

The Boy from
Bamberg



A personal testimony
and biography of Günter Löbl
from Bamberg who became
George Frederick Loble MBE JP
as told to Gerald Stern

זי"ל

Of Blessed Memory

***Dedicated to the memory of my grandmothers and other
family members of Eve and I who were murdered by the Nazis***

*Betty Fried née Bachmann (my maternal grandmother)
born 17th March 1867 in Kronach, Germany
who was deported to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp
believed to have perished 29th September 1942
in Treblinka Death Camp*

*Hugo Heinemann (Eve's uncle)
born 18th July 1900 in Düsseldorf, Germany
imprisoned in 1937, accused of fraud, tried and sentenced to prison in 1939
for 'illegally' transferring the family's own monies out of Germany
believed to have perished 16th February 1943 in Auschwitz*

*Walter Heinemann born 26th July 1896 in Düsseldorf and his second wife
Trude Kircheimer born 14th January 1905 in Grombach (Eve's uncle and aunt)
Walter was accused of fraud, tried in absentia and sentenced to prison in 1939
for 'illegally' transferring the family's own monies out of Germany
deported 18th January 1944 to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp
believed to have perished 16th February 1943 in Auschwitz
Trude was deported 18th January 1944 to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp
believed to have perished 8th October 1944 in Auschwitz*

*Karolina Löbl née Schloss (my paternal grandmother)
born 23rd August 1861 in Maroldsweisach, Germany
who was deported to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp
and is believed to have perished 29th September 1942
in Treblinka Death Camp*

*Leo Löbl born, 16th August 1887 in Bamberg, Germany
and his second wife Gisela née Platz (my uncle and aunt)
believed to have perished date unknown, in Belzec Extermination Camp
(details of Gisela are not yet known)*

*Martha Zimmer née Bachmann and her handicapped son Albert
(my great aunt and cousin once removed)
born 7th December 1870 in Kronach and 1st February 1894 in Fürth, Germany
It is believed that Martha committed suicide 31st August 1942
in Theresienstadt Concentration Camp
and Albert perished 3rd or 4th April 1942 in Piaski Ghetto*

Abridged digital version

THE BOY FROM BAMBERG

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND BIOGRAPHY

of Günter Löbl from Bamberg

who became

George Frederick Loble MBE JP

as told to Gerald Stern

Edited by Monica Stern née Loble and Joel Stern

*Front cover photograph is of the Synagogue in Bamberg
set on fire during Kristallnacht
(photo courtesy of The Wiener Library, London)*

Günter Löbl

George



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Foreword



I have jotted down notes, with this book in mind, over a number of years. I always dreamed of producing my biography as a legacy to our grandchildren and to their descendants, but life has been so full that it has been a long time in coming to fruition.

When we became great-grandparents and Eve and I began to suffer a few health problems (wear and tear!), I came to realise that perhaps we should get on with the task.

The purpose of this record is to give a very general picture of my life and times. My early life, up to the age of 12, was spent in Germany. This is the story of how my family escaped Nazi tyranny and ended up in the North East of England.

I arrived in London in March 1939 in the care of my Hammelburger relatives from Würzburg. I had clothes and a few personal possessions in the suitcase which was as big as I could manage on my own and 10 shillings (the current equivalent of 50 pence), which was the maximum amount permitted by the Nazis to be taken abroad in foreign currency.

This book contains reminiscences of my life and is not a diary. Some of the dates may not be completely correct, as I write largely from memory. It was written particularly so that those dark days in Nazi Germany will never be forgotten. There are those who suggest the Holocaust never happened or was some gross exaggeration of the truth - but sadly not!

I hope this account will honour the memory of my beloved family who were cruelly murdered purely because they were Jewish. In fact they were decent, honourable and hard-working. I hope that these qualities may inspire future generations to help others, to be smart, to work hard and to see what they can achieve in their own lives.

In any event, it should also form a testimony as to how our well established family had contributed for many decades to the good of the local and national community. My father and uncles fought for Germany in the First World War and yet only a few years later were victimised by the Nazi regime.

This book was written with the prompting, encouragement and great assistance of my son-in-law, Gerald Stern, commencing around the time of my 85th birthday.

As my general education ceased at the age of fourteen, I would ask the reader to make allowances for any shortcomings in the text.

*George Loble
June 2014*

Setting the Scene

I was born Günter Löbl on 25th September 1926 in the town of Bamberg in Upper Franconia, Bavaria, Germany. I was the third son and youngest child of Fritz Löbl born 1886 in Bamberg and Elsa née Fried born 1892 in Bamberg.



The beautiful Bamberg Rathaus 2011

My father's family came from Michelob in Bohemia (today known as Mecholupy in the Czech Republic) to Bamberg around 1881. They moved for economic reasons and initially opened a clothing store on the Obere Brücke adjacent to the Rathaus, which is situated on an island in the centre of the river Regnitz. According to the Family Residence Records, my grandfather, Hugo Löbl, born 1857 in Michelob, officially became a Citizen of the State of Bavaria on 16th June 1896.

My mother's family came from the small town of Ebelsbach, some 22 kilometres North West of Bamberg. The Fried family had lived in Ebelsbach and neighbouring Trunstadt since at least the early 1700s. My grandfather, William Fried, born 1852 in Ebelsbach, was a hop merchant who moved to Bamberg in 1899.



*My father
Fritz Löbl born 1886*



*My mother
Elsa Löbl née Fried born 1892*

All of my ancestors were Jewish. I believe that the Löbl men were Levites because I have recently discovered two descendant lines (Sali Löbl, buried in Quito, Ecuador and Arnost Lobl, buried in London) continuing to observe this tradition. My parents and grandparents were active in the Deutsch Liberale Synagogue which was the predominant branch of Judaism in Bamberg at that time. The Synagogue, built in 1910, was opened by our minister, Rabbi Dr Adolf Eckstein (1857 – 1935). It incorporated a smaller sanctuary which was used by a group of Orthodox Jews who held a *minyan* (prayer quorum) three times each day on the same premises. Use of the two sanctuaries, one large and one small, was interchangeable according to communal requirements.

My Löbl family were more observant than my Fried family. My grandparents, Hugo and Karolina Löbl kept a kosher home, observed Shabbat and the Jewish festivals. My father was Treasurer of the Synagogue and wore a silk top hat during formal services. It was stored in a special container in a locker at the Synagogue, together with his *tallit* (prayer shawl) and *siddurim* (daily prayer books). A collection of daily and special Holiday prayer books was kept under his hinged seat in the Synagogue. During services, my father, a member of the Synagogue Council sat in specially designated seats at the front.

My mother's Fried family were more relaxed in their observance and belonged to the same community. Other members of our family were also active in the Synagogue and sang in the choir.



Iron Cross First Class



Iron Cross Second Class



Wounded Medal

My father was also Chairman of the Reichsbund Jüdischer Frontsoldaten (Bamberg), the German Jewish equivalent of the British Legion. He had spent the entire four year period of the First World War (1914 to 1918) in the trenches, finishing as a Lieutenant. He was awarded Iron Crosses both First and Second Class, a Wounded Medal (he sustained an injury from shrapnel) and the Bavarian Military Service Medal with Crossed Swords, awarded during the reign of the State President, von Hindenburg. It was unusual for a Jewish soldier to achieve such high rank.



War Service Medal



Bavarian Service Medal



Red Cross Medal of Elsa Fried



His Majesty the King (Kaiser Wilhelm II) is graciously pleased to award Lieutenant of the 1st Defence Forces Telegraphic Division, Fritz Löbl, the Royal Military Service Medal 4th Class, with swords. This certificate is issued as confirmation, Munich 29 April 1918 by order of the Chief Medal Chancellor, M Herringrath

From my earliest recollections my father and his younger brother, Robert, worked together running a business, established by my grandfather, manufacturing outdoor electric lighting fittings and accessories. The business called Hugo Löbl Söhne GmbH was based in Lichtenhaidestrasse on the outskirts of Bamberg. They employed around 200 people on a large site with full design and manufacturing facilities, selling throughout Germany and with quite a lot of international trade. They operated under the trademark 'Hulorit' to emulate the already successful *Bakelite* brand which in Germany was called 'Bakelit'.

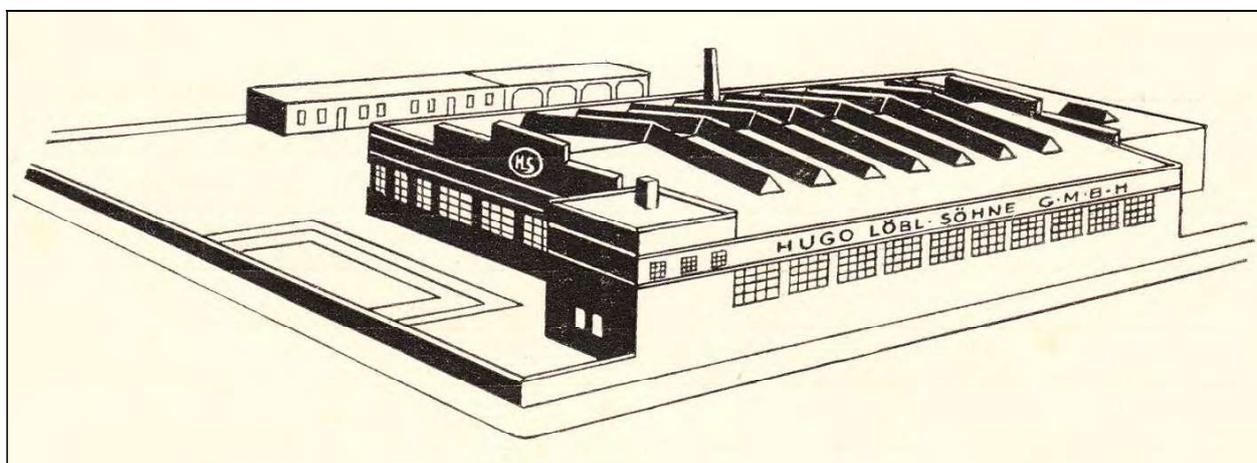


The 'Hulorit' trademark and logo and the 'HLS' motif representing Hugo Löbl Söhne GmbH

This business had been spun off my grandfather's very successful business called 'Hugo Löbl', (trademark HuLo) which was located in a four storey building right in the centre of Bamberg in Luitpoldstrasse. It was limited in terms of expansion by virtue of its location. The buildings included offices, factory and residences for various family members.



The Hugo Löbl factory in Luitpoldstrasse, Bamberg



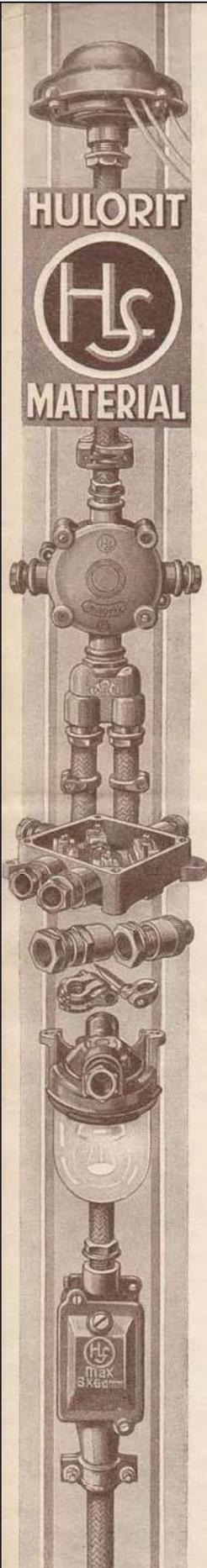
The factory of Hugo Löbl Söhne, Lichtenhaidestrasse, Bamberg built in 1928

The logo for Hugo Löbl, written in a stylized, cursive script. The letters are fluid and interconnected, with a prominent 'H' and 'L'.

Telegramm - Adresse: HULO BAMBERG
Fernsprech-Anschluß Bamberg Nr. 1289
Postcheckkonto: Amt Nürnberg Nr. 12096

Bankverbindungen: Reichsbank - Girokonto
Deutsche Bank und Disconto-Gesellschaft
Bamberg / Städtische Sparkasse Bamberg

FITTINGS-WERK
ELEKTROTECHNISCHE-FABRIK
HUGO LÖBL SÖHNE
G · M · B · H **BAMBERG** (BAYERN)
LICHTENHAIDESTR. 9



Ihre Zeichen

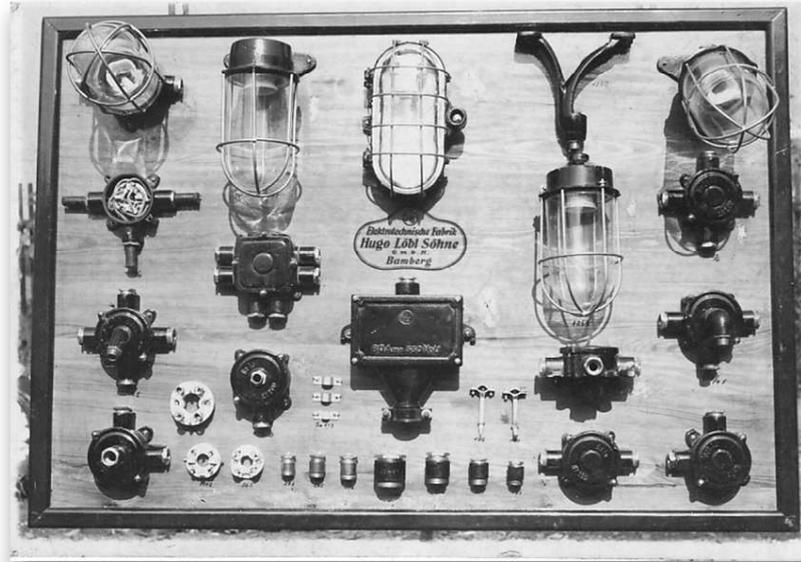
Ihre Nachricht vom

Unsere Zeichen

Tag

Hugo Löbl Söhne letterheading discovered at the former Loblite Limited premises in Gateshead on 6th March 2014

An example of some of the products manufactured by Hugo Löbl Söhne



My grandfather, Hugo Löbl, had concentrated on both wholesale and manufacture of more traditional and heavier metal based lighting fittings, alongside which he sold complimentary tools and accessories. My father and Uncle Robert were pioneers in the manufacture of plastic weatherproof lighting fittings and accessories and export accounted for a large proportion of their sales.

