, which is awarded to the best school project that links learning about the Holocaust to the world we live in today. The HMDT's theme for that year was *Stand Together* (although it should be noted that Holocaust deniers also stand together) and over 30 schools were represented, a record number. The winning school had focused on female discrimination, using KZ Ravensbrück as an example. However there was no mention of the

camp's dreadful medical experiments, its brothel, the presence of a gas chamber and crematorium (operated by male prisoners), the brutality of female SS-women, the daily death toll by suicide, execution, weakness through malnutrition, punishments, and slave labour for Siemens. Eighty inmates died each day, not to mention their children. Because schools had depended on the HMDT resource pack, all such information eluded them. That is not the way to teach students, or anybody else, about the Holocaust. It is an insult to the 50,000 who died there.

We know from research that the state of Holocaust education is poor. In the US it is even worse, but let us start here and one of the first steps I suggest is either to ignore HMDT because it has been a bad influence, or offer something better before Cambodia, the Sudan and Rwanda are considered equal to Germany's persecution, robbery and annihilation of European Jewry. It is one of those institutions of which it has been said that no people do so much harm as those who go about doing good. If we have the facts of the Jewish Holocaust at heart we just cannot afford their mixed-up, confusing and superficial messages which corrupt young minds.

Prefer to make up your own mind? See the full range of HMD 2021 resources and activities on www.hmd.org.uk. You could also join the University of Sussex at 2pm on Wednesday 3 February for its very special HMD event - a live Q&A session, with Holocaust survivors, Peter Summerfield BEM and his twin brother George <https://alumni.sussex.ac.uk/hmd-booking>

INTRODUCING THE BRADY PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

The Brady Club for Working Lads was founded in 1896 in Whitechapel, London E1. The project was driven by Lady Rothschild and several other wealthy West End Jews who wanted to improve the social quality of life and help to anglicise the East End boys from East European refugee families, whose *lingua franca* was Yiddish. In 1925, Miriam Moses OBE established the Brady Girls Club, which occupied the same building until 1935 when the girls moved to a building in Hanbury Street, London E1.

In 1946 the Primrose Jewish Youth Club was founded by some of the young survivors of the Holocaust who settled in Britain. These youngsters forged close bonds, based on their shared histories and called themselves "The Boys" (only about 80 of them were girls, as survival for Jewish girls under the Nazis had been almost impossible).

The link between these clubs was P. Yogi Mayer MBE who, in April 1939, had escaped Nazi Germany to the UK. He enlisted in the army and served in the Special Operations Executive (SOE). After the war he was appointed leader of the Primrose Club and then, in 1951, club leader at Brady, amalgamating the Brady Boys and Girls Clubs in Hanbury Street in 1960 to create an environment where all members were encouraged to participate in sport, art and social activities.

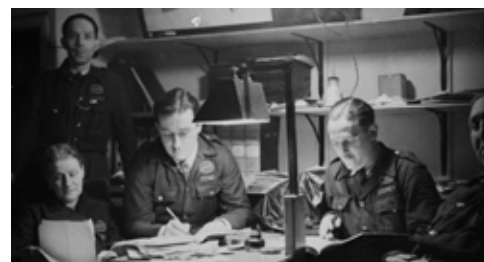
Yvonne Brent, an AJR volunteer, whose mother arrived in England in 1938 from Poland, joined Brady in the 1960s. She remembers being encouraged by Yogi to regularly visit a local elderly lady for tea and a chat and then, building on this first stimulation of her social conscience, as

retirement beckoned she signed up for the League of Jewish Women (LJW), volunteering as a hospital visitor and in a local Jewish Care home. From 2013-16 she served as national President of LJW, is currently Chair of the Executive, and also UK Vice President of the International Council of Jewish Women.

In 2016 a cache of photographs relating to the members and premises of the Brady Clubs between 1940 and the mid-1970s were discovered in an attic. They were passed to Susan Andrews, Reader in Photography at London Metropolitan University. Susan realised that there was an historical value to the collection but she knew little about the Brady Clubs. She decided to organise an exhibition entitled *Nostalgia is Not Enough* to raise some public awareness. The exhibition was visited by a number of old Bradians, who approached Susan to find out more about the collection and add greatly to their history. Subsequently, students, staff and old Bradians worked together to archive the photographs and record the Brady story.

This led to the formation of the Brady Photographic Archive Committee (BPAC), culminating in a second, larger exhibition of the photos and memorabilia in May 2018 at the London Metropolitan building in Aldgate with the support of the University, its students and Susan Andrews. BPAC subsequently obtained funding to build a website to make some of the newly found photographs and memorabilia available to the Brady *diaspora* around the world.

While there are currently no photographs of Club members from the pre-war era, many of the current archive's photos and memorabilia will undoubtedly include the parents and grandparents of second and third generation AJR members. In addition to the photographic archive, BPAC arranged a banner to march under at the 2019 AJEX commemoration service at the Cenotaph followed by a memorial



Miriam Moses during the War



Frank Bernard, Laurie Bloom, Phil Emden, Joe Lazarus & Charles Spencer on the winning 'pirate ship' at a local carnival during Brady's 1950 camping trip to Dymchurch in Kent. The 'ship' was the camp luggage cart adorned with some spare canvas and tent rigging.



