

Testimony

Despite the fact that I have become completely Anglicised, or perhaps because of it, I do not talk readily to people (except very close friends) about my origins.

I want to be thought of as completely English. Unfortunately I still cannot knit the English way, and for that reason I will never knit in public. I suppose this is because I don't want to be different from real English people.



The Kindertransport memorial at Liverpool Street Station

I never think of my birthplace as home and never refer to it as such. We were told that we must always remember that other children might have come out in our stead and that they might have been more worthy people than we. Since then I have always been obsessed with the thought that I must justify my survival.

We Came As Children,
Karen Gershon

I renounced my background; I was ashamed of it. I wanted to forget everything. If I was asked where I came from it was tantamount to being accused of a crime.

We Came As Children, Karen Gershon



Kindertransport

By Diane Samuels

Alton Fringe Theatre

have been entertaining and challenging audiences for twenty years with a wide range of drama, from Greek tragedy to modern plays such as this. We are pleased to welcome several new members to our group for this production.

If you are interested in joining Alton Fringe Theatre to act, direct, or help backstage, please talk to any of the members. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, leave your name and address with one of the front of house team or phone Lesley Willis on 01420 83416

Future Events

24 June: *Born to be An Heroine?* Dramatised readings from Northanger Abbey, with musical embellishments. This is part of Alton's Jane Austen Week. The Swan Hotel, Alton, 7:30pm.

5-8 August: Oscar Wilde's *Salome* at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. There will be one preview performance in Alton on 1 August, details to be arranged.

Keep up to date by checking our new website www.altonfringe.com

Alton Fringe Theatre

April 2, 3, 4 & 5, 2008
7:30pm

Amery Hill School Drama Studio



Cast

Helga

Eva, *Helga's daughter*

Evelyn, *Eva's adult self*

Faith, *Evelyn's only child*

Lil, *Eva/Evelyn's English foster mother*

Ratcatcher, *a mythical character who also plays Nazi border official, English organiser, Postman, and Station guard*

Tessa Davies

Elizabeth Williams

Barbara Rayner

Hannah Brown

Ann Scott

Chris Lang *Wed & Fri*

Dom Gwyther *Thurs & Sat*

Cath Gerlach

Chris Chappell

James Willis

Sue Wilson

Penny Cushing

Morris Hopkins

Lesley Willis

Tim Guilding

Stage Manager

Lighting

Sound

Costume

Publicity

Front of House and Bar

Box Office

Director

Setting

The play takes place in a spare room in Evelyn's London home, with interjecting scenes in Germany, Manchester and two railway stations. Likewise, the action is set in the 1930s, 40s and 80s.

There will be an interval of 15 minutes

Sound

Music from *Yiddische Blues* by the Budapest Klezmer Band.

Richard Dimpleby entering the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp immediately after its liberation by British troops on 15th April 1945.

The horn of the RMS Queen Mary.

Thanks to Amery Hill School, The Little Green Dragon Bookshop, Corkscrew Wine Services, Richard Fowler

Background

The rise to power of the Nazis in Germany in the 1930s signalled a huge escalation in anti-semitic activity. The first organized attack on the Jews was in April 1933 - a boycott of Jewish businesses was instigated and triggered much violence. A series of laws ensued, increasingly excluding Jews from public life. The most notorious of these were the Nuremberg Laws - the Reich Citizenship Act, depriving Jews of their citizenship, and the Act for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour. This latter law prohibited marriage or extra-marital relations between 'Jews and nationals of German or allied blood' in order to ensure the survival of the German race. Later measures required that all Jewish passports were marked with the letter **J**. In addition Jews were banned from places of public entertainment and cultural institutions, had their driving licences revoked, their property confiscated and were often forced to live together in communal Jewish houses.

The killing of a German diplomat by a young Jew in November 1938 gave the Nazis the opportunity to engineer a huge increase in momentum. Thousands of Jewish businesses and institutions were destroyed and Jews were assaulted, killed and 30,000 herded into concentration camps. It was in response to this pogrom, known as Kristalnacht, that the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany was formed, supported by World Jewish Relief in the UK, rescuing almost 10,000 unaccompanied children, before the outbreak of war just nine months later.

On Displacement

'...The children of the Kindertransport were seen as the lucky ones. They did not end up in the gas chambers. But they suffered enormously. The murder of loved ones, the tearing asunder of families, the obliteration of a way of life, present a legacy of pain that is felt acutely by the survivors themselves but also by their children and grandchildren. What this play reminds us is that the past is never really past, and overcoming its terrible claims is the bravest work imaginable.'