Our family was well established and comfortable. My parents employed a maid, a nanny and the business employed a chauffeur named Arthur Schlichtig. He collected my father and took him to the office each day. Here, his morning ritual included a visit from Herr Sorge, the barber, who shaved him and Uncle Robert using an old fashioned cut throat razor, which he lovingly honed on a leather strop. The wash basin, mirror and chair were located in customised built-in cupboards in their private office. Whenever my father needed a new suit, he went to Nuremberg, where his tailor was the uncle of Henry Kissinger (the American statesman).



Family photo circa July 1921 showing Left to Right – Back row: Fritz Löbl born 1886, Sali Löbl born 1890, Hugo Löbl born 1857, Robert Löbl born 1892, Leo Löbl born 1886. Front row: Elsa Löbl née Fried born 1892 (wife of Fritz) holding her first child 6 weeks old Wilhelm (later known as Bill) Löbl born 1921, Karolina Löbl née Schloss born 1861 and Margot Glücksmann (first wife of Leo).

Our domestic staff were treated with the utmost respect and were almost regarded as a part of our family. Most of them were practicing Catholics and went to Church every morning before commencing their duties and of course on Sundays, which was their day off. On Sundays our live-in maid, Babette Fugmann, was permitted to entertain her family and friends either in her room or in our kitchen while enjoying coffee and cake.

Whilst our maid went to Church on Christmas mornings, our whole family set about putting up and decorating a Christmas tree in the living room and placing gifts for her on a table next to it. As this was a secret operation until our maid returned from Church, we children thought this was great fun. The tree and gifts were transferred to the maids room after she returned from Church until it shed all its pine needles and was discarded.

Similarly on our Babette's birthday, she was presented with gifts by our parents and we children specially drew birthday greetings.

Our whole family ate fish on Fridays out of respect for our Catholic maid. The fish, usually carp, came from local carp ponds fed by the river Regnitz, as Bamberg was a long way from the sea and refrigeration at that time was fairly primitive.

Meanwhile, my mother managed the house and staff, shopped, cared for us children and socialised with friends and family. I remember that customers from other parts of Germany, visiting on business, were frequently entertained to dinner in our home. My mother was a proud and capable *Hausfrau* and together with Babette, prepared rich Bavarian dishes including duck, goose and beef with traditional potato *Klöße* (dumplings). She was also a great baker and made fruit tarts according to the season as well as an excellent cheesecake.



Our home at 16 Hainstrasse photographed in 2011

When I was around five years old we moved from Schützenstrasse to a large, eight room, ground floor apartment at 16 Hainstrasse. There, we three boys shared two bedrooms. This home benefitted from a large garden where we could play games and use our bicycles, a loft area where the laundry was aired and where we were allowed to play in the winter, and a cellar full of preserves, fresh fruit and vegetables. All of this was a haven for fun and games with many of our cousins and friends who lived in the vicinity.

The boiler, fuelled by coal stored in the cellar, was tended by the *Hausmeister* (caretaker) who lived on the premises.

Our living room (Herren Zimmer) had a smoking corner for our father with a comfortable leather chair and a hanging *Shabbos* (Sabbath) lamp. The indoor garden room (Blumen Zimmer) had glass shelves fitted adjacent to the windows and across the width of the room but permitting access from both sides. Here my mother displayed her plants which benefitted from the full light. There was a comfortable sofa and a low round glass coffee table.

My eldest brother, by five years was called Wilhelm, known as *Willi*, born 1921. He had many friends of his own age and they enjoyed books (Karl Mai who wrote stories about native American Indians, and Louis Trenker the mountaineer) and rode around our suburb on bikes. Willi very much ruled the roost and kept his younger siblings in line. However he was kind and protective of me, particularly as I was a sickly child, suffering from tubercular glands which required surgery between the ages of 6 and 10 years.

I found out much later that the fresh milk which my parents forced me to drink to improve my health actually contributed to the glandular problems because it was not pasteurised (treated for tuberculosis). To further improve my health, I was taken to high altitude resorts in Switzerland by my mother, who was advised that the altitude and atmosphere would help.

My middle brother, Rudolf, known as *Rudi* was born in 1923. He had distinctive red hair, inherited from our father, although I never witnessed this as my father had lost all his hair through wearing a steel helmet for four years during the First World War. Rudi had a very quick temper and he was often under strict control from our Nanny, Maria! Rudi was the only musician amongst the three of us as he played a *Hohner* accordion on family occasions.



Rudi (left), Willi and baby Günter

The favourite clothes in summer were our *lederhosen*, short leather pants. They could be grey or beige thick leather, had a drop-flap fly and the dirtier and shinier they were, the happier the wearer! They were held up by leather braces with a cross strap and secured by horn buttons. Some were patterned or embroidered and were adjustable as we grew.



*Left to Right:
Willi, Günter and
Rudi in the garden*

The three of us got along very well and were unanimous in disliking my father's imposed gymnastics which took place each Sunday morning in the garden behind our flat. Here, my father who was a disciplinarian and as I have already explained served with distinction in the army, believed in the benefit of regular physical exercise.

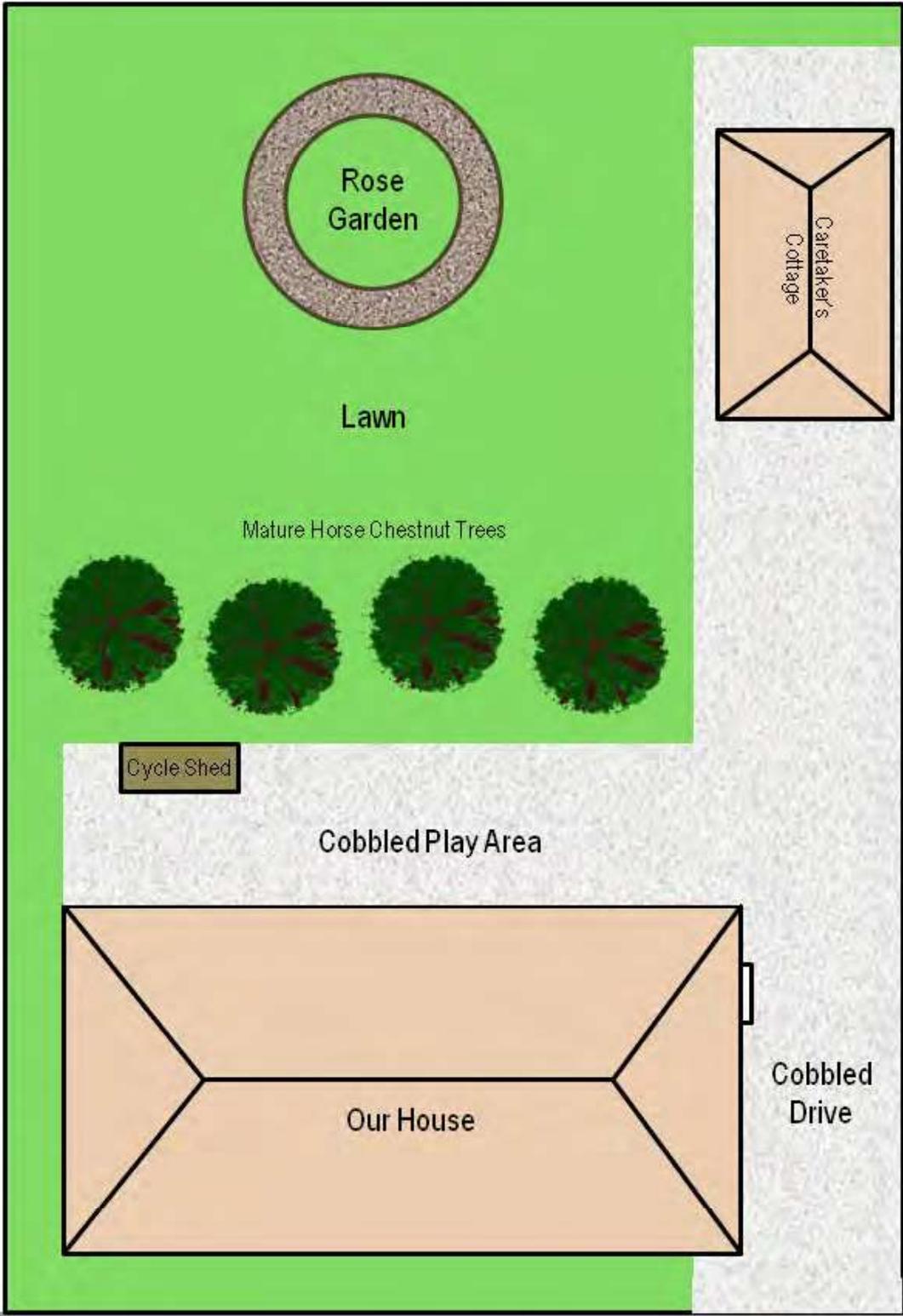


*The garden
area
behind our
house
photographed
in 2011*

*To the right
side is the
caretakers
cottage*

The Layout of our home at 16 Hainstrasse, Bamberg





16 Hainstrasse

All of us, wearing singlets and shorts, had to run around the circular rose beds, do physical exercises with my father (also in a singlet and shorts!) barking commands, and do pull-ups from a rope hanging from a large chestnut tree. We were delighted when the weather interfered with this Sunday exercise routine!



Outside the front door to the former Löbl residence in July 2011 are Left to Right, Max Loble, Catherine Loble, Harry Loble, me, Monica Stern née Loble and Peter Loble

As my parents did not have a daughter, they were delighted when Uncle Robert's younger daughter, Lili, came on most Sundays to join us for breakfast.



The Neues Gymnasium, now called the Franz-Ludwig Gymnasium photographed in 2011

NEUES GYMNASIUM BAMBERG

Löbl Günther,

Sohn des *Kaufmanns Hermann Jörg Löbl,*
 geboren *25. 9. 1936 zu Bamberg.*
 Konfession *N.*
 Eintreten *Oktober 1937*

Leistungen.

Schuljahr	Klasse	Religionslehre	Deutsch	Latein	Griechisch	Englisch	Mathematik (Arithmetik)	Physik	Naturkunde	Geschichte	Geographie	Zeichnen	Turnen	Singen	Bemerkungen Vermerk (V.) Repetition (R.)
<i>1937/38</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>3</i>	
<i>1938/39</i>	<i>IIa</i>	<i>keine Beurteilung durch M. f. v. 14. 11. 39</i>													<i>unvollständig.</i>

George's school report, School Year 1938/39. Religion is shown as 'i' meaning Israelite.
 Marks 2 and 3 are out of 5.

Comments on the reverse show he has achieved satisfactory performance due to appropriate effort, has a good character and is well behaved but 'will have to make more effort in future'!

Besondere Schulzensur.

Die „Besondere Schulzensur“ soll Bemerkungen enthalten 1) über die körperlichen Anlagen und ihre Verwertung, allenfalls über Kurzsichtigkeit, Schwerhörigkeit, Dispens vom Turnen, Erkrankungen, 2) über die geistigen Anlagen und ihre Verwertung, 3) über Fleiß, Pflichtgefühl und Vorliebe für einzelne Fächer oder Tätigkeiten, 4) über sittliches Verhalten, 5) über Wahrnehmungen, die außerhalb der Schule bei dem Schüler gemacht wurden, 6) über das Verhalten der Eltern gegenüber der Schule, 7) über Aussichten bezüglich des Vorwärtkommens beim Studium.

Schuljahr *1937/38* Klasse *IA*. Klasseleiter: *Preisung*

1. *Röviziering mittelmaßig erarbeitet jedoch bei entsprechenden Fleiß über genügende Leistungen.*
- 2/3. *Geistig nicht pflanzt erarbeitet manne er bei lobenswerten fleiß befriedigende Leistungen.*
4. *Er zeigte ausnehmenden Fleiß bei den arbeitsüblichen Leistungen.*
5. *Über Anwesenheiten.*
6. *+*
7. *Er mußte später gegebenenfalls größere Fleiß aufwenden.*

IIa. *1938/9.* *Kausor.*
f. 1. Teil!

Willi, Rudi and I all attended St Martins Schule, up to the age of eleven years. Afterwards, we attended the Neues Gymnasium, now called the Franz-Ludwig Gymnasium (Grammar School). I recall that the only compulsory item of school uniform at the Gymnasium was a red peaked cap which every student wore, with the school year designated by a colour coded band.



Left to Right: Rudi, Willi, Günter

Our family was very close and visits to and from both my grandmothers were regular features. As I remember them, both were widows and always wore black. Grandmother Löbl also wore a black choker and as she had snow white hair, the combination was quite stunning. She was a very observant Jewess, kept a kosher home, lit Sabbath candles and regularly invited the family for Friday evening meals. She lived in the large downstairs flat at 27 Luitpoldstrasse, adjacent to the previously mentioned business premises.

We also visited grandmother Karolina (Lina) Löbl often during the day. She employed a young orphaned girl from Pferdfeld (a small village near Bamberg) named Kunigunde Lieb (known as Kuni). Although employed as a maid, she was treated like the daughter my grandmother never had. When Kuni was due to partake of communion and needed an appropriate dress, Karolina bought the material and had it made up for her.

It was always Kuni's job to force-feed a small flock of geese which were kept in a chicken-wire pen in the factory yard. The purpose was to enlarge the livers to make delicious *fois gras*. Kuni would hold the goose's neck between her knees and push the yellow corn into its beak, massaging it down the throat. In later years, my mother was astonished that her grandchildren liked sweetcorn which she disparagingly referred to as *Gänse Futter* (goose feed)!

Grandmother Fried lived for many years in an apartment at 5 Promenadestrasse. Later she lived in a flat at 14 Hainstrasse, next door to our home at number 16. We saw her often. She was a very kind, gentle lady and not nearly as formidable as Grandmother Löbl.