Basil Marcusson and friends

service for Club members killed in action, which was held at Sandys Row Synagogue, where the Kindertransport children were first taken after arriving at Liverpool Street Station.

The website can be found at www.bradyarchive.co.uk, and BPAC is building a list of email addresses to keep members informed of further events and initiatives to keep the memory of Brady alive. Please get in touch with us at bradpacom@gmail.com for more information or to join our mailing list.

Anna Perceval

An Addiction

A framed handwritten letter from Sigmund Freud to my father hangs in my study, writes Victor Ross. It is a request to check a quotation from one of Goethe's plays.

My father was known as a collector of books and manuscripts by and about Goethe. He was also known for defending social democrats and communists in Vienna's High Court which earned him a place on a Gestapo list. They came for him the day German troops marched into Austria. Finding him gone they vented their frustration by making a bonfire of his books and using manuscripts as lavatory paper. My father wondered what Goethe would have said.

My mother was no collector (busy people rarely are) but when I tidied her bookshelves after her death I found a cache of books that came from Sigmund Freud's private library, a bit like finding gold among pebbles. There were 27 volumes in all, many of them in English with Freud's ownership signature, others were gifts from admirers such as H.G. Wells and Artur Schnitzler with fulsome dedications.

How did my mother come by such treasures? She was a friend of the family, a psychoanalyst and former patient of the Professor (as we called him). Perhaps there is a clue in three volumes of essays by, respectively, Adam Smith, David Hume and Sydney Smith - a suitable gift for a friend about to emigrate to England, offering a taste of English culture. But what about the other books? My mother never mentioned any of this; an air of mystery persists as of a secret transaction.

"I really am quite talented - Noël"

There is no mystery about my wife's Coward connection and her Noël Coward-iana. She appeared in his shows and became something of a protégée. The above quote is from Coward's



Sigmund Freud - the exemplary collector

inscription in her copy of a *catalogue raisonné* listing his prodigious output of operettas, plays, films, songs, stories, performances. And in her copy of *Alice in Wonderland* he wrote "So that you can have a thorough grounding in the classics - Love, Noël", thus inadvertently echoing Shaw's mission.

Although I have been a collector all my life, from minerals, marbles, stamps, watches - really of everything except rents - I came late to books. I started by looking for inscriptions that revealed character, relationships, possibly secrets. Noël doesn't leave you in any doubt about his self-confidence. Or does he?

The fun lies in the chase: visiting charity shops and spending 75p on what may be an unrecognised treasure, or thousands at auction on an unexpurgated first edition of James Joyce's 'Ulysses'. I've done both.

D.H. Lawrence's phallus

What a collector like me aspires to is to own a truly unique item, an astonishingly revealing one-off. If you want to see an intimate caricature of Lawrence you have to come to me. In my copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, signed by the author and inscribed by H.G. Wells, I found two sketches, one showing Lawrence with a giant phallus ("as he sees himself"), the other of a diminished and shrunken Lawrence ("as

he really is"). This is Wells' skilful pen delivering its devastating judgment in a book worth a few thousand pounds but in my eyes priceless as a supreme example of the genre.

"I must always have an object to love." - Sigmund Freud

This desire makes Freud the exemplary collector, famously pictured at his desk, surrounded by his books, his favourite antiquities lined up before him. Freud kept no record of his acquisitions. They follow no discernible plan and look for all the world like happy impulse buys. He called it his addiction.

They say that collecting is a sublimated form of hoarding and that philately gets you nowhere (my wife collected scissors, which I found worrying). A correspondent in the November issue of the *Journal* confessed to collecting empty envelopes! That makes me feel a lot better. I am at ease going with Goethe, who said that "Collectors are happy people."

Books Bought

MODERN AND OLD

Eric Levene

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Proud to be German

Peter Gumbel is the author of a new book entitled *Citizens of Everywhere*, which is currently being reviewed for a forthcoming issue of the *AJR Journal*. In this article he explains why his grandparents, who fled Nazi Germany for Britain, would be heartbroken to see our country today.

My grandparents arrived on the eve of WW2 as stateless refugees. They felt gratitude for their immediate safety and a deep attachment to the values of openness, decency and tolerance they found in their adopted homeland. As soon as the war ended, they became naturalised British citizens. In a letter to a friend, my grandfather praised the “generous hospitality and nearly unrestricted freedom” they enjoyed as migrants. They never shed their German accents but switched to speaking only in English.

My parents’ generation, in turn, gave their all for the country that took them in. My uncle, who arrived via Kindertransport when he was 15 years old, was killed on a Normandy beach on D-Day, aged 21. In the 1980s, my father, a businessman, and my aunt, a radiographer, were both decorated by Queen Elizabeth II for their contributions to the country. “After all the trauma of leaving Germany I had struck fresh roots in England,” my father wrote in a private memoir. “We had found a new home in every sense of the word.”

But the openness and tolerance that made the country a safe haven for them are in retreat. The vote to leave the European Union in 2016 and the surge of national exceptionalism that accompanied it revealed deeply held prejudices about migrants. Xenophobia and racism, presumed to be banished to the margins of public life, made an ugly return to the mainstream.

