

REMEMBERING ANNE SENCHAL — 02.04.2029–27.04.2022

On 27 May 2022, following her battle with cancer, we accompanied our lifelong friend Anne to her final resting place.

Her daughter, Gloria Ogborn, wrote this eulogy:

Anne was a complicated woman as she had a very unusual and difficult life. She was fiercely independent, charming, flirtatious and very outspoken.

Anne, or Anna as she was born, was born in Berlin, Germany in 1929. For the first 10 years of her life, she lived in Berlin during the time of Hitler's rise to power and his dictatorship. Although very young, she herself witnessed the rise of the Nazi party and the horrors experienced by the Jews in Berlin.

She was a weekly boarder at the Residential School for Jewish Deaf Children (RSJDC). She and her Deaf brother Horst were two of the lucky 10 children from their school in Germany to secure a place on the Kindertransport and to come to England for their safety. Anne was the last surviving member of that group of 10. One of the most painful memories of her life was excitedly waving goodbye to her mother at the train station — she thought she was going on holiday. She did not know she would never see her family again.

Just a few weeks later, the Nazis came for her mother and her eldest brother. A week after that, they came for her father and her half siblings. All her family, apart from Horst, were wiped out.

So the little 10 year old girl arrived at the Jewish School for the Deaf in Clapham not knowing a word of English, not knowing how to use British Sign Language and very alone and isolated. The school was also her home, and she remembered it being a very lonely and isolating place — although she did make some life-long friends.

When Anne was 16, the school arranged for her to go to Manchester to learn her trade as a dressmaker.

But, again, she was very isolated and lonely so she moved back to London and was introduced to Deaf clubs where she met her husband-to-be, Stanley.

Dad was a devoted husband and he gave mum a good life. His parents became her parents and, for the first time since leaving Germany, she felt loved.

Together they joined many Deaf clubs and made so many friends. They had good lives and travelled to all four corners of the world. They raised two children, Lana and me, Gloria. Then, when my two children Kevin and Charlene were young, they moved to Bristol to watch their grandchildren growing up.

Sadly, Stanley passed away in 2003. I thought mum would fall to bits, but she coped well, although she missed him and talked to his photograph frequently.

She always said she was alone again, but in truth, she had lots of friends — many of whom are here today. So, at the grand old age of 80, she did another remarkable thing — she moved back to London where her life-long friends lived and where transport was so much more accessible.

She loved going out and would hop on a bus or tube and travel to wherever it took her, even though she had absolutely no sense of direction!

She had her freedom pass so she knew she could always get home. Up until she reached the age of 90 she would happily travel, by herself, on the tube and by coach, to Bristol to see John and me, her grandchildren, and then later, her great- grandchildren, Erin, Serenity and Lois. Travelling that far on your own at the age of 90 shows how fiercely independent she was.



All through mum's life, there has been quite a lot of interest in her life as a Kindertransport refugee. She has featured in three See Hear TV programmes and there is also a recorded interview of her life stored in the archives at the British Museum.

In 2018, I was contacted by a person from a Berlin museum who had listened to mum's archived story and wanted to know if she was still alive.

Throughout Germany, concrete cubes called "Stolpersteine" were laid on the pavements where victims of the Holocaust had lived or worked.



These concrete cubes had a brass plate inscribed with the name and life dates of victims of Nazi extermination. We were told that two brass memorial plates had been placed on the pavement outside Anne's mother's childhood home in Berlin, inscribed with her mother's and eldest brother's names. The museum wanted to document a little bit more about their history.

This led to another chapter in Anne's life. We were invited back to Germany, to stay in the very best of hotels and to have a personal guide and chauffeur to show us around the town where she grew up. It was a wonderful experience for mum, especially going back to her childhood home and seeing the two Stolpersteines that had been laid in her mother and brother's names. Mum was even more delighted when she was told they would arrange to lay Kindertransport Stolpersteines for Horst and Anne.

Again, mum is quite exceptional — not many people can say they have had a brass tribute in their name while they were still living.

Anne was diagnosed with tumours about 4 years ago. They started small and grew very slowly. Mum refused to have an operation. She said she wasn't afraid to die and was 'ready to go'. By January 2021 she was given a prognosis of 6-12 months, but she lived 15 months.

By the end of December 2021 she was so weak and frail that she needed 24 hour care. It is at this point that I want to thank JDA, especially Janet, Janine and Sue Cipin for the truly wonderful support they gave to both mum and myself. They have been simply amazing, going over and above anything I could have dreamed of. They worked tirelessly and exceptionally to improve the quality of Anne's last months. I'd also like to thank the marvellous team of carers, from Tonic and Remark, who gave tireless support and comfort to mum in her final months.

Her last weeks were difficult and she was, most definitely, more than ready to go. She wanted to die. She wanted two things in equal measure. She wanted to be with Stanley again and to be reunited with her mother. Oh, but there was one more thing... she wanted people to be happy at her funeral.

Thank you for being there for Anne through her lifetime. Together, we celebrate her 93 year long and very exceptional life.

▼ *Anne with JDA Support Services Manager Janet Coombs at JDA's Tiara Tea in 2018*