Other relatives lived close at hand and we socialised with them regularly. Uncle Robert and his family lived at 17 Hainstrasse and the Sali Kahns lived at number 15. Their younger son, Hansi, was my special school friend and his older brother, Rolf, was friendly with my brother Rudi. Siegfried (known as Buxi) and his wife, Tilde Buxbaum lived in the flat above the Kahns. Their daughter Eva, later married my brother Ronnie (Rudi).

The Simon, Pauson, Loew, Morenwitz and Rau families lived further up the Hainstrasse. Dr Bauchwitz, the family doctor, lived in the other direction towards town. Hainstrasse was a wide, pleasant tree-lined street. It led to the park which had a swimming club and a rowing club along the river Regnitz, tennis courts and lovely woodland walks. Each spring, the woodland floor was covered by colourful *Hainguckerle* (*Corydalis*) flowers. Our nanny would take us there in our prams to benefit from the fresh air. Many Jewish families had nannies who regularly met in the park with their charges.

My father was at work all day during the week and at weekends, we often socialised with friends and family. My parents often went on Saturday afternoons and evenings to the *Ressource* which was a Jewish social club based in a large building at one end of our road close to Schönleinsplatz. Here they met Jewish friends, attended small concerts, watched amateur dramatic productions and enjoyed celebratory dinners and dances. Meanwhile, my brothers and I were left at home with one of the staff. The *Ressource* remained a favoured meeting place until it was commandeered by the Nazis.

As Arthur, the Chauffeur, always had Sundays off, we each had a bicycle and weather permitting, we went for rides in the area, often to the *Hauptsmoor Wald* (a beautiful forest) where we consumed picnics and played.

Quite often we went to a swimming club in the *Hain*, the park at the end of our road, based in a wooden building with timber decking on the banks of the river Regnitz. Alternatively, the family would take a stroll through the park to a jetty from where we boarded a skiff, which was propelled between the banks by a boatman pushing against the muddy bottom with a long pole, to *Bug* on the opposite bank. Here we enjoyed *Kaffee und Kuchen* (coffee and cake) in a very well known garden café, at least until Jews were forbidden from doing so.



Learning to swim with my father, Fritz

Another favourite evening outing in summer time was to a *Keller* (a brewery serving beer and food on long tables with bench seats outside in a garden). We were permitted to take our own picnic food so long as we consumed the beer! There were more than ten breweries in Bamberg at this time, most of whom offered a similar facility.

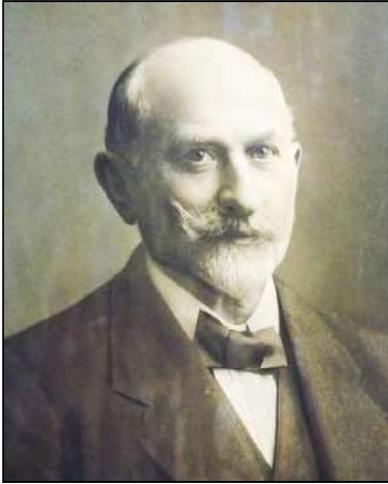
Our family celebrations usually took place at home in our dining room. This had dark oak furniture, a large extendable dining table with high-backed chairs upholstered in leather, held in place by brass studs. The carver at the head of the table was always reserved for my father. There was a very long sideboard, a glass corner unit displaying china and silverware and a tallboy in which the crockery was stored.

Although we had a nanny and a maid who normally did all the cleaning and cooking, our mother did all the shopping and oversaw the preparation of meals. Whenever we had guests, an additional person was hired as a waitress for the evening. These guests for whom the most formal meals were prepared, were usually the company's sales representatives, often from foreign countries. Apparently, one of their obligations was to watch the three young Löbl boys (my brothers and I) enjoy their bath time before going to dinner!

My favourite memories of celebrations in our home were the *B'nei Mitzvot* (Bar Mitzvahs) of Willi and Rudi. Family and friends came from out of town to attend the Synagogue service and they were then entertained at home. Two trestle tables were set up in the lounge to display gifts comprising fountain pens, propelling pencils, wallets, watches and books.

My Family

The Fried and Bachmann families, my mother's family, were hop merchants.



*William Fried born 1852
My mother's father*



*Betty Bachmann born 1867
My mother's mother*

Hops, used to make the famous Bavarian beer, were grown in the vicinity of Bamberg. Many hop merchants lived in apartments along the *Hainstrasse* which had detached hop stores to the rear of the properties. As children we used to play in these hop stores during the late winter and spring. The hops were gathered up in the autumn and stored in large hessian bales, brought to the stores by flat horse-drawn carts and sold to the many breweries in the area and further afield. This meant that the stores became empty over the winter.



Wedding portraits of Betty Bachmann and William Fried - 1888

I regret to say, that I know nothing about the location, size or history of my grandfather William Fried's hop business, as he died some ten years before I was born. However, my great-uncle, Theodore Bachmann (Betty Fried's brother), whom I knew quite well, was an affluent bachelor and must have made money out of his hop business. My grandmother, Betty Fried née Bachmann was born in 1867 and her brother, Theodore, two years later in 1869. They had a younger sister, Rosa (married name Rosenblatt) and an older sister Martha (married name Zimmer). They were all born in Kronach situated some 60 kilometres north east of Bamberg. Their parents, Simon Bachmann born 1836 in Kronach and Hedwig née Reitzenberger born 1843 in Burgkunstadt must have all moved to Bamberg where they were later buried.

My memory of great-uncle Theodore was a tall man, wearing a pin-striped suit with waistcoat, which always sported a gold Hunter pocket watch with chain. He used to sit me on his knee and asked me to blow, whereupon the watch seemingly magically opened as he pressed a button on the winder. He left me the watch in his will, a treasured possession.

I recall that his skin and the whites of his eyes were slightly yellow, so he probably suffered from an undiagnosed or at least untreated liver problem. He regularly went to the Bayerische Hypotheken und Wechsel Bank, on the corner of Lange Strasse and Schönleinsplatz, to collect the dividends from his investments.



*The refurbished
Synagogue
in Kronach
photographed
in 2011*

My mother, Elsa, lived at a time when daughters did not go out to work but stayed at home preparing for marriage and the raising of a family. She attended the *Höhere Töchter Schule* (literally, the Higher Daughters' School), which is now called the *Maria Ward Schule*, in memory of an English Catholic nun who founded the order of the Sisters of Loreto.

*My mother Elsa née Fried
and her older brother
Carl circa 1895*



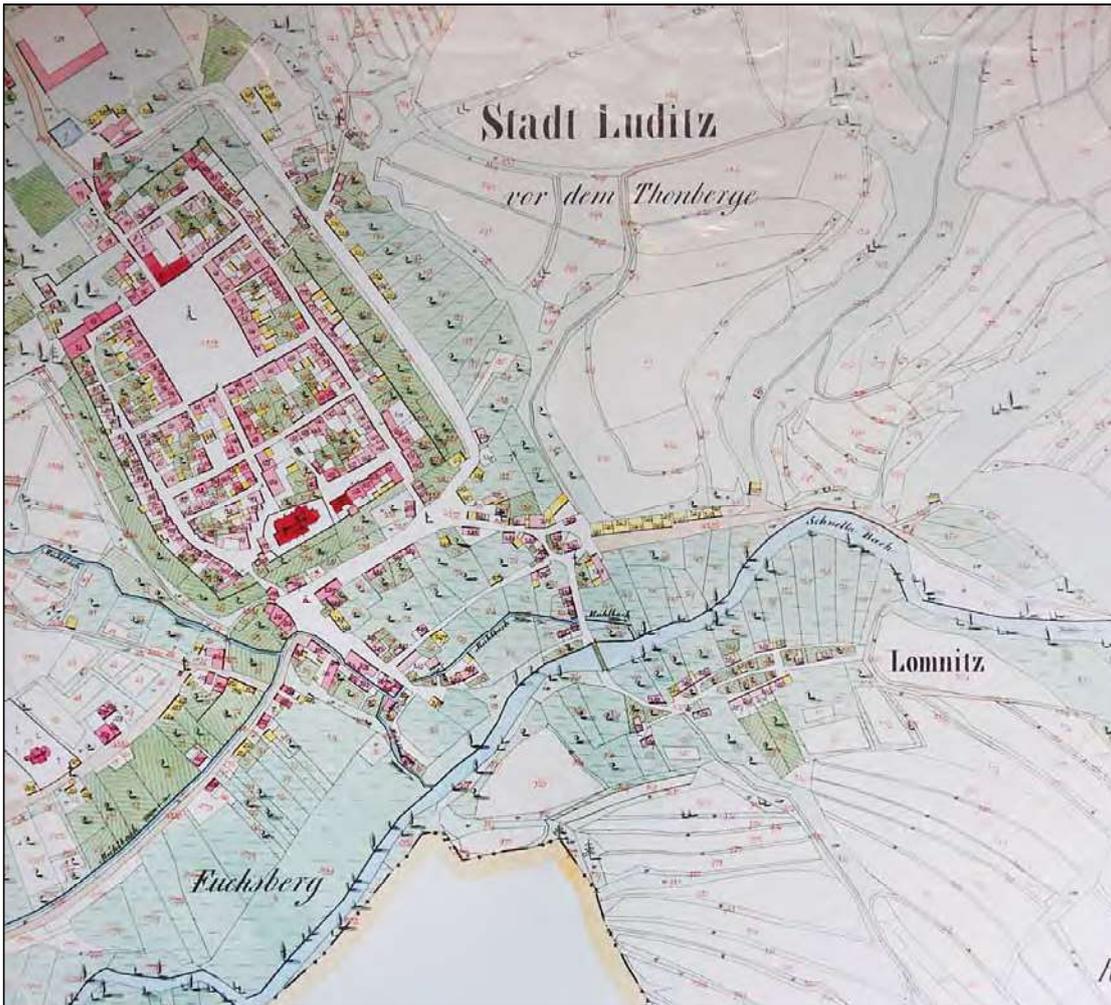
After school she was sent to a finishing school in Montreux, Switzerland, where she learned French and to play the piano, as well as the attributes of a refined young lady. She worked tirelessly for the German Red Cross during the First World war, preparing bandages for the troops. His Majesty King Ludwig III awarded her the 'Cross for Home Service' on 1st May 1918.

Elsa had two brothers, neither of whom went into business. The older brother, Dr Carl Fried, born 1889 in Bamberg became an early specialist in X-rays. He was senior consultant at the Jewish hospital in Breslau, before emigrating to Brazil in 1939. Their younger brother, Stefan, born 1905 became a lawyer in Bamberg. Unfortunately, by the time he qualified, Jews were no longer permitted (by the Nazi Government) to practice law or indeed any profession. Therefore Stefan was employed by Uncle Robert and my father in the office of Hugo Löbl Söhne. During this time he also trained as a photographer. I remember him as a very jolly and humorous uncle, who was an excellent pianist and who wrote funny ditties to sing while playing.

The Löbl family came from Bohemia where my ancestors lived in the small towns of Maschau, Michelob (sometimes referred to as Micholup), Duppau and Luditz, which today are known as Mastov, Mecholupy, Doupov and Zlutice in the Czech Republic. This area is around 200 kilometres due East of Bamberg. Great-great-grandfather Emanuel Löbl (1787 -1873) was the Manager of a distillery reputedly owned by Count Czernitz.



Period maps of our ancestral towns in Bohemia courtesy of the Estate of Herbert LoebI



Courtesy of the Estate of Herbert Loebel

My great-grandfather, Samson Löbl, who later became known as Dr Siegfried Löbl (1818-1886), became a 'medical practitioner'. This was not considered quite the same as a fully qualified doctor. He worked in Michelob from 1848 until his sudden death at the age of only 68 years. The local paper published a very moving obituary.

OBITUARY

Dr. Siegfried LÖBL

Deaths: Dr. Siegfried LÖBL, local medical officer in Michelob, died there suddenly on Sunday evening from a heart attack. He was in his 68th year.

The deceased practiced in the town almost 40 years and his kindness made him an unusually popular figure. The burial taking place in Michelob this morning will undoubtedly demonstrate the universal esteem in which the deceased was held.

Translation of the obituary for Dr Siegfried Löbl from an unknown source



The grave stones of Siegfried Löbl (ha'Levi) and Karoline née Lilling discovered after quite some searching, lying in a forest near Mecholupy, Czech Republic. Other grave stones had been removed and used for home construction and renovation! (Photos courtesy of Werner Loval)

My Löbl grandparents, Hugo and Karolina née Schloss born 1861 (she was deported to Theresienstadt Concentration Camp and is believed to have perished on 29th September 1942 in Treblinka) had five sons. One of them named Eugen born 1888, lived for only six months.



Hugo Löbl and Karolina née Schloss

Hugo must have made a reasonable living, otherwise the town of Bamberg would not have granted him residency. Records show that he opened his clothes shop in Austrasse, in 1887. This later moved to larger premises at Obere Brücke around 1890. The business failed in 1902 and the family moved back to Austrasse.