Since the 2016 referendum, the government has alienated many of the



Believed to have been taken in 1934 in Cottbus, Germany, this photo shows Peter’s maternal grandfather Ernst Frank, his wife Carla, and her mother, Carolin Grua, with Peter’s mother Ellen, her twin sister Marion, and their brother Maxi, who was killed on D-Day fighting in his British Army Commando unit.

3.5 million European Union nationals in the country. Such people make a big contribution to British life and without them, the country would be greatly diminished. Alarmingly, large numbers appear to have left in 2020 while political rot has set in. When Moody’s Investors Service downgraded Britain’s credit rating last October, it cited the “diminished” quality of British executive and legislative institutions. Ethical standards have also tumbled, with the government turning a blind eye to workplace harassment of civil servants and cronyism creeping into the award of public contracts through the pandemic.

I take no joy in this state of affairs, and neither do many fellow Britons. The country is just as divided as the United States has been over President Trump. But unlike in the United States, where Joe Biden is now providing a reprieve from Mr. Trump, Brexit cannot be undone.

My American friends see me as quintessentially British, a devoted tea drinker and fan of Marmite, *Monty Python* and fair play. Yet I am also strongly pro-European, a feeling reinforced by having lived in several European countries over the years. The two identities always seemed to me to be complementary. But Brexit has made it impossible to be British and European at the same time. I therefore took a decision I never dreamed I would even consider: I applied for German citizenship.

I can never forget what happened to my family; my great-aunt perished in Auschwitz and several other cousins died in the Holocaust. But I can also recognise how much Germany has changed and the lengths to which it has gone to atone for the atrocities of the Third Reich. Today, it is Germany that opens its door to refugees and whose chancellor, Angela Merkel, is outspoken in defence of global values and embodies decency and respect. By contrast, the Britain that sheltered and nurtured my family is a sad shadow of its former self.

After 80 years, I feel ready to close a cycle of history. British by birth, I am European by heritage and conviction — and now have an unambiguously European nationality to prove it. I am still proud to be British, but I am also proud to be German. I think my grandparents and parents would approve.

Peter Gumbel’s book *Citizens of Everywhere: Searching for Identity in the Age of Brexit* was published last November by Haus Curiosities.

Peter Gumbel will be interviewed by AJR Chief Executive Michael Newman on Zoom on Wednesday 10 February at 6pm. Book your free ticket on: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/in-conversation-with-peter-gumbel-author-of-citizens-of-everywhere-tickets-135477489819>

A 'BOUNCED CZECH'

Like Madeleine Albright, the USA's first female secretary of state, Sir Tom Stoppard, par excellence Britain's intellectual playwright, was born in 1937, in what was then Czechoslovakia. And like Albright, he learnt only late in life of his Jewish origins.

Dame Hermione Lee, a prize-winning biographer and retired professor of literature, vividly describes the traumatic and tragic background in her magisterial *Tom Stoppard A Life* (published by Faber). Stoppard was born in Zlín, where his father, Eugen Stráussler, was a doctor in the hospital of what was an enlightened, multinational shoe-manufacturing company, Bata. The Nazis had taken over Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939 and promptly banned Jewish doctors from practising.

Bata, with branches in many countries, offered to relocate its Jewish doctors and their families. Tomáš or Tomik, his parents and his elder brother Petr, were evacuated to Singapore. With the Japanese conquest of south-east Asia, however, the family in early 1942 had to flee once more. (Stoppard would later write the film script of *Empire of the Sun*, the best-selling novel J. G. Ballard wrote around his memories of the fall of Shanghai).

As mothers and children received priority, Stoppard's father stayed behind when Tom, his mother Marta and his brother embarked on a boat that took them to India, not to Australia, as Marta had supposed. Her husband later managed to get a passage on a boat that was part of a convoy headed for Australia - but the vessel never reached its destination. It presumably sank after Japanese aircraft attacked it.

Marta was managing Bata's shoe shop in Darjeeling, a small town surrounded by British-run tea plantations, and a summer refuge for British officials in the Himalayan foothills. Having failed to find out the fate of her husband, she asked a woman friend to

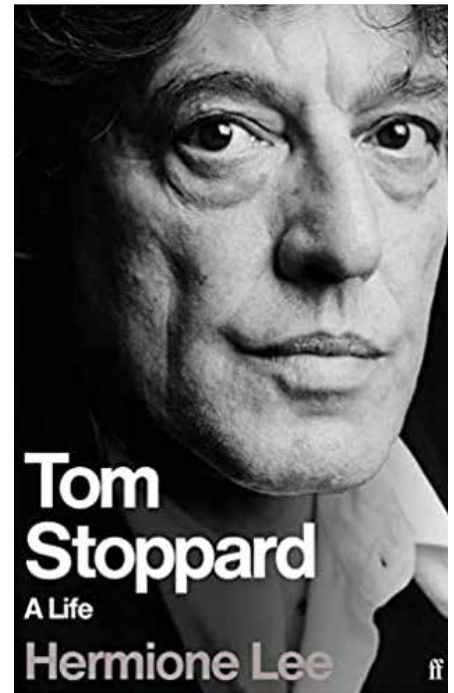
tell her sons that their father was dead.

It was at a dinner party that Marta met Major Kenneth Stoppard, a 'handsome, clean-cut Englishman' strongly committed to 'King and Country.' On leave from New Delhi, he courted her assiduously from the start. They were married - in an Anglican church - in November 1945. The next year the new family sailed to England.

