


Holocaust Memorial Service & Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children Reunion

Sunday 1st May 2011

Hendon Reform Synagogue,
Danescroft Avenue, London NW4 2NA


HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL DAY



RSJDC



1865 - 1965

Sponsored by the Jewish Deaf Association to
commemorate their Diamond Jubilee (1951-2011)



Programme

Reception

Holocaust Memorial

Welcome speech - Colleen Daniels

Poem – 'I'd like to go alone' - Organising Committee

Personal stories

Remembrance service - Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner

Poem – 'Butterfly' - Organising Committee

Candle lighting

Dinner

RSJDC Reunion

Introduction - Colleen Daniels

Tribute to Leon Lebor who died in the Twin Towers

School stories, photos and film

Coffee and social

Today is about mourning loved ones & celebrating friendships

Today, JDA member Colleen Daniels has seen her dream come true – she has created a Holocaust Memorial Service for the Deaf Community, combined with a Reunion of past pupils of the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children (RSJDC).

Colleen studied and boarded at RSJDC during term-time from 1956 to 1960. The school was in Nightingale Lane, Balham, South London. It closed in 1965.

Together with her husband Alan and a group of close friends, and supported by the JDA, Colleen and her committee have today brought together more than 130 former RSJDC pupils, in remembrance of Jewish Deaf children whose families were affected by The Holocaust.

A surprise guest from Manchester is Ben Forman, grandson of German refugee Gudula Cahn, whose parents, Philipp and Sophie Cahn, were both teachers at the Israelite Institute for the Deaf in Berlin. Its headmaster, Dr Felix Reich, successfully brought 11 Jewish deaf children, aged 2 to 11 years, out of Berlin to safety in England. Most of the 146 students who remained at the school were killed in 1942.

Out of the horrors of The Holocaust that brought Jewish deaf children together in Britain from so many parts of occupied Europe, came the all-important friendships that have sustained them through life and brought them to this reunion. So whilst the Deaf community mourns the loss of loved ones on Holocaust Memorial Day, together on this day we also celebrate those friendships.

During its 60th anniversary year, the JDA is delighted to sponsor this unique event. We thank Colleen Daniels and her dedicated committee for the many months of planning and hard work that have brought this special day to fruition.

We look forward to the Jewish Deaf and Deafblind community and their friends experiencing a truly memorable get-together and sharing a wealth of memories.

Sue Cipin
Executive Director
Jewish Deaf Association

I'D LIKE TO GO ALONE

I'd like to go, away alone,
Where there are other, nicer people,
Somewhere into the far unknown,
There, where no one kills another,

Maybe more of us,
A thousand strong,
Will reach this goal,
Before too long.

Alene Synkova

Written by children from Terezin (Theresienstadt)
Concentration Camp, located in the hills outside of Prague,
1942-1944

A total of around 15,000 children under the age of 15 passed
through Terezin. Only around 100 survived.

BUTTERFLY

For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Pinned up inside this ghetto,
But I have found what I love here.

That butterfly
Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly way up high

I am proud of my people
How dignified they are
Even though I am suppressed
I will always come back to life
Like the butterfly.

Pavel Friedmann & Franta Bass

Leslie Bieber



I was two years old when I arrived in England, as a refugee with 10 other children.

I have no memories of my dear deaf parents and deaf aunt, who perished in the Holocaust.

I felt extremely sad being an orphan and left school feeling withdrawn and unwilling to talk.

My father's two brothers and sisters, and my mother's parents and other relatives escaped and survived the Holocaust. None of them could explain to me why my parents and aunty were left behind to perish in the death camps.

Ruth Fallman



I was born in Schlochau, Germany, which became part of Poland after the war. I lived with my parents and my older brother, Kurt. When I was three I started at the Israelite School for the Deaf in Berlin (Weissensee.)

Just before my 4th birthday I was evacuated to England with our Headmaster Dr. Reich, and a group of 10 children - nine of us deaf and one hearing girl. The journey took two days by ship.

We docked at Harwich and were taken to the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children in London. Upon arrival at the school, we were sent straight to bed without food. I was one of the youngest children there, sleeping in a mixed dormitory.

My parents sent me photos of my family, but we were only allowed to write to each other via the Red Cross every 6 months, with a limit of 24 words.