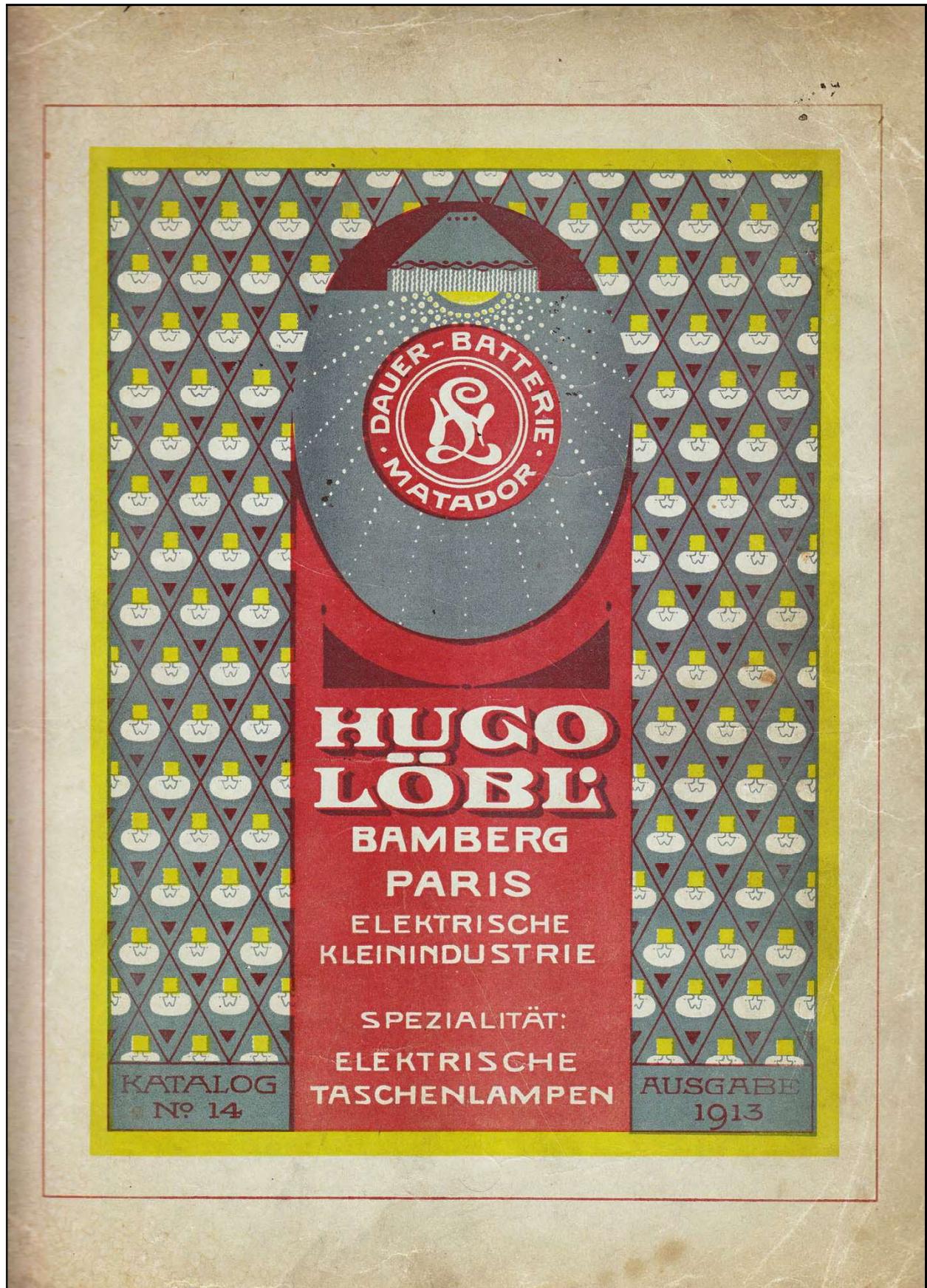
*Hugo Löbl's home and business at Obere Brücke, Bamberg
Left to Right: Monica Stern née Loble, me, Harry and Max Loble, Catherine and Peter Loble*

Hugo then worked as an agent for gas lighting products and accessories. When electricity became more popular, he started a wholesale business dealing in battery operated torches and other items for the home. This developed into materials for mains power electric lighting and installations. It was the beginning of a series of Löbl family businesses in the electrical sector, which came to an end when I sold my business, Loblite Limited, in 1994.



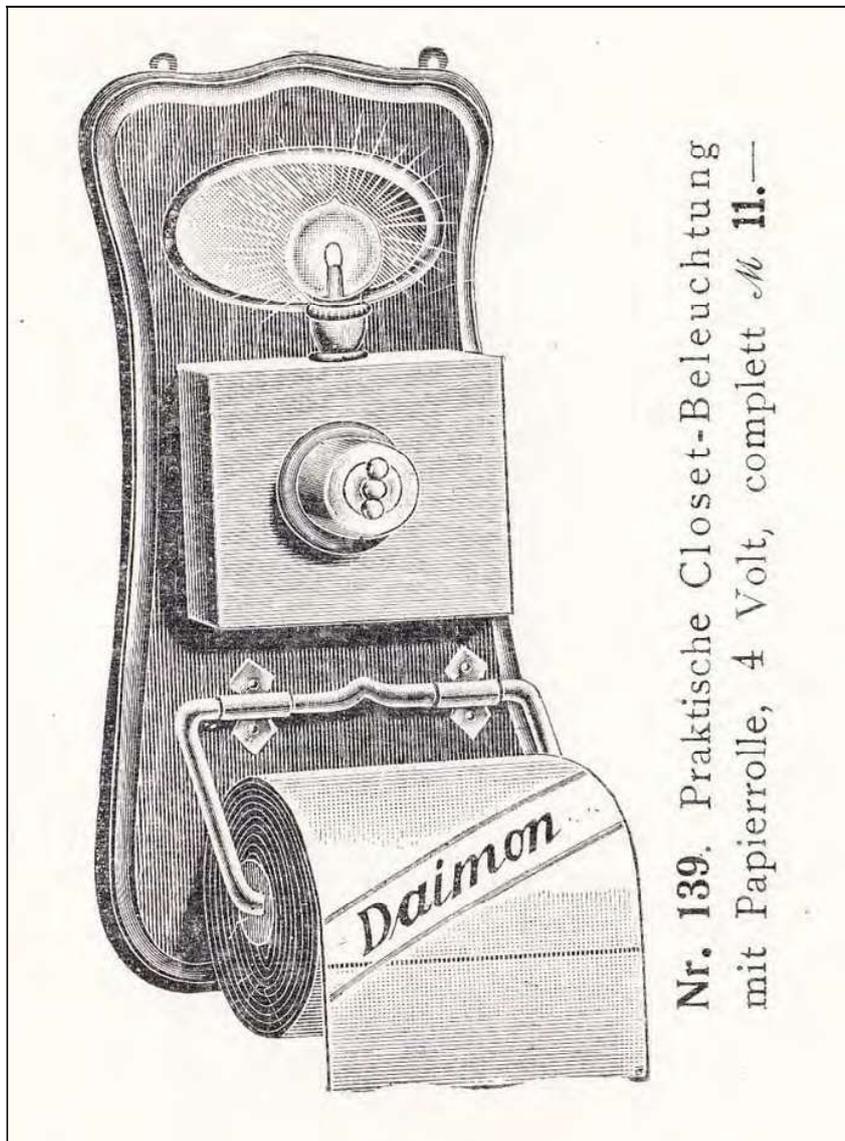
Feature to the entrance door to my former home in Bamberg which was still there when I visited in 2011

The earliest surviving catalogue of Hugo Löbl dated 1913, ran to 38 pages. It illustrated a large number of pocket torches, cigarette and cigar lighters, table lamps, and early mains power accessories.



One of my favourite products in that catalogue is a twin hotplate table cooker. It is similar to the famous *Baby Belling* cooker, which was very popular in England from the 1960s onward.

Another product was a water closet light and toilet paper holder, which consisted of a wood back plate fitted with a box to house a flat battery and switch. A torch bulb, backed by a mirror, was mounted above the box and a toilet roll holder under it. Just the thing for an outdoor convenience!



4 volt water closet light with toilet paper holder

The business expanded so that Hugo had a four storey factory built in the yard adjacent to the house. He and Granny Lina, as she was known, lived on the ground floor, the family of my Uncle Sali lived on the first floor and ran the business after the death of my grandfather. The top floor was rented out to another Jewish family called Saalheimer.



Photographed in 2010, the original four storey factory and adjacent - my grandparents' home

When Hugo died in 1929 he left the business to his widow and sons although Uncle Sali continued to manage it. The business had a lot of passing traffic from country customers, as it was on the main road leading from the railway station into town. This was particularly busy on market days, when the farmers and 'peasants' brought their agricultural products from the surrounding villages to the market square in Bamberg.

Hugo had a gas flame burning at eye-level outside the house so that passers-by could light their pipes, cigars and cigarettes, free of charge. This was a wonderful advertisement for the business, which older people from Bamberg still remembered long after the Second World War.

*

*** Mit Fabrikant Hugo Löbl ist gestern im Alter von 72 Jahren der Seniorinhaber der Elektrotechnischen Großhandlung gleichen Namens, die er durch Mühsigkeit und Fleiß aus kleinen Anfängen zu einem mächtigen Unternehmen der Branche auszubauen verstanden hatte, infolge Herzschlages verschieden. Der Verlebte war als Sohn eines Domänenarztes in Michelob im böhmischen Saazland geboren und siedelte im Jahre 1881 nach Bamberg über, woselbst er sich mit großem Unternehmungsgeist im Wirtschaftsleben betätigte und zuletzt, unterstützt von seinen Söhnen, seine Firma zum heutigen weit über Bamberg hinaus bekannten Großbetriebe ausbauen konnte. In den letzten Jahren wurde dann die Fabrikation unter der Firma „Hugo Löbl Söhne“ von dem Unternehmen abgetrennt und der neuzeitliche Werkbetrieb in die Lichtenhaiderstraße verlegt. Mit Hugo Löbl ist nicht nur ein außerordentlich rühriger Kaufmann, sondern auch ein allseits beliebter Mitbürger dahingegangen.**

The businessman, Hugo Löbl, died from a heart attack yesterday, age 72. He was the senior partner of the electrical engineering wholesaler of the same name, which he managed to transform from small beginnings into a major trade business through his ambition and diligence. The deceased was born as the son of a medical officer in Michelob in the Bohemian Saazland and he moved to Bamberg in 1881. He worked in business with the support of his sons and grew his enterprise into a well-known and respected concern. In recent years the production has been split off into a separate entity under the name "Hugo Löbl Sons" and the modern workshop was transferred to the Lichtenhaiderstrasse. Hugo Löbl was not only an active and capable businessman but also a popular citizen.



*Marianne Tuchmann née Engelmann 1780 - 1850
and Marx Tuchmann 1774 - 1850, my great-great-great-grandparents*

*These drawings are taken from a detailed Tuchmann Stammbaum (family tree)
published in 1928 by 16 year old Carl Friedrich Tuchmann*



*My first day at school age 6 years
holding Schultüte (cones full of goodies)*

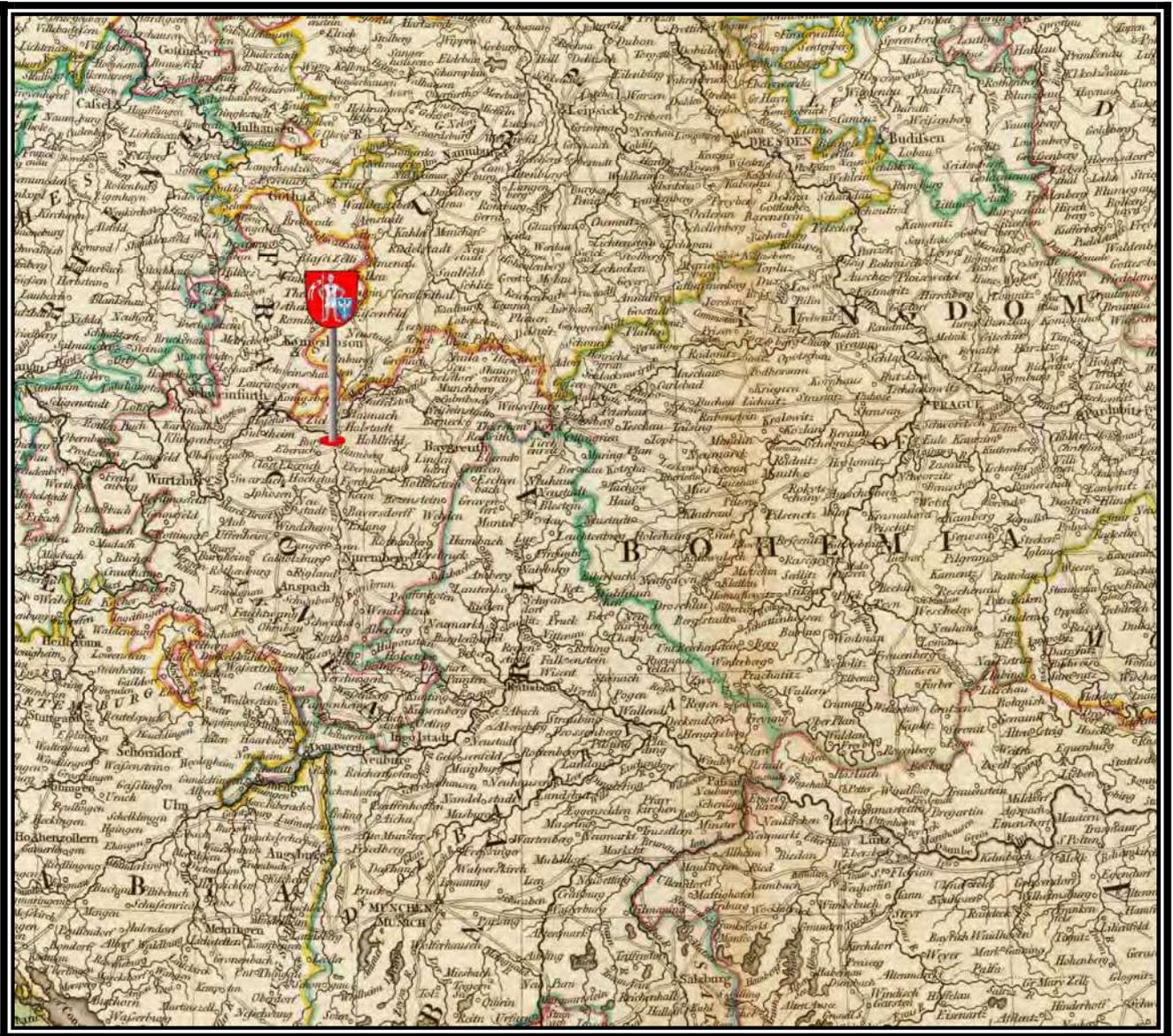


Andrea Israeli née Kaufman (Fried descendant) with my daughter, Monica Stern née Loble in Ebelsbach at the site of the former Synagogue



The village of Trunstadt was the former home of my Fried ancestors

Bamberg



Map circa 1799 showing Franconia (a region of Bavaria) and neighbouring Bohemia with Bamberg, marked by the town's coat of arms, courtesy of the David Rumsey Map Collection www.davidrumsey.com



The coat of arms of Bavaria



The coat of arms of Bohemia

As previously stated, my Löbl family had moved to Bamberg from neighbouring Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) in the late 1800s. Both of my parents were born in Bamberg although, for several generations before, their ancestors lived in villages in Bavaria as Jews were not granted permission to live in larger towns. In due course these restrictions were lifted and I believe that the attraction to move to Bamberg was not only better economic prospects but also the ability to belong to a larger Jewish community with its religious and social activities.