Hermione Lee tells us the boys saw 'their stepfather as a bitter, disappointed man, bigoted, xenophobic and antisemitic.' In a key passage, she writes: 'And because of his overriding Englishness, from now on [Marta] would speak only English, discount her Jewishness and keep quiet about the past. If she knew, by the time she left India, what had happened to her family, she said nothing.... She never told her sons, either that she was Jewish or that most of her family had perished in the Holocaust.'

Years later, when asked about his harrowing past, Stoppard, witty as ever, would describe himself as a 'bounced Czech': although seemingly assimilated, he still felt Czech. In the 1970s he supported Eastern Europe's struggle to throw off the Soviet yoke. He wrote several plays around that issue, among them *Professional Foul* (1977), dedicated to his friend Václav Havel, the Czech dissident writer who became president in 1993, after the 'velvet revolution.'

It was only in 1993, however, that his mother's great-niece surprised Tom, by revealing to him that he was 'completely Jewish.' Over lunch at the National Theatre restaurant, in the presence of his 'uneasy and distressed' mother, Sir Tom learned that



relatives of both his parents had perished in Auschwitz. It emerged that Marta already knew the appalling details, but had 'felt it would be better for the boys if she left the past behind.'

What Tom came to see as his 'absence of curiosity,' and 'an endless willingness not to disturb my mother by questioning her,' turned into an ever more insistent self-reproach. Family matters gradually 'had their full impact on him and got into his writing.' In the late 1990s he returned to the place of his birth, and began to investigate his past. His plays now dealt with revolution and exile; 'his family's past ... What had once been obliterated came back to haunt him.'

In her brilliant exegesis of Stoppard's cathartic *Leopoldstadt* (Covid-19 closed the play only a month after it opened), Hermione Lee outlines how he 'pillaged from everywhere,' in his quest for details about Viennese Jewry. But he also incorporated many facts about his own family's destiny. 'It could be described,' she writes, 'as an act of restitution.'

Martin Mauthner

www.fishburnbooks.com

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MEMORIES OF A REFUGEE CHILDHOOD



Christine and her parents



Peter de Mendelssohn



Hilde Spiel

Christine Shuttleworth is a translator and indexer, and the daughter of two distinguished figures of the literary emigration to London, Hilde Spiel and Peter de Mendelssohn. She shared her reminiscences with Martin Mauthner.

Tell me about your early years

My mother, from Vienna, and my father, from Munich, were writers of Jewish origin who left their respective countries in 1936 to escape the Nazi regime. They had met in 1934, in Vienna. They married in London, and settled in Wimbledon, whereas other émigrés mostly gathered in North London.

I was born in Cambridge in 1939 – my mother was one of the pregnant women evacuated from London. My brother, Anthony Felix, was born in London in 1944 and became a psychoanalyst in Vienna. In 1945, we moved to Berlin, where my father worked as a press officer for the Allied forces under Eisenhower. According to his own account, he almost singlehandedly rebuilt the Berlin newspaper industry. My mother enjoyed her job as a theatre critic. In 1948, we returned to Wimbledon.

I wasn't particularly aware of my Jewish heritage. My mother had been brought up as a Catholic; I was sent to a convent school, and my brother to a Jesuit-run college. Later, we both went to boarding schools. After graduating from Oxford, I worked as an editorial trainee for Robert

Maxwell's Pergamon Press, in Oxford. I received no training, and found Maxwell uncongenial. I came back to London and worked as an editor for book and magazine publishers. Since 1982, I have worked from home, as a freelance indexer, and translator from German into English.

Who is or was 'Shuttleworth'?

Frank Shuttleworth, my second husband, ran a steel fabricator business. Despite our different backgrounds, our marriage was happy, but he died, aged 56. He was the father of my daughter, Beckie.

Your memories of your parents?

My father was a brilliant but difficult man, whose passion for his work was paramount. Our relationship was strained at times. I was closer to my mother, who supported me in my personal and professional life. She asked me to translate her *Fanny von Arnstein* [a celebrated 18th-century personality in Viennese society], and encouraged me to translate other books.

Your reflections on your 'refugee' experience?

I was conscious of being an outsider in the UK. This may be why I turned to the Catholic Church as a girl. It offered me a feeling of belonging. However, I abandoned the Church at the age of 18.

I could not understand why my grandfather was interned as an 'enemy alien', when he was Jewish and fleeing from the Nazis. He was a research chemist and had been offered a job with DuPont in New Jersey. On his release, it was too late to take up his booking on the ocean liner, as all non-military sea travel had been cancelled.

My parents associated with other émigré writers, artists and publishers, such as Oskar Kokoschka and George Weidenfeld. Hilde interviewed Anna Freud and the philosopher Karl Popper. My parents were active in International PEN, and took me to PEN meetings in London and other cities. We encountered such august literary figures as the novelist Alberto Moravia and the historian C. V. Wedgwood. Among our close friends in London were [the writer] Hans Flesch-Brunning, who became my stepfather in 1971, after my parents' divorce, and the Ehrlichs – Georg, a sculptor, and his wife Bettina, a children's writer and illustrator.

In 1945, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman* and a great friend of Hilde's, asked her: 'I expect you will go back to your own country now?' In her memoirs, she comments: 'Then we knew, though we did not admit it to ourselves, that nine years of assimilation into the English world had been in vain.'