I was unaware of what was happening to Jews in Germany at that time. My parents, brother and grandmother managed to escape to Shanghai and survived. However, my brother and grandmother, who returned to Germany to look for relatives, were caught by the Nazis in Berlin and perished in the Holocaust - my grandmother died of Typhus in Theresienstadt and my brother was transported to Auschwitz.

Benno Icigson



I was born in Leipzig, Germany on 27th February 1936.

One month before my 3rd birthday I was enrolled at the Israelite Institute for Jewish Deaf Children in Berlin, as there was no Jewish Deaf School in my home town of Leipzig.

In July 1939, nine other children and I were evacuated from Germany to England. I attended the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children in London for many years, staying with my aunt and uncle and my cousin until I was 18.

My aunty did not want me to stay in Hendon, so I went to live on a farm in the north of England in preparation for a life in Israel.

Four years later, I boarded a ship to France, then a train to Paris and onwards to Naples where I stayed one night for the Sabbath. The next day I boarded the ship 'Jerusalem' to Haifa.

I met my first wife in Haifa and had a second marriage there too. I lived in Israel for 52 years.

Klaus Martin Kornik



In 1929, I started my schooling as a German child, first in Kindergarten and then Primary school until 1934.

I did not know anything about Jewish religious practice but, as a Jewish child of Jewish parents, I was forced to leave my school due to anti-semitic laws enforced by the Nazis which prohibited Jewish children attending German schools.

I attended the Israelite School for the Deaf in Berlin for four years. In January 1939, I left for England with my mother. We left my father behind in Germany. Fortunately, my father was able to board an Italian ship to Shanghai in 1941.

For 6 months, I was at the Jewish Deaf School in 101 Nightingale Lane. We were evacuated to Brighton for 11 months and then re-evacuated to Havering House for the next 18 months.

After 50 years of marriage, I am now a widower and live in Gloucestershire.

Henrietta Scardino



1932 - 2010

Born 18th April 1932 in Saarbrücken, Germany, Henrietta was 5 years old when she started at the Jewish Deaf School in Berlin.

At the age of 10, with her school destroyed in a bombing raid, she was evacuated to London with a group of 10 other children. Through the help of the Red Cross, Henrietta was overjoyed to be reunited with her father.

In December 1951, she emigrated to America. Her mother and deaf brother remained in England. Henrietta was told they had 'perished' but no further explanation was ever given to the deaf youngster.

Her father remarried and had a son named Aaron – Henrietta's half brother. In 1957, Henrietta married Anthony Scardino who passed away in October 1976.

Henrietta worked with the IRS until retirement in 1997. She died, after a long illness, in September 2010.

Anne Senchal



I was born in Berlin on 2nd April 1929. I had two brothers; one hearing, one deaf.

In 1938, at my school Open Day, a group of German soldiers marched into the school hall and arrested our Headmaster 'Onkel' Felix Reich in front of parents and children. Our parents knew what was happening but we, the children, were shocked and frightened and did not understand.

A few months later, Onkel Felix returned and in July 1939 took 10 of us on a train from Germany to England. My mother ran to my carriage, gave me a blue Star of David and said, 'I will be with you in two weeks' time'. I never saw her again.

On arrival in England we were taken to the Jewish Deaf School where, for the first time in my life, I saw white bread. In Germany, we always ate black bread. One day, at the end of the war, I saw a PATHE newsreel detailing the horrors of the concentration camps – it was only then I began to understand what had happened to my mother and my hearing brother – they both perished in the Lodz ghetto in 1943. As a deaf child with no family in England, I had never read newspapers nor had the details of the war and the fate of Jews in Europe explained to me.

Now I light a candle in gratitude to Onkel Felix who saved us from death by bringing us to England, where I married, had two daughters of my own and am now a grandmother.

**A 'Big Thank You'
to the following people who
helped make today such a
memorable event**

Committee

Colleen & Alan Daniels
Irene & Anthony Spielsinger
Ann Hart
Esther & Abraham Ellenberg
Moshe Moshy
Linda Smith

Donations

Ruthie & Percy Morris (USA)
Jackie Fletcher (Stockport)
Klaus Kornik (Glos.)

JDA

Sue Cipin
Ann Clements
Suzie Andrews

Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner

Peter Abraham - BSL Interpreter
Gloria Ogborn - BSL Interpreter
Rosalind Josephs - Lipspeaker
Gillian Stringer & Sue Hawkins - Video Project