The Klein Venedig (Little Venice) district of Bamberg

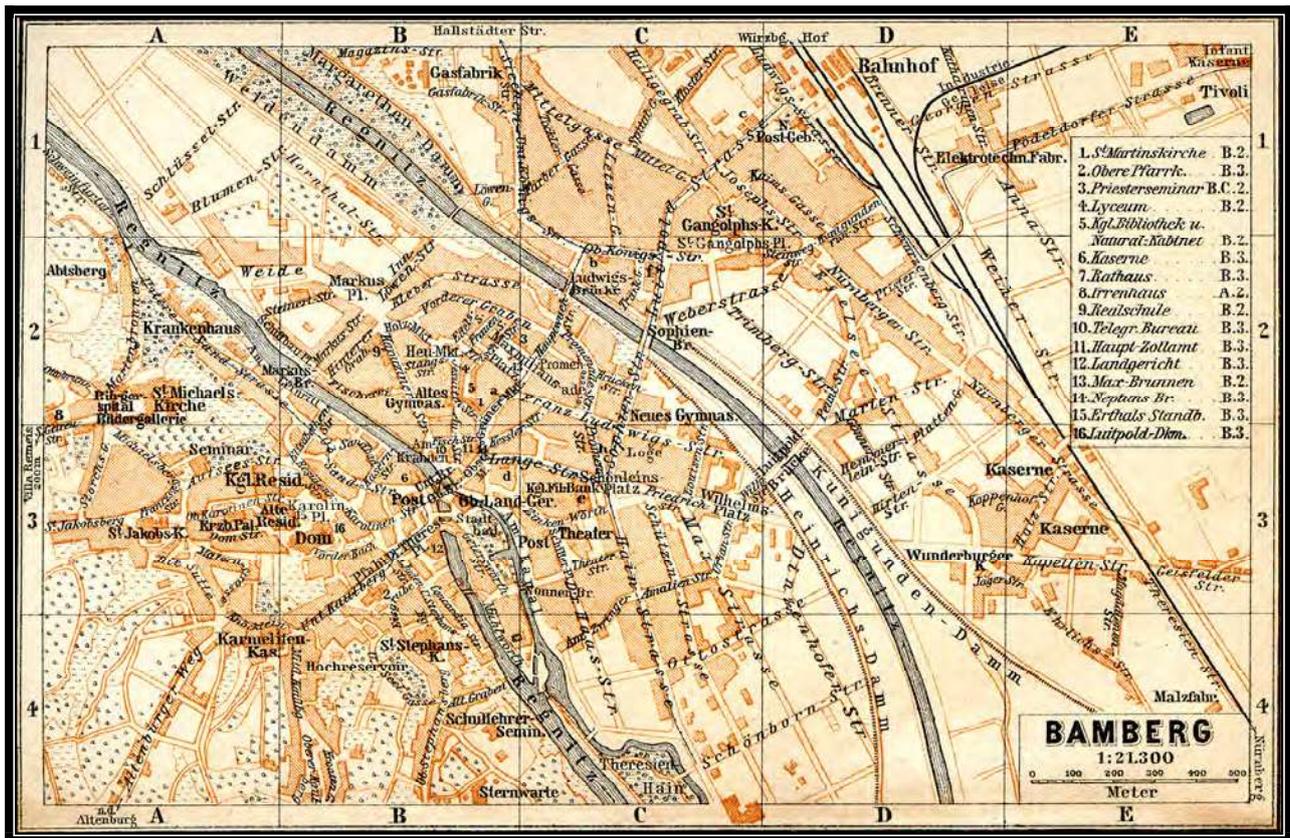
Bamberg was a wholly agricultural and horticultural town until the beginning of the twentieth century. Apart from hops, the seven hills around the town had sandy soil which is ideal for growing asparagus and onions. Bambergers, as the locals are known, were sometimes known as *Zwiebeltreter* (onion trampers and growers) or *Spargelstecher* (asparagus cutters).

The Jews were industrious and well educated and they led a move to industrialise the town. The extent to which this change of local industry and culture affected the town can be seen in the book “Bamberg’s Wirtschaft Judenfrei” (Bamberg’s Economy free of Jews). This book was written in German by four Bamberg amateur historians and was published in 1998. It clearly shows how many and varied the Jewish businesses were. The book contains a map of these businesses which were situated all over the town. The Löbl family businesses are mentioned on several pages together with photos and illustrations from our trade literature.

Within the Jewish community at that time, I recall in particular a business owned by the Kalischack family, with whom the Löbls had connections. *Kalischack* made technical porcelain components and supplied my father’s business.

There were two Kahn families. One, headed by Sali Kahn who was married to Dora Kahn née Fleissig, my father's first cousin. Sali was an equal partner with Heinz Öhlhorn in the business called *Öhlhorn und Kahn* established by Heinz's father Georg. The business, which still trades today on the same site under the name *Ökametall* started in 1913. The company manufactured precision metal pressings for cosmetics as well as for the electrical industry, including my father's business. Today *Ökametall* is run by Heinz Öhlhorn's grandson, Gerald. Over the years it expanded enormously and has become a major supplier to the automotive industry.

The second was the family headed by Otto Kahn, a shirt manufacturer who established his business in 1881 on Heinrichsdamm, under the business name of *Louis Kahn*, Otto's father. Otto's two sons were friends of my oldest brother, Willi.



Old map of Bamberg courtesy of www.tourvideos.com

The company *Kupfer und Mohrenwitz* based in Willi Lessing Strasse manufactured silk sewing yarn. Some years after the war, the surviving family members donated their former factory area to a newly emerging Jewish community in Bamberg and today the Bamberg Synagogue is situated to the rear of this site.

The company *Gebrüder Neuburger* moved from Regensburg to Bamberg in 1911 and manufactured footwear. The business was owned by Sigmund Buxbaum, Philipp Neuburger and Albert Weil. Sigmund Buxbaum's daughter, Eva, married my middle brother, Rudi, in England in 1953.

Of course the bustling town of Bamberg was served by many retailers, several of whom were Jewish. The main department store was called *H & C Tietz* and was owned by Siegfried Simon and

family. His wife, Bertha, was a close school friend of my mother at the *Höhere Töchter Schule*. The five storey building and business exists to this day but is now owned by one of Germany's major retailers.

There were quite a number of Jewish professionals living and working in Bamberg. I vividly recall our General Practitioner, Dr Sigmund Bauchwitz, a very caring family doctor. Dr Michel Wassermann lived on the first floor of my home (he owned the building and rented the ground floor to my family) and was a General Practitioner and Bacteriologist. A close relative of his discovered the benchmark test for Venereal Disease.



The famous Bamberg Horseman from circa 1230

The river *Regnitz* divided the town and gave a pleasant aspect to it with many properties being situated on the river front. The various areas of the town were connected by bridges, the most famous connecting the *Rathaus* situated on a small island. It is said that the citizens were unable to agree on which side of the river the *Rathaus* was to be built in the mid 1700s, so they built it in the middle!

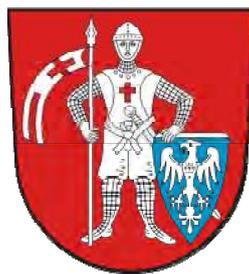


The old Rathaus (Town Hall) is situated on an island



The formidable Schloss Seehof, summer residence of the former Prince-Bishops of Bamberg

The old town of Bamberg is today listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its authentic medieval buildings, such as the Michaelsberg Abbey, dating back as far as the twelfth century.



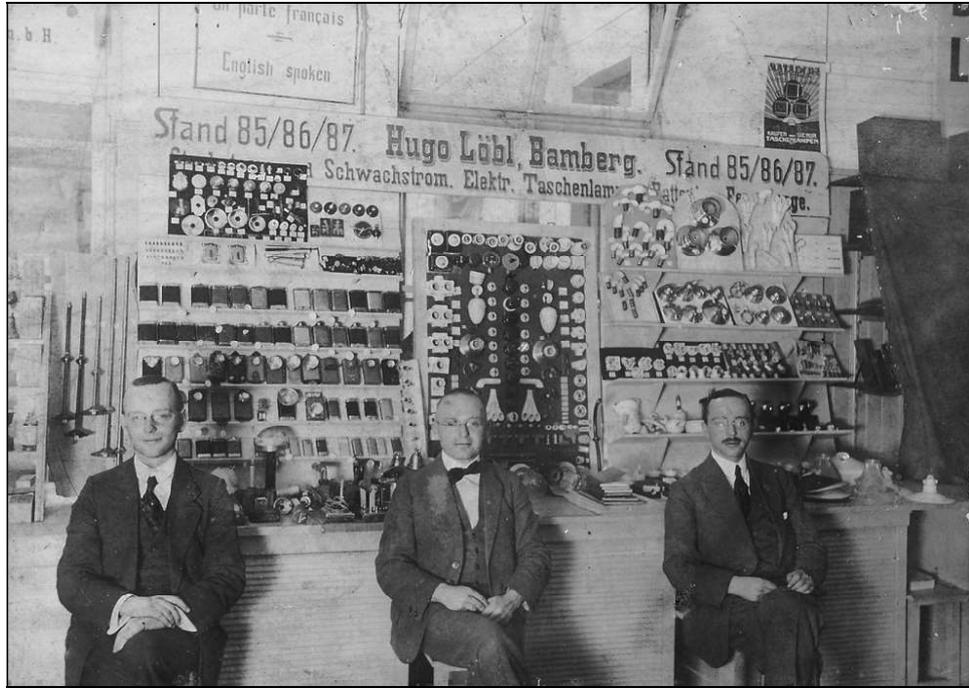
The coat of arms of Bamberg



Bridge leading to the medieval Rathaus (Town Hall)

Our Businesses in Bamberg

The annual Leipzig Industrial Fair was a major event where any serious manufacturer would exhibit products. Hugo Löbl had a stand there every year, displaying its products mounted on display boards.



*Left to Right,
brothers Sali, Fritz
and Robert manning
the Hugo Löbl stand
at the Leipzig Fair
circa 1923*

In 1928 the brothers Robert and Fritz bought a piece of land in the Lichtenhaidestrasse for the newly created Hugo Löbl Söhne GmbH (Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung) which means a company with limited liability. It was to be quite a revolutionary building for the time.

The factory area was one single storey, had skylights to provide daylight all over the factory floor and spare land for future expansion. On the right hand side facing the front of the building there was a double garage, with the caretaker's flat above. Alongside the main building they had a smaller unit divided for separate purposes. One was a plating unit, another the beer store and bicycle shed. As Bamberg was and still is an important beer brewing and drinking area, the company sold beer to the workers. I well remember the green glass bottles with hinge action porcelain stopper standing next to most machines in the factory, so the men could refresh themselves during working hours. This would not fit with any *Health and Safety* directives these days!

Uncle Robert and my father were businessmen (Kaufmänner) employing specialist staff to design and manufacture the products. Mr Meissner, the works foreman, was a large jolly man who ruled over the workers and oversaw production. Kurt Wassermann, who later emigrated to the north east of England and changed his name to Ken Waterman, was one of several draughtsmen in the design office. I can remember that Max Wiesenfelder was the commercial manager.



*The Hugo Löbl
Söhne GmbH
factory in 2011*

On entering the building from the front, there was a small office for the receptionist sitting at the plug-in type telephone exchange. On the right, was the door to the Directors' offices. This was in line with the modern design of the building. I can recall that one whole wall had fitted cupboards with bright orange doors.

This was quite different from other offices at the time which were in more sombre but dignified dark timber. The Löbl brothers sat at two large light oak desks with kneeholes facing each other. These items, together with other office furniture, were brought to England in 1939 and were used in the offices of our newly established British company Loblite Limited (detailed later) for many years. To this day, I use one of the small filing cabinets with roller-shutter door.

The built-in cupboards contained files and reference books, but one unit had the wash basin and mirror where the daily shave was administered.

There was also a general office where accounts, book-keeping and correspondence were dealt with. In about 1936, the directors bought dictating machines which were then considered very modern and *hi-tech*. These were large units with a horizontally rotating wax cylinder and a hand held microphone mounted onto a trolley. The dictation cut fine grooves into the cylinder, rather like on old vinyl records. After the letters were typed, the grooves were shaved off by the machine, so that the cylinders could be used again, until they became too small. Spare wax cylinders were stored on a lower shelf. The cylinders were then given to the secretary, who had a similar machine to transcribe the letters. For their foreign correspondence, Uncle Robert dictated in French and my father in English. The company had a large export business, throughout Europe and Scandinavia.

The factory was a large clear area, with few roof support columns, where pressed and turned metal parts were manufactured. Assembly benches, packing areas and stores were all under the same roof. Porcelain components, such as lamp holder bodies and connector blocks were bought from local manufacturers and assembled on site.

The company made a wide range of lighting and wiring accessories, including cast iron light fittings, junction boxes, tees and elbows for steel conduit pipes housing electric cables. In the early

1930s Hugo Löbl Söhne, with the HLS logo, was the first company to use plastic materials to replace cast iron.

This early plastic was *Bakelite*, a thermosetting phenol formaldehyde resin which was branded with what became a well known trade mark, *Hulorit*, made up from the name Hugo Löbl and the German brand 'Bakelit'. This early plastic had a huge advantage over metal in that it could be made weatherproof by the use of rubber gaskets and it was insulated, meaning that if a wire became loose on the inside, it would not electrocute anyone touching the fittings on the outside. Parts made under the *Hulorit* brand were non corrosive and did not need painting to protect them from the weather.

The Company was highly innovative, designing the very first spring loaded connector blocks which did not require the use of a screwdriver and had mushroom-shaped weatherproof junction boxes and a large range of outdoor luminaries and light fittings.



Some pages from Hugo Löbl Söhne GmbH September 1935 Catalogue

When I visited the huge Industrial Fair in Hannover, after World War II, some older *Hulorit* customers still talked warmly about the company and its innovative products.

The Company grew alongside the rapidly expanding product range. Agents were appointed all over Germany and abroad. They had annual sales meetings in Bamberg.