Is that why your parents went back to Munich and Vienna?

It was a major factor. My parents' marriage was breaking down, and they decided to separate in 1962. A year later, Hilde returned to Vienna. My father stayed on in Wimbledon, but disenchanted with his life in the UK, he returned, about 1970-71, to his native Munich.

What do you think about the post-Brexit trend to (re)acquire German/Austrian passports?

I am strongly opposed to Brexit. My daughter is applying for Austrian citizenship, and I support her in this.

REVIEWS

SYBILLE BEDFORD - AN APPETITE FOR LIFE

By Selina Hastings
Chatto & Windus

The writer Sybille Bedford, née Von Schoenebeck, was twice a refugee or, perhaps more accurately, an émigré.

Her German-Jewish mother and Bavarian Catholic aristocratic father had divorced when she was a child. She was a teenager at school in England, when her mother and Italian aristocratic stepfather, Norberto Marchesani, left Mussolini's fascist Italy in the 1920s and settled in Sanary, near Toulon. In June 1940, Bedford secured a berth on the last United States passenger ship to sail from Genoa before the outbreak of war. On that occasion, it was not only the Nazi menace that motivated her; the stream to France of émigrés from Hitler had provoked a disturbing xenophobic backlash among French right-wing extremists in the region.

Sanary is today associated with several German-language writers and their respective wives who visited or found refuge in the small port, among them Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger and Stefan Zweig. (Bedford's half-sister also lived there, with her German diplomat husband spying on the defence installations at Toulon!) Aldous Huxley and his Belgian wife were residents for many years, and inevitably several British writers gathered around them. The multilingual Bedford had a key role as a go-between. She did voluntary work helping hard-up German refugees in Paris; until the French authorities stopped her, Bedford brought food to refugees interned by the French in the notorious Les Milles camp, near Marseilles.

Bedford spent the war years in California and New York, but did not flourish on either coast; she eagerly returned to France in 1947. Thereafter, she led a nomadic existence, constantly moving between Provence, Paris, Rome and London, plus trips to Switzerland, Spain and Portugal, and elsewhere. She spent her final years in Chelsea.

Bedford changed not only the roof over her head; she changed her lovers frequently, too. Bedford was publicly reticent about being a lesbian. Selina Hastings, who had access to Bedford's diaries and other private papers, has now opened the closet. In her new biography, *Lady Selina* recounts the arranged marriage in 1935 to Walter Bedford, so that Sybille could acquire a British passport.

She details almost twenty 'affairs' and 'relationships,' stretching into Bedford's extreme old age; there were also visits to a lesbian club in Chelsea, and to 'a much less sophisticated venue, where the girls made themselves available by the hour.' Bedford asked one girl where she worked. Told 'In the forecourt,' Bedford said, 'Where is that? In the Inns of Court?' 'Naah!' replied the sex-worker, 'It's a petrol station.'

That intimate side of her life does not feature in Bedford's fiction in the way, over and over again, she transformed her formative years - in Berlin and a Black Forest castle, and the pre-war sojourn in Italy and France - into the literary works that ultimately brought her, if not wealth, certainly wide and well merited recognition.
Martin Mauthner

ASHES

By Christopher de Vinck
Harper Inspire

This novel – inspired by true events – is set in WW2 telling the poignant story of two young girls who live in Brussels: Simone, the daughter of a famous Belgian national hero, General Joseph Lyon, and her best friend, Hava Daniels.

Despite growing up in different worlds the friends are inseparable and in spring 1940 escape together when Nazi planes and tanks begin the terrible attack on the capital. Until then they had led a fairly charmed existence, having met as volunteers for the Red Cross. Simone – whose mother died when she was born – gets to know the Daniels family from Poland including Hava's father Yaakov, mother Avital and little brother Benjamin whose drawing she keeps.

Hava is an extrovert who loves show business and the Catholic Simone becomes familiar with the life of an observant Jewish

family. But as clouds gather Simone is warned to keep away from her great friend. An order she has no intention of following.

Her father already has a lasting disdain for Germany. Deeply respected, he fought with great bravery during the First World War, sustained a lasting disability to his arm and won the Croix de Guerre. He was part of the White Lady - "La Dame Blanche" - intelligence network and this time he leaves home the first autumn of the war to join the mysterious Belgian resistance. Simone doesn't see him for four years during which he escapes over the Pyrenees and is imprisoned before making his way to London.

This mirrors the author's grandfather, Joseph Henri Kestens, and all unattributed epigraphs are either excerpts or memories as recorded and shared in his war journal. Interesting headings also quote from Anne Frank, German propaganda, Winston Churchill and Theodor Herzl. Both girls – Simone has brown hair and Hava is blonde – love literature and books. Works and authors such as *Gone with the Wind*, *Madame Bovary*, *Black Beauty*, Shakespeare and Dickens are mentioned. There are dreams of Hollywood with Greta Garbo and Clarke Gable.

But the story itself is serious with the horrors of war and invasion. It narrates an encounter mentioning the old Jewish saying: "Where you have no choice, mobilise the spirit of courage", and this is clearly demonstrated. There are vignettes of the unexpected kindness of strangers experienced when obtaining scarce food, rail tickets or shelter. There is also a convent sister who helps Jewish children. Deeper and darker themes such as collaboration under enemy occupation are explored. The casualties of the war of people from different walks of life are tragically legion and there is continual movement and turmoil escaping from the enemy in the maelstrom.