The company's professional marketing was even presented in English

The agent for the Berlin area, Herr Kolbe, became a fervent Nazi after *Kristallnacht*. He used to ring the office and ask "Sind Sie schon arisiert" (Have you been arianised yet?). He no longer wished to work for Jews although for many years he had made a good living from *Hulorit* products.

On the other hand, two Jewish agents, Leon Litvine, in Brussels and Abraham (known as Bram) van Santen in Amsterdam, were most helpful. As Uncle Robert spoke French, his family was very friendly with the Litvines. When Robert and Fritz came to the UK, they had very little money. Both of these friends lent them £500 each, to help finance the establishment of a new business called Loblite Limited. Although not large sums today, they were worth much more at that time and this was a great help both morally and financially.

Changing Times

Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on 30th January 1930. Two months later the Reichstag (Parliament) empowered him to enact laws on its behalf. At that time around 500,000 Jews lived in Germany, less than 1% of the population.

From 1933 onwards, there were signs of the Jews being discriminated against by the gradual introduction of demeaning and degrading laws. Statutes, known as The Nuremberg Laws, were enacted. These laws dismissed all Jewish civil servants from employment, forbade the slaughter and sale of *kosher* meat and restricted the admission of Jews to educational establishments.



Winter sports - with my mother, Elsa Löbl née Fried (circa 1934) in St. Moritz, Switzerland

My parents tried to maintain a normal family life despite the mounting tensions around us

Hitler's supporters and activists who were civilian sympathisers were given authority to enforce the Nazi ideology. This began with Christian individuals, both men and women, donning uniforms initially as an evening and weekend activity. For many this rapidly developed into full time paid positions, resulting in the lower ranking *Brown Shirts* (the SA) and the higher ranking *Black Shirts* (the SS). Although described as '*shirts*', these were in fact full uniforms in those colours, complete with knee high boots, wide leather belts, sash (*Sam Browne*) and caps. For many of these ordinary citizens, this was the first time they had been given any power which, almost without exception, they enforced with relish.

The Jews of the town worked hard and prospered, something which some of the non Jews resented. The Jewish businesses of course employed local people who also prospered. There were retailers, wholesalers, horse dealers and manufacturers of all types of products from silk yarn to bricks.

Betreff: Vergabe von Aufträgen und Lieferungen
der Stadt Bamberg an jüdische Firmen.

I. Beschluß des Werkssenats vom 14. Juli 1933.

1.) Der Senat hält grundsätzlich an dem Standpunkt fest, daß jüdische Firmen erst in zweiter Linie bei Vergabe von Aufträgen und Lieferungen der Stadt beteiligt werden können.

Es sollen aber die jüdischen Firmen nicht ausgeschlossen sein, nachdem die Reichsregierung den wirtschaftlichen Boykott gegen die Juden abgestellt hat.

Die anteilmässige Berücksichtigung jüdischer Firmen ist auf Antrag insbesondere dann vertretbar,

- a) wenn bei dem Geschäftsinhaber die Voraussetzungen des § 3 II des Reichsgesetzes zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums (Kriegsteilnehmerschaft) vorliegen,
- b) wenn bei Nichtberücksichtigung der Auftrag nach auswärt vergeben werden müßte,
- c) wenn eine Geschäftsverbindung auf Gegenseitigkeit in Mitte liegt,
- d) wenn die Rücksichtnahme auf eine ansehnliche Anzahl von Arbeitnehmern die Beteiligung der jüdischen Firma rechtfertigt.

Die Senate (Verwaltungssenat und Werkssenat) entscheiden von Fall zu Fall, ob jüdische Firmen mit Aufträgen bedacht werden können.

2.) Auf Grund der vorstehenden Richtlinien beschließt der Senat, die Firmen L ö b l und L e s s i n g zuzulassen. Die Firma Lessing soll berücksichtigt werden unter der Voraussetzung, daß die Preise dieser Firma den Preisen auswärtiger Lieferanten weitgehendst angeglichen werden; es wird strikte abgelehnt, der Firma Lessing eine Monopolstellung einzuräumen.

II. Ins

Bamberg, den 15. Juli 1933.
Stadtrat.



A permit dated 14th July 1933 signed by the Mayor of Bamberg, Leopold Weegmann (who my father referred to as Poldi), authorising two Jewish-owned companies, the firms of Löbl and of Lessing (a major local brick manufacturer), to trade as "second tier suppliers" with certain restrictions. It stipulates that the (Bamberg) Council will decide which contracts are awarded on a case by case basis. The Lessing company had to "match out-of-town suppliers' prices" and furthermore that "there is a strong objection to the company being in a monopoly situation".

The Jews participated in and supported local amenities such as sports, social and cultural activities for the general public. However, after 1933 their membership was withdrawn from the organisations they had previously supported.

In April of that year, Adolf Hitler proclaimed a one day boycott of Jewish owned shops. I remember shop windows and fascias being daubed with the word *Jude* and with *Stars of David*. The *Brown Shirts* stood outside the shops and told customers not to enter. Later, all non *Aryan* civil servants were forcibly retired. *Kosher* butchery was forbidden by law and German nationality could be withdrawn from any citizen who was considered 'undesirable' by the Government. This category included not only Jews but also gypsies, homosexuals, mentally or physically disabled people and political opponents. They did not conform to the Nazi image of a pure *Aryan* race. At that time there were very few black, coloured or mixed race people living in Germany but they would also have been included.

Having German nationality withdrawn rendered citizens stateless and meant that they had no passport. This made travel virtually impossible and although this did not affect us immediately, it was unsettling.

Neither my father nor his business partner and brother, Robert, could drive a car. As previously mentioned, they employed Arthur Schlichtig, as chauffeur. In line with the newly established practice of the Nazis, as a lowly employee he was elevated to the position of chief Nazi employee in our Company. This meant that after 1933 he could commandeer the car at weekends, saying that it was 'required for defensive manoeuvres'. Of course his Jewish employers could not tell whether this was true or not but they did not dare to raise any objection.

In 1935 marriage or sexual relations between Jews and non Jews (whom the Nazis referred to as *Aryans*) were forbidden because it would taint the pure *Aryan* race. To inhibit this, domestic female staff resident in homes where the head of the house was Jewish, had to be over 35 years of age. The term *Mischling* was used to describe a child of only partial *Aryan* ancestry. The word has the derogatory meaning of hybrid, mongrel, or half-breed and *Mischlings* were mis-treated in the same way as Jews.

By 1936, Jews were no longer allowed to vote and during the Olympic Games which were staged in Berlin, signs reading "*Jews not welcome*" were briefly removed from all public places in order to create a more favourable impression on foreign visitors.

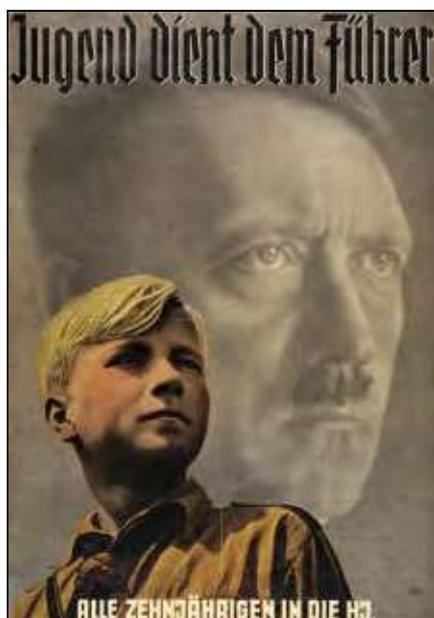
When I attended the Neues Gymnasium (New Grammar School), some of the teachers began to make insulting remarks about Jews. In particular I remember my music teacher, Professor Stockmann, accusing anyone who sang an incorrect note of having *Jewish ears*. Some pupils ignored this out of embarrassment but others laughed and were encouraged to participate in insulting behaviour which inevitably continued outside class.

In 1937, Jewish students were barred from certain schools and universities and Jews could only get passports and exit visas in exceptional circumstances.

In 1938, after the Germans marched into Austria, (called the Anschluss or occupation and annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany), the floodgates opened. New laws were established by the dozen. For example:

- Jews were prohibited from following certain public and private occupations.
- Jews had to carry identity cards at all times (after 1st January 1939).

- Qualified doctors, many who were eminent and very experienced, were only permitted to work as medical attendants (i.e. nurses).
- All Jewish street names were removed.
- Jewish males had to add the name *Israel* as their middle name and women, *Sara*, for easy identification as Jews.
- Jewish passports were marked with a red capital J. It was said after the war, that this was at the request of the Swiss authorities, so they would not make any mistakes and allow Jews to enter into Switzerland.
- About 15,000 Jews who were considered stateless were "re- settled" and forced to move to Poland.
- Jews had to deposit all valuables, such as jewellery, paintings and silver, with the authorities.
- Jewish bank accounts were blocked and the funds sequestrated with the withdrawal of basic living expenses permitted. The restrictions were put in place to prevent funds being accumulated or sent abroad.
- Any special expenses such as house repairs had to be formally agreed by the Gestapo and were paid directly by the bank to the approved supplier.
- The playing of music written by Jewish composers was forbidden and books by Jewish authors were publicly burned. The name of Mendelssohn was removed from the walls of the assembly hall in my Grammar School.



Poster urging all 10 year olds to join the Hitler Youth (HJ)

Further laws restricting our activities were introduced and these had the intended demoralising effect. For example, as Jews, we were no longer permitted to swim in public places for fear that we would contaminate the waters. As my parents wanted their three boys to learn to swim, we were sent by train to Gland (near Nyon) on Lake Geneva in Switzerland to the Bondi Holiday Camp. This was a Jewish camp in Switzerland where we could swim and enjoy ourselves without restrictions.

I remember learning to swim at this holiday camp in a single session. The breast stroke was demonstrated and I was then given a lifebelt made of large pieces of cork threaded through with rope tied around my upper body. With this I was launched towards a large log tethered some fifty metres offshore and without realising it, the instructor swimming alongside pulled a rope and the cork lifebelt slid from under me. Once I was confident that I could swim, I no longer needed support!

As the SA (Sturm Abteilung) and SS (Schutzstaffel) grew in strength there were parades in our town, mainly on Sundays and holidays such as Easter and May Day. Many of the town residents turned out to hear the bands playing, listen to speeches and watch the marching with banners. This tended to stir up interest and even fervour for Nazi ideology, so on those days my family stayed at home.

The Nazi Party also promoted certain charities such as *Winter Hilfs Werk* (Winter Action) which collected unwanted old clothes to help the poor. We Jews did not dare to let the collectors leave our house empty handed for fear of reaction. Another charity, as I recollect, was called *Eintopfgericht* (one course meal). The idea was that one reduced Sunday Lunch to a single course and donated the savings to a Nazi charity.

Each day as I walked to school along Hainstrasse, I passed several glass fronted display cases which showed open pages of the daily issue of *Der Stürmer* (The Storm Trooper), a paper edited by Julius Streicher who was known nationally as *the Jew Baiter*. This paper reviled the Jews with articles accusing them of creating all the problems in the German economy and was usually illustrated with cartoons showing caricatures of Jews with big noses and pockets stuffed with money. The fact that a large percentage of Nobel prizes for scientific and other achievements were awarded to German Jews between the two world wars was never taken into consideration.



Typical anti-Semitic caricature of a Jew

The Hitler Youth Movement (*Hitler Jugend*) was a paramilitary youth organisation for boys, established by the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) as early as 1922. A similar organisation, Bund Deutscher Mädchen (BDM - League of German Girls) was established for girls. These organisations enrolled 10 to 18 year old non-Jewish youths in a Scouts and Guides type movement where they were indoctrinated in the beliefs and ideals of the Nazi Party. The children wore uniforms and were rewarded for their achievements with merit badges and given increasing authority denoted by a recognised rank. The ethos, to produce a pure Aryan population of blond and blue eyed Germans all completely faithful to the *Third Reich*, was not in any way concealed. In fact *Anti-Semitism* was encouraged. Of course ultimately the objective was to rid the country of those who did not fit the racial criteria, especially Jews.

Blue eyes, fair hair, small straight nose and smallish ears were the hallmarks of an Aryan person. Those who did not fit this description were often called upon to prove their Aryan roots by providing birth records going back a few generations, especially if they wanted to join these Youth Groups.

At first the activities were quite subtle and those in the Hitler Youth and BDM went camping, learning woodcraft and other skills. They learned Nazi songs with quite anti-Semitic words which mocked and abused Jews as well as other minority groupings. They helped out at Nazi rallies, handing out leaflets and assisting with crowd control. Eventually the indoctrination was such that there were increasing instances of children reporting their own parents to the authorities for listening to foreign radio stations or criticising the Führer in the comfort of their own home. Not all children joined these youth movements but those who did were considered above the rest and received recognition. Some youngsters wanted to wear their youth movement uniforms to school and the headmasters who attempted to prevent this got into trouble for doing so.

Of course the organisation wielding the greatest power were the Gestapo (*Geheime Staats Polizei* - literally Secret State Police). They wore plain clothes but were often quite clearly identified by their black leather coats, black trilby hats and their furtive looks! They could question, mentally or physically abuse, arrest or even shoot people on the spot. Actually, they were feared by both Jews and non Jews alike, probably because of their unlimited power, their aggressive behaviour and the fear that they were constantly spying on the general population.



Löbl family circa 1935 - Back Row Left to Right: Louis Schloss, Fritz Löbl, Max Rosenfelder (Marie Löbl's father), Stefan Fried, Marie Löbl née Rosenfelder, Robert Löbl Middle Row: Rosalie Rosenfelder (Marie Löbl's mother), Mrs Louis Schloss, Karolina Löbl née Schloss, Betty Fried née Bachmann Front Row: me, Rudi, Willi, Herbert

Those arrested were usually sent to Concentration Camps (*Konzentrationslager* or KZ for short) originally intended for political prisoners and opponents of the Nazi regime. After 1933, these Concentration Camps were gradually quadrupled in number (to over 300 between 1939 and 1942). Those incarcerated, all without any judicial process, included Jews, homosexuals, gypsies and the mentally ill. However a mystique existed surrounding what happened in these Camps and most

Germans denied any knowledge or belief of mistreatment, abuse or murder. This denial of knowledge (some would call this a blatant lie) extended to a period after 1945 when of course people were being held to account for their complicity.