Throughout this moving tale of refugees, wartime courage, escape and tragedy a light shines through; the reader is taken effortlessly from chapter to chapter as the action moves along. The situation covered is extremely harrowing yet is told with a light touch and interestingly the male author manages to get inside the mind of Simone, the storyteller.

Janet Weston

FINDING RELLY: MY FAMILY, THE HOLOCAUST AND ME

By Rosemary Schonfeld
Valentine Mitchell

By now there are dozens of Second and Third Generation books written about retracing one's family history, but this one stands out because of its distinctive character and genre; it reads more like a *Bildungsroman*; all true, but more engrossing than much of non-fiction.

Rosemary Schonfeld writes candidly about her own experiences and emotions, in a style that invites you into her life. It is a very intimate account of her journey. A journey of discovery, not only about her relatives, but also about other people she encounters, across continents. In the process she also discovers her own strengths and weaknesses.

She describes what afflicts her, at first as a teenager growing up in Canada, haunted by unexplained depressions, dropping out of university and taking on jobs in New Zealand and Australia, arriving in England in the mid-1970s.

In London, she begins to uncover what really lies behind her depressions, a feeling that she is being 'hit from behind'. She attends a Radical Psychiatry Clinic in Kentish Town, with group therapy in a supportive group environment, where she gains more self-confidence and faces up

to her sexuality as a Lesbian. She sets up a band and sings with a close friend of hers. The band (Ova) took off, touring Germany and Scandinavia for about thirteen years, but by the end of the 1980s, Schonfeld felt burnt-out and went into therapy. In order to move away from more recent pain, broken relationships and disappointments with the band, she decides to make a clean break and move to Devon.

She embarks on a music degree as a mature student, renting a flat in the countryside, where she stayed for 12 years. And it is here that she began her quest to find out what had actually happened to her lost relatives. After watching a couple of Holocaust related TV programmes, she contacted one of the films producer's, who was able to put her in touch with the Association of Children of Jewish Refugees, who sent her their newsletter. She was also put in touch with the Second Generation Network group in Bristol, began attending their meetings, discovering that she shared many things in common with other members, feeling a special bond with them.

It is through a Czech-born member of the Bristol Second Generation group, that Schonfeld finds out about the list of inmates at Theresienstadt (Terezin) and discovers that one of her uncles had died, but his wife, Relly, had survived. After the war, the aunt had settled first in Prague, but then is said to have left for Australia. Desperate to find out more, Schonfeld

writes to all the Jewish organisations in Australia she could find addresses for (via the good services of the Wiener Holocaust Library in London) but draws a blank. Eventually, via a circuitous route, her search notice does reach the right family and she receives a letter from Australia saying that her aunt is alive and well, living in Sydney. Schonfeld is able to visit her aunt five times from 2000 to 2010, establishes a wonderful rapport with her aunt, her children and grandchildren.

Not only does Schonfeld find her lost aunt, but in the process gets to know a warm-hearted and welcoming family. She thoroughly enjoyed her trips to visit them and, in the process, also found out the truth about her father's family, a truth that had always been hidden from her, or covered up with half-truths and lies. Her aunt died in 2010, but she still maintains contact with the rest of the family. Schonfeld notes that one of the themes of being Second Generation is not belonging anywhere, but in Australia she found a family where she felt she did 'belong' and felt accepted by them.

There is more to this story too, as Schonfeld writes: 'This theme that "I am still here" is crucial for the history of the Holocaust. We of the Second Generation are not here merely to sort out our own problems. We are what is left. We are evidence'

David Clark



benuri.org

DISCOVER

Ben Uri's Research Unit studying the Jewish and immigrant contribution to British visual culture since 1900 at benuri.org

THE FIRST FULL SCALE VIRTUAL MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTRE

OBITUARIES

BERTHA LEVERTON

Born: 23 January 1923, Munich

Died: 1 December 2020, Israel



It all started in 1988 when our mother realised that her oldest granddaughter, then aged 15, did not know anything about the harrowing details of how she, at exactly the same age, had left her parents unaccompanied to travel to a strange land with a different language and culture.

In 1989 it would be the 50th anniversary of the Kindertransport and she came to the conclusion that, after 50 years of not talking about what had happened, it was time to finally talk about the past.

She decided to take matters in hand and put an advertisement in various Jewish newspapers asking for anyone who had also been on the Kindertransport to contact her for a possible reunion.

She had no idea that from such a modest beginning this would develop into a large scale international platform of connection and education for former Kinder. It was especially poignant as the vast majority of these Kinder's families ended up in the death camps. This made the desire for connection between the Kinder, and to hear of how other Kinder had fared, even stronger.

Our mother devoted herself to the needs of these Kinder, combining her incredible organisational skills with her understanding of exactly what would be important, given that she herself was one of them. It was because of her warm and caring personality that the reunion was such a success. She dedicated herself for over 20 years and apart from the reunions, made a connecting newsletter, secured assistance and encouraged archives of the

Kindertransport for educational purposes. She compiled a book of stories from the Kinder of the Kindertransport entitled *I Came Alone*, which was swiftly followed by a professional Hollywood adaptation, *Into the Arms of Strangers*, which went on to win the prestigious Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in the year 2000.