The most serious breaches resulting in arrest of non-Jewish Germans were breaking Nazi laws, speaking against the Führer (Adolf Hitler) or listening to foreign radio stations. Hitler intended to replace religion by Nazism (*Nationalsozialismus* in German) and so staunch Catholics with a strong tradition of attending Church were at risk of arrest and many had to hide their religious activities.

All of this anti-Jewish behaviour gradually increased in many aspects of our daily lives and made us feel very apprehensive and concerned about the future. In the evenings my family often listened to the radio when Hitler's and Göbbel's speeches from Berlin or Nuremberg were broadcast. Their rantings, loudly and enthusiastically applauded by their audiences, did nothing whatsoever to reassure us.

Yet despite this, my parents continuously assured us children that Hitler would not last and that our standing in the community and my father's war service would protect us. My father started to wear miniatures of his war medals on his lapel in order to remind everyone that he was a good German!



Kristallnacht

The trigger to the monumental events of *Kristallnacht* (night of broken glass) took place in the morning of Monday 7th November 1938, some 800 kms or 500 miles from Bamberg.

A hitherto unknown German Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, who was only 17 years old and studying in Paris and whose family had been expelled from the city of Hanover a few days earlier, purchased a revolver and some bullets. He asked to see an official at the German Embassy in Paris. He was taken to the office of Ernst vom Rath where Herschel shot him three times and made no attempt to escape the French police, freely confessing to the shooting.

In his pocket, he carried a message to his parents "*May God forgive me. I must protest so that the whole world hears my protest, and that I will do.*"

Enraged by Herschel's action, on Tuesday 8th November 1938 Germany unleashed its response.

First, Jewish newspapers and magazines were closed forthwith, cutting communication within the Jewish communities. At the time there were a number of German Jewish newspapers with a national circulation as well as local community papers and magazines. Berlin had one of the largest Jewish papers with a circulation of 40,000. The German Government also announced that Jewish children could no longer attend state elementary schools and all Jewish cultural activities were suspended indefinitely.

Until the hours of darkness, the 9th November was a normal day within the scope of all the restrictions under which we lived. Even then, when we arose on the morning of 10th, we were oblivious to the dramatic events which were taking place around us and indeed, all over Germany.

It must have been about 6:00am on the morning of Thursday 10th November 1938 when my eldest brother Willi, who was an engineering apprentice at our father's factory was getting ready to go to work. He shouted to tell us that there was smoke coming from the Synagogue, from the cupola roof which we could just glimpse over other rooftops from our flat a few hundred metres away. My father decided that we should all stay at home. Our maid, Babette, was despatched into the street to find out what was going on. She returned to tell us that the Gestapo and the SA were marching down the street and arresting all Jewish men.

Babette's evening duties included closing all curtains and especially in the winter months, lowering roller shutters outside our windows. Little did we know this would offer our family some basic protection from the smashing of our windows early that morning. On top of this we were subjected to the daubing of our shutters with anti-Semitic slogans in paint. Other homes also suffered throwing of projectiles, leading to injury, damage and broken windows. We were under siege in our own home.

We were very worried indeed and after a while we saw members of the Jewish community, whom we knew, being marched down the centre of our street by members of the Brown Shirts and Gestapo, some armed with fixed bayonets.

Later that morning I witnessed the Gestapo coming to our house, arresting my father and taking him away. We did not dare to ask anybody what was happening or find out if and when he might return as this would only have drawn attention to the rest of our family. We had an extremely anxious day and night.



*The Synagogue in Bamberg burning the morning after Kristallnacht
(photo courtesy of The Wiener Library, London)*

Around 2:00am that night, the doorbell rang. We had gone to bed in a very uneasy state and were terrified, wondering what might happen now. It was my father, released from jail by the police chief, Herr Bezold, who was an old school friend. He told him that he could let him go, but could not guarantee his safety. My father had returned home walking along the darkest, least frequented back streets and made it home safely. He was one of the few to be released so quickly as most of the male Jewish residents were detained for a longer period and many were transferred to Dachau Concentration Camp, near Munich, for weeks or even months.

During *Kristallnacht* on Wednesday evening 9th November 1938, Synagogues throughout Germany were vandalised, desecrated and burned. That night and the following day, Jewish homes and businesses were ransacked and destroyed both by SA Stormtroopers and some civilians who delighted in joining in.

1,668 Synagogues were seriously damaged or destroyed (almost all the Synagogues in Germany), over 7,000 shops as well as other businesses were destroyed, and a large number of Jews were killed although the official number shown by the German authorities was only 91. Additionally, some 30,000 Jews were arrested and taken to Concentration Camps.

I later heard that the leader of the Jewish Community in Bamberg, Kommerzienrat (this is a title similar to Sir) Willy Lessing had gone to the Synagogue to try and save the Torah Scrolls. Previously he had been honoured for his services to the town of Bamberg but that evening he was beaten up and the crowd then went to his home and threw furniture out of the windows of his first floor apartment. He died a few weeks later, in January 1939, from the injuries sustained that night. Today, the town of Bamberg once again recognises his contribution to the town and *Willy Lessing Strasse* is one of the major thoroughfares in Bamberg and is situated adjacent to his former apartment.



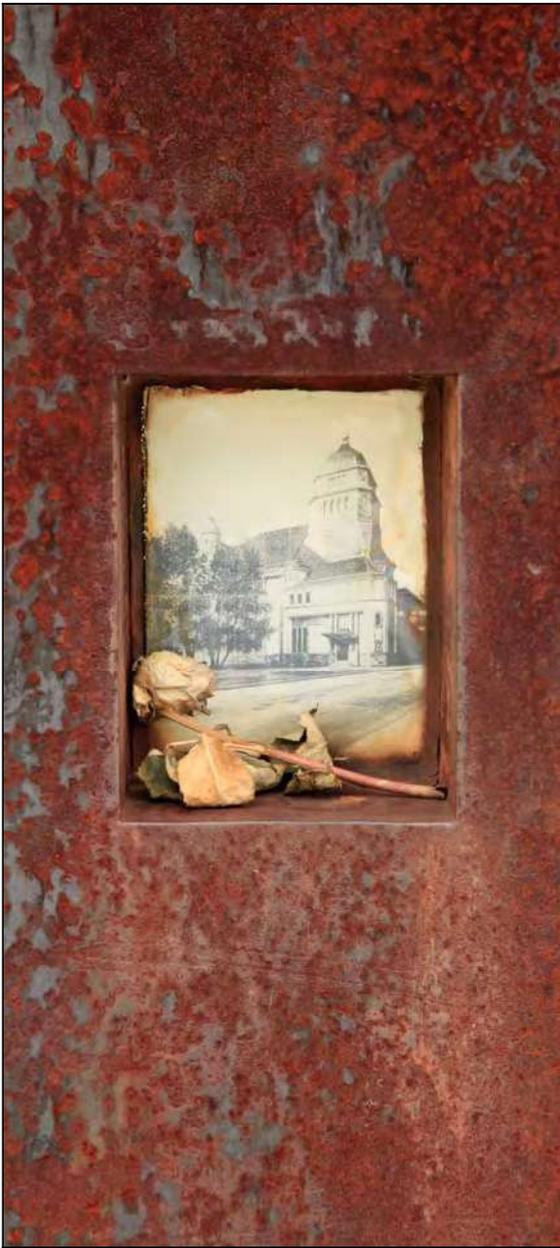
Willy Lessing
Street in Bamberg

From *Kristallnacht* until the time I crossed the German/Dutch border by train, I lived in constant fear. I jumped if the doorbell or telephone rang. It is unimaginable to live in a country which is not only lawless but one which actually encourages crimes against minority groups. The feeling of anxiety and at times terror never leaves you!

The Jewish population of Germany was fined one billion Reich Marks by way of *Judensteuer* (Jew Tax) to pay for the damage caused on *Kristallnacht*, which of course had actually been inflicted by the Nazis and non Jewish German citizens.

Further dictates and laws were issued. Jews were prohibited from entering restaurants, theatres, cinemas, concerts and exhibitions. Jews were no longer permitted to live in certain areas and had to hand in their driver's licences and cars.

All Jewish shops, most of which had been vandalised or destroyed, were forced to close and the larger businesses were obliged to sell to Aryans. In fact many of the male Jews who owned businesses and property were not released from Concentration Camps after *Kristallnacht* until the sale of their business and property, including their homes, had been completed. These '*sales*', made under duress, were of course carried out at a fraction of the true value.



Above is the site of the former Synagogue in Bamberg, 'Synagogen-Platz' with a new memorial (close-up shown left) and below the old memorial situated a few metres away (with me and my son, Peter).



Despite long-standing and extremely loyal personal and business contacts and an impeccable reputation, the realisation dawned on my parents and family that there was little choice but to try and leave the country quickly. This came as a great shock. The pressure on our family had grown to be unsustainable.

As the family business was a substantial exporter bringing in much needed overseas sales, it received certain privileges. For instance even during the restrictions placed on Jewish businesses, our company had a letter confirming that although the owners were Jews, they were still to be permitted to quote for public contracts. Despite all obstacles and difficulties, the business remained a large and successful entity.

And so it was, one day right on cue, that a large and well established electrical manufacturer from a town called Sondershausen in Thuringia, situated some 230 kilometres North of Bamberg, approached my father and Uncle Robert. They were Drs Kurt and Hans Joachim Lindner. They wore their *Nazi Party* badges on the underside of their lapels during their visit.

My father and Uncle Robert eventually made a deal to *sell*. Knowing that Jews could not leave Germany until all their assets had been transferred to Aryans was a huge negotiating advantage for the purchaser! The discussions were conducted in the presence of the company's Christian accountant, Georg Held. He did not support the Nazi regime and had to be very careful in all he said and did.

In any event, as soon as any business was sold, the Gestapo confiscated the proceeds of the sale. As previously mentioned, Jews were not allowed to take money out of the country. After the contracts were signed, my father and Uncle Robert withdrew from the business and concentrated on their plans to leave Germany. The first decisions were which country to go to, how to cope with living and working in a foreign country and indeed, how to make a living.

After completing a mass of paperwork and overcoming many hurdles put in their way by Nazi officials, our family was almost set to leave. All remaining assets such as paintings, furs and small items of value not previously confiscated had to be handed in. With true German efficiency, everything was carefully recorded and receipts issued to my parents. Of course, the values recorded were a fraction of the true worth.

Two special taxes had been imposed on the Jews; *Judensteuer* (Jew Tax) and the *Reichsflucht Steuer* (Tax on Fleeing the State of Germany). My father, in common with all Jews, had to pay regular instalments of *Judensteuer* but the *Reichsflucht Steuer* was assessed individually and this was inevitably set so that the fleeing Jew had to leave all his assets behind and emigrate penniless. Passports were issued in exchange!

My brother Willi, aged 17 years, was the first of our family to leave Germany. He travelled to New York on the Holland America Lines steamer, Staatendam. On arrival in December 1938 he found a job as a tool-maker. A cousin of my father's, who I believe was Moritz Schloss, gave a guarantee to the US authorities to ensure that Willi would not be a burden on the US taxpayer.

nder, von Wendland & Co.
 A.E. WASSERMANN
 BAMBERG-BERLIN
 Geündet 1791
 Drahtanschrift: Wasserbank
 Fernsprecher: 323, 325, 326, 327
 Postcheckkonto: Nürnberg 628

W/N.
 BAMBERG, den 21. Januar 1939.

Hierdurch teile ich Ihnen mit, daß ich Sie wie nachstehend belastet habe.

Gesperrtes Konto

Adresse	Betreff	Betrag RM	Wertstellung
Herrn Fritz Löbl Bamberg Hainstrasse 16	Für unsere Vergütung an die Deutsche Golddiskontbank Berlin C III unwiderruflich als unentgeltliche Abgabe für Exportförderungszwecke in Bezug auf die Auswanderung Ihres minderjährigen Sohnes Günter Israel Löbl Eine Zweitschrift unseres heute in dieser Sache an die Devisenstelle gerichteten Schreibens haben wir Ihnen bereits ausgehändigt.	535,-	21.1.

Mit deutschem Gruss

A receipt showing a deduction from my father's frozen bank account for exporting my personal belongings: "For reimbursement of payment to the German Gold Discount Bank, Berlin C III, as a non refundable levy for the purpose of export [of personal items] with regard to the emigration of your young son Günter Israel Löbl. Amount: RM 535 on 21 Jan 1939. A letter regarding this matter was sent to the Foreign Exchange Department. We have sent you a copy. With German greetings" (in other words - Heil Hitler!).

I'm not sure why my parents decided that England should be our destination of choice. Perhaps this was because of its proximity, because my father spoke some English and the family did have one or two contacts there.

My middle brother, Rudi, aged 16 years, left for England in January 1939 where he was to become an apprentice motor mechanic. His entry to England was made possible through an English private school, the Glack in Deal, Kent. Willi had attended the summer school a year earlier and my parents had forged a good relationship with the owners, Mr & Mrs Howard. Mrs Howard was the sister of the famous sculptor, Henry Moore. In fact Rudi never attended the school because we could no longer afford the fees, but the Howards were willing to provide documentation and also provided him with accommodation until he found employment as a motor mechanic in Deal.



My German passport. The name "Israel" was inserted to denote a Jewish male ("Sara" in the case of a female) and a large red J stamped to make certain that Jews were readily identified. The second page also shows the various visas and permits required to enter the United Kingdom and the Alien's Registration Certificate number. The endorsement 'Visit of 12 months to the UK authorised' can be clearly seen.

I left Bamberg with 10 shillings (50 pence) and a suitcase containing my clothes for which my father had to pay R.M. 535 as an export levy. My parents stayed on to resolve the many bureaucratic issues. They were no doubt reassured that we children were safely out of Germany, but of course we were youngsters (I was only 12 years old) living apart and in separate countries and naturally, considerable anxiety remained.