She organised Chanukah and Purim parties, especially for those Kinder who had been adopted by non-Jewish families and for whom these festivals were but a vague memory. She also organised bar and bat mitzvahs for fellow Kinder aged 70+ who had never had one.

Thanks to mum's efforts, hundreds of other Kinder also wrote books about their experiences or gave lectures to different audiences.

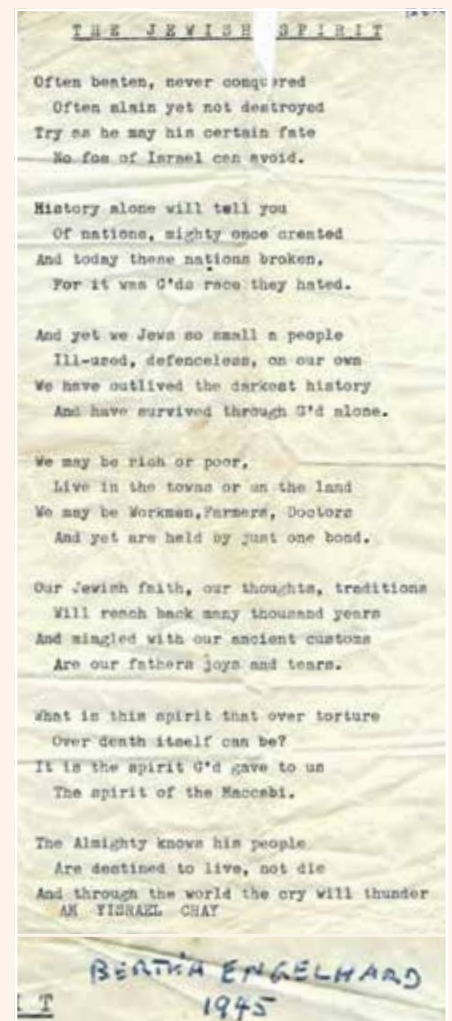
Mum was the right person at the right time with the right personality for breaking the silence of 50 years. So, we, her daughters found ourselves sharing our mother with another few thousand people! As we were already grown up, we found this our privilege and honour and we were very proud to witness our mother receive the MBE from HM The Queen and to be invited along with fellow Kinder to join HRH Prince Charles for supper. So many people wanted to interview her and she became a natural and extremely proficient speaker. Yet she still remained just as modest as she had always been and continued making kneidlach for pesach for us. She also loved writing poetry, about anything and everything.

She accomplished a lot in her life and was loved and admired by many. She spent the last 12 years of her life with her family in Israel. Her last words were "I want to help you".

Miry Reich (Israel) and Shula Kohn (London)

Extract from the July 2009 testimony from the then Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, on the occasion of Bertha making Aliyah:

Bertha Leverton has made an outstanding contribution to Anglo Jewry and indeed International Jewry. Her passion and energy is to be admired....She is a role model for her acts of chessed to her colleagues and she is much loved and respected and will be sorely missed in this country.





TRAUDE BOLLAUF

Born: 8 December 1941, Vienna

Died: 15 October 2020, Vienna

Dr Traude Bollauf was a journalist, contemporary historian and highly valued member of the Austrian Society for Exile Research. She edited the weekly paper *Die Frau* and was a frequent broadcaster on Austrian radio. After retirement she took up German-Jewish Studies at the University of Vienna, specialising in the emigration of women and children.

Her doctoral thesis (2009) dealt with the option of escape from the Nazi regime by means of a visa for domestic service in England. This pioneering work was published in a revised form in 2010 under the title: *Domestic Emigration. The flight of Jewish women from Germany and Austria to England in 1938/39*. For this she received the Bruno Kreisky Political Book Prize.

AJR's former Contributing Editor, Anthony Grenville, knew her well and contributed to her obituary, which can be found (in German) at: <https://exilforschung.ac.at/nachruf-wir-trauern-um-unsere-kollegin-traude-bollauf-1941-2020>

Irene Messinger
University of Vienna



ELLY MILLER (née HOROVITZ)

Born: 5 March 1928, Vienna

Died: 8 August 2020, London

During a career spanning some seven decades, Elly – whose father Béla Horovitz founded the Phaidon Press - designed and edited a rich corpus of art books, nurturing the work of leading scholars and art historians, including Sir Ernst Gombrich, to whose best-selling *The Story of Art* Elly had, as a teenager, given her seal of approval.

Elly, her older brother Joseph and baby sister Hannah, had lived in Vienna with their parents Béla and Lotte, and maternal grandparents, in second-floor apartments overlooking the Stadtpark, with Phaidon's grand offices occupying the first floor. In the nearby Café Prückel my mother would meet her mother after school each day, enjoying the traditional *Kaffee und Kuchen*.

In the shadow of the looming Nazi threat, in 1938 Béla had the foresight to arrange a transfer of Phaidon to British ownership with the British publisher Sir Stanley Unwin. He was away in London when Elly witnessed the events of the Anschluss. Days later Elly and Joseph left Vienna with their grandmother, aunt and baby cousin, by a dangerous train journey to Italy, thence to Zurich and Belgium, where the entire family was reunited, eventually reaching England.

Elly and Joseph attended the Regent's Park School known as 'Schindlers', after the headmistress. In 1939, the family moved to Bath, returning to London briefly before moving in autumn 1940 to Oxford, where Elly attended Oxford High School, then Somerville College Oxford reading PPE. Upon graduating, Elly worked as researcher for *The Times* and then for OUP in New York, where she reconnected with the American wing of her family.

Elly returned to England to work at Phaidon and in 1950 married Harvey, a Cambridge science graduate who had just returned from serving in Israel's War of Independence as a pioneer radar officer in the nascent Israeli Navy. Following the untimely death of Béla in 1955, they took over direction of Phaidon and expanded its international list. In 1967 Phaidon was sold and Elly and Harvey launched Harvey Miller Ltd, specialising in Medicine and Art. Elly pursued her passion for the Mediaeval and Renaissance periods, nurturing young authors in what was a cutting-edge discipline. From 2000, in partnership with the Belgian academic publisher Brepols, Elly published a number of major projects.

Interviewed in 2001 for the AJR's 'Continental Britons' exhibition at the Jewish Museum, by Dr. Bea Lewkowicz, her soon-to-be daughter-in-law, Elly described herself as "An Austrian-born, Jewish, British citizen". Her Viennese heritage was evident, her *joie de vivre*, expressed in songs and poems for special occasions which she performed at the piano, her love for translating Wilhelm Busch, including the classic adventures of Max and Moritz, published by Canongate as 'Mac and Murray'.

A loyal member of Chelsea Synagogue, and former chair (in the 1970s-80s) of the SW London Women's Group of the Friends of the Hebrew University, Elly's joyful approach to her Jewish identity inspired her children (my sisters Dorothy, Tamar and myself), grand and great grand-children. Her positive outlook was summed up in the same interview: "I think I have a much broader outlook on the world than I would have had if I had remained in Vienna. I regard myself as extremely lucky and fortunate; the emigration certainly enriched me."

Malcolm Miller

ZOOMS AHEAD

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

Tuesday 2 February @ 2.00pm	Rabbi Danny Bergson – Live Desert Island Discs from St Anne's Shul https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81411893512
Tuesday 2 February @ 4.00pm	Sandra Silversale & Anthea Berg – Miracle of Targu Mures https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84724216139
Wednesday 3 February @ 2.00pm	Nick Dobson – An underground guide to London in the Roaring Twenties https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/88056690860
Thursday 4 February @ 2.00pm	Rahima Mahmut – The genocide of Uyghurs https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81986916472
Tuesday 9 February @ 2.00pm	Cllr Caroline Stock – View from the Mayor of Barnet https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89860384467
Wednesday 10 February @ 2.00pm	AJR Book Club discussion https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/82962878789
Wednesday 10 February @ 6.00pm	Citizens of Everywhere – Author Peter Gumbel in conversation with Michael Newman Book via: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/in-conversation-with-peter-gumbel-author-of-citizens-of-everywhere-tickets-135477489819
Thursday 11 February @ 2.00pm	Graham Perry – Perspectives on China from the son of the first Western businessman ever to visit it, in 1953 https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/81438567188
Monday 15 February @ 2.00pm	Alan Forbes – Tinderbox Heroes (the history of firefighters) https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/86564297154
Tuesday 16 February @ 2.00pm	Claude Vecht Wolf – The Beatles https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84171212283
Wednesday 17 February @ 2.00pm	Philippa Bernard – The story of the Rescued Scrolls https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/84671468909
Thursday 18 February @ 2.00pm	Lynn Bradley – We're off to see the Wizard: the REAL story https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89517721773
Monday 22 February @ 2.00pm	Nadia Ragozhina – Worlds Apart https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85490685236
Monday 22 February @ 4.00pm	Gathering the Voices – the stories of Holocaust survivors who went to Scotland https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83238119370
Tuesday 23 February @ 2.00pm	Lesley Urbach - Herbert Morrison https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89634124774
Wednesday 24 February @ 2.00pm	Hannah Last – Opening up the Royal Opera House, London https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/83184786469
Thursday 25 February @ 2.00pm	Silvia Nacamulli - Cooking for the Soul https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/89988914343

ONLINE PROGRAMMING FOR ALL

AJR is introducing a series of “dementia friendly” zoom events which are for everyone and especially for any members living with dementia.

Our special Memory Loss team believes that dementia should not prevent a person from enjoying life in the best way. This is particularly important during these times, which are especially hard for people living with dementia and

their carers. Our new series of inclusive events can ease isolation and stimulate the mind and body, and the team will rotate a variety of sessions including poetry, seated exercise and reading and discussion.

The team has already held a pilot poetry event that led to lively conversation, shared memories and lots of much-missed laughter. They are now working with Maccabi to provide sessions combining seated exercises with advice on healthy living, particularly important when it is

often far too cold to go out.



Pre-booking is essential, to allow any necessary resources to be posted out to participants beforehand. For example, the AJR team will be providing a booklet of poems, materials to join in our craft sessions - not to mention a teabag and biscuits to enjoy with us.

Look out for details of these inclusive events in our weekly e-news or contact either Julia or Naomi julia@ajr.org.uk / 07985 422 372 or naomi@ajr.org.uk / 07496 623 537.

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