I heaved a huge sigh of relief as I crossed the border into Holland. From there, I travelled with some distant relatives, Ludwig and Frederika (known as Friedl) Hammelburger, to England via the Hook of Holland and Harwich where I arrived on 7th March. On the train journey from Harwich to London (Waterloo), I was struck by all the chimney pots and the huge 'For Sale' signs on properties, features which did not exist in Bamberg.

In London I was handed over to a Jewish family named Platt who lived at 153 Clarence Road, Clapton, London E5. Debbie Platt, the eldest daughter who was a school teacher, had stayed with us in Bamberg for a few weeks in the summer of 1938. She came to improve her German and we benefited by learning some English.



Young George with the Platt family taken in April 1939

The Platts lived in a terraced house with a convenience store at the front and living accommodation to the rear and upstairs. They had four daughters, who together with Mrs Platt's mother from Eastern Europe (known as *Bubba*) all lived in the same three bedrooms. There was no bathroom and so we all washed at the kitchen sink and, as was quite common at that time, the toilet was outside in a back yard next to the coal house. The family filed off in groups once a week to attend the local public baths, a facility situated in the same building as the swimming pool. Mrs Platt sent us with fresh clothing for the week.

Mr Platt was a tailor and went out to work each day. Mrs Platt and her daughters helped to run the store. The shop sold everything from cigarettes to ice cream, hair nets, candles, canned and packeted food, stationery and other diverse everyday household items.

Popular in Germany,
Dr Dralle's Birken
Haarwasser



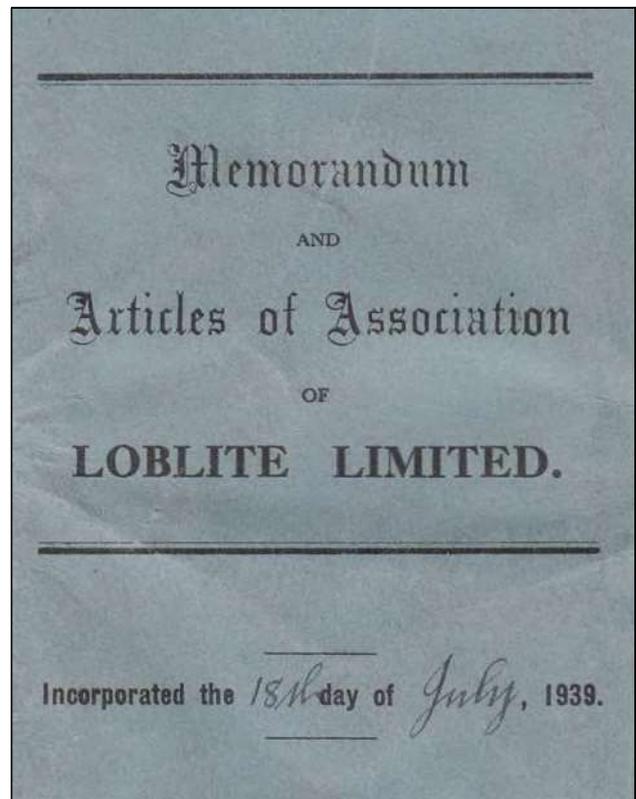
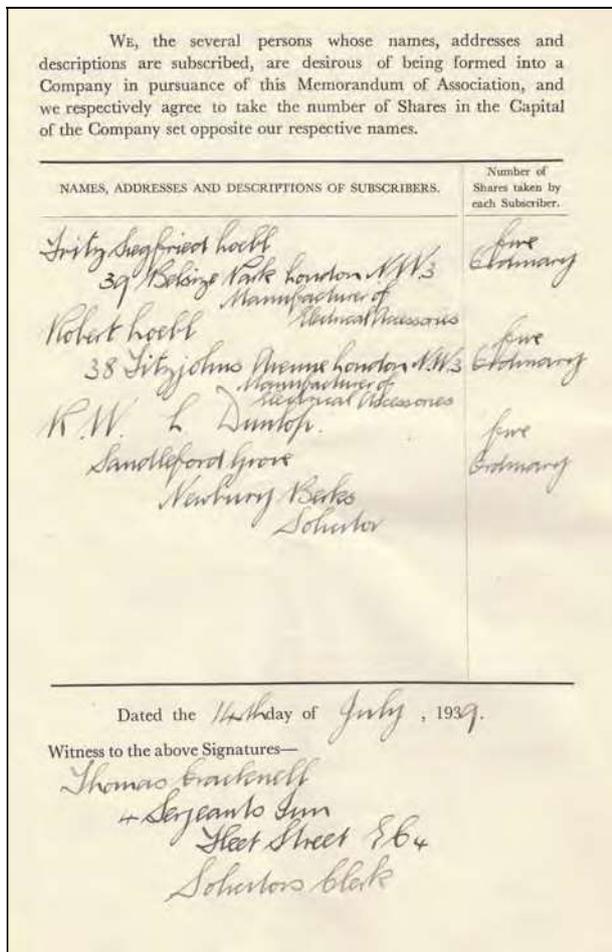
Leaving our comfortable home in Bamberg and being accustomed to nanny, cook and chauffeur, it was a culture shock to experience my new lodging above a small corner shop. I slept on the sitting room sofa which, to my horror, I soon discovered was riddled with fleas. I happened to have with me a bottle of *Dr Dralle's Birken Haarwasser*, a German hair tonic containing alcohol which soothed the flea bites. I always wondered whether this hair tonic was so effective that it gave me a hairy chest! Added to this was the trauma of being in a foreign country, speaking and understanding little English and having no news of my parents.

My English extended to very simple, useless phrases I had learned from a book such as "If you do not know the way, ask a policeman" and "My ear trumpet has been struck by lightning"!!

Three weeks after my arrival in England, the Educational Welfare Officer arrived to ask my adoptive family why I was playing truant from school. The fact that I spoke no English was no excuse and I was then taken to Shacklewel Lane School in Clapton where my appointed teacher fortunately had a smattering of German.

Although I'm not sure whether the Platts requested payment for my keep, my parents wanted to offer some recompense. Five ladies' gold watches for Mrs Platt and her daughters, a length of suit cloth for Mr Platt and various other items were smuggled in a bed couch which was shipped by my parents to me in a *Liftvan* (special made-to-measure timber crate).

The Platts took me to the cinema a couple of times per week (there was of course no TV at that time) and this helped my English.



The Memorandum and Articles of Association for Loblite Limited dated 18th July 1939 showing shareholders, Fritz and Robert Loeb and Sir Robert Dunlop.

Other family members left Germany at different times as soon as they could get out and find a country which would accept them. My Uncle Robert and his family also came to England.

Our English connections were twofold. Uncle Robert had met a London solicitor, Sir Robert Dunlop, DSO CIE, on holiday on the Belgian coast. So he wrote to him to ask whether he would be able to help. In fact, Sir Robert did assist and in due course became the mandatory English director of Loblite Limited, the business my father and Uncle Robert founded after they settled in England.

My father also knew an official at the British Consulate in Munich. He was an intelligence officer and as part of his job visited various part of Germany, mainly its border areas. At one point he needed to rent a car with local number plates, so that he would not be noticed. My father had lent him our car. So this British official showed his gratitude in due course by supporting my parents' visa application.

This document had to state a reason for wishing to enter the UK which was given as "to found a manufacturing plant for electric light fittings and accessories". The application for "12 months leave to enter" was granted following a great deal of correspondence and many heart-stopping ups and downs. Finally, amid huge relief, the visas arrived stating that they had been granted on the condition that a manufacturing plant employing British workers would be established and the accounts presented within 12 months.

One of my Uncles, Sali and his wife, Friedel, left Bamberg on the trans-Siberian railway via Shanghai with the aim of heading for Ecuador in South America, the only place to which they could obtain a visa. These were parts of the world which we only knew of from our school geography lessons but the prospect of travelling so far from home seemed far less daunting than remaining in

Germany. They were unable to leave via France which was hostile to Germany, however as Russia was an ally, this was a route by which many left. Their children, Erika and Werner, had previously left for England with the *Kindertransport*. They later went to Ecuador to join their parents. Erika received a diary as a gift from her grandmother on her 13th birthday in 1937. In this she recorded her experiences and charted her journey via England to Ecuador. This diary has now been used by students at her former school in Bamberg, for Holocaust education.

Finally in England, we Anglicised our names. I became George, Rudi became Ronnie (Ronald on formal documents) and in the USA, Willi became Bill (William). Our family name became *Loebi*, the closest English equivalent to *Löbl* as the English language has no umlaut. We became British Nationals on 19th October 1946.

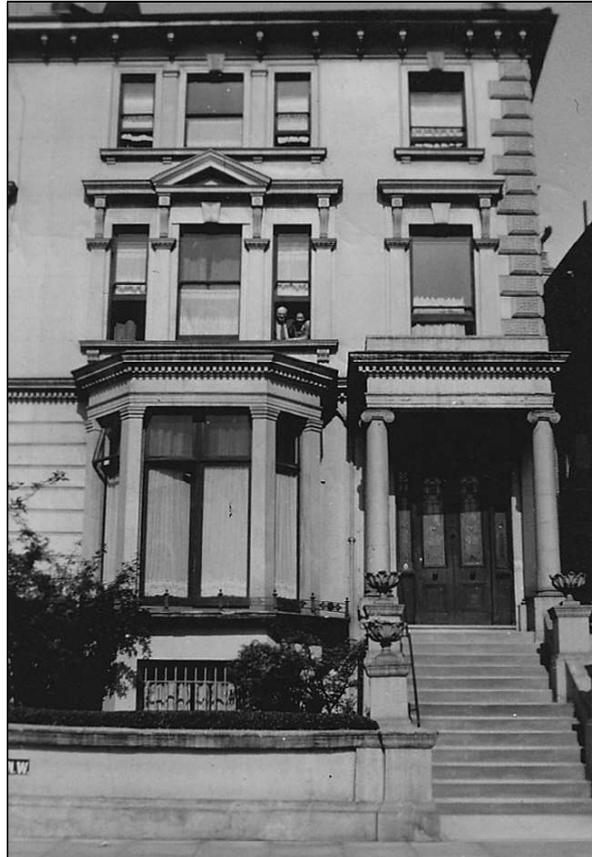
Needless to say, my family and I are forever grateful to the British Government for saving our lives by allowing us into the United Kingdom. The British people have proved themselves time and again to be most compassionate.

In 1938, only five days after *Kristallnacht*, a delegation of British Jews and Quakers appealed to the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, to accept the temporary admission into the United Kingdom of up to 10,000 predominantly Jewish children (without their parents) between the ages of 3 and 17 years. This initiative became known as the *Kindertransport*. Although initially, only temporary admission to the UK was granted, these children could never return while Hitler was in power. Many of these individuals (known as *Kinder*) became well established in their host country and made a substantial contribution. This included four individuals who in due course became Nobel prize-winners.

Our Immediate Family Reunited – but not for long!

Our immediate family were re-united when my parents arrived in England on 13th May 1939. We all breathed a massive sigh of relief.

In order to recover from the trauma of the past months, they decided to take a two week holiday in a small hotel in Deal. From here they moved to Belsize Park in London where they rented two rooms and I moved to Hampstead to join them.



*Belsize Park,
Hampstead, London*

Of course, there remained a huge amount of trepidation and anxiety. Our family were thankfully no longer afraid for our lives but instead were now virtually penniless (penniless!), living in a foreign country with limited language skills, few contacts and a strict 12 month period in which to set up a viable business employing British workers and prove our worth!

While in London, my father and Uncle Robert (who lived with his family in Fitzjohns Avenue at that time) rented a small office in Ropemaker Street. From this base they formed Loblite Limited, searched for a factory and started to look for plant and machinery.

I sensed the tension within the family as my father and Uncle Robert began the huge task of finding working capital, premises, machinery, tools, employees and customers. All this had to be accomplished quickly so that they could deliver on the promise and present accounts within a year.

Only two factory locations were offered by the British Board of Trade on industrial estates in areas of high unemployment. These were on a new industrial estate in Pontypridd, South Wales or Team Valley Trading Estate in Gateshead, situated on the southern bank of the river Tyne, directly opposite the city of Newcastle upon Tyne.

They chose Team Valley because of its proximity to the North Sea ports. The brothers had exported large volumes of their electrical products from Bamberg to Scandinavia and were hopeful of being able to pick up some of this business again.

War was declared on 3rd September 1939 and two days later, while attending as a pupil at St Paul's Parochial School in Swiss Cottage, the entire school was evacuated to escape anticipated bombing by the Germans. I had to attend school with a suitcase, identity card and gas mask. Pupils had to affix a label with their name and home address to their coat label. We were taken to an unknown destination by bus and in this way, once again, I was separated from my family.

The bus arrived at a small village school in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, some 20 miles North of London. From here, we were separated into our classes and together with our teachers walked down various village streets. The teachers knocked on every door pointing to the children asking if they would be willing to accommodate one or two child evacuees. They were offered the enticement of fifteen shillings (75 pence) per child per week towards the cost of board and lodging.

I was very lucky because, together with my friend Werner Daniels, we were taken in by Mr & Mrs Stanbrook who lived in Breakspeare Road. Once again, this home, like that of the Platts had an outdoor toilet and no bathroom. However, we did not visit the local baths as the Stanbrooks filled a tin bath on the *clippy mat* (a homemade rug made of small pieces of textile) in front of the open kitchen fire with buckets of hot water obtained from a boiler.



*Mr and Mrs Stanbrook and their daughter Nina
(photo taken in 1943)*

The local school children shared their facility with the evacuees each day. I kept in touch with my parents by exchange of weekly letters. Mr Stanbrook, a carpenter, was called up to serve in the army and Mrs Stanbrook was left with her young daughter, Nina. In order to assist in the house, I had three jobs. The first was to carry the accumulator (similar to a car battery which powered the radio) to a service station to be recharged. Second, to clean the horse brasses which were displayed in the front room of the residence. Third, to clean the ground floor windows. At first this was carried out using a bucket of water and a wash leather but after a few weeks, *Windolene*, a revolutionary cleaning solution, was discovered. I was so excited about this innovation and wrote to recommend it to my mother. I was paid 3d (about 1½ pence) per week. Aged only 12, that was the first money I ever earned.

One memorable excursion was to an *Ovaltine* model farm near Abbots Langley. Contrary to the image of quaint old farm buildings, this turned out to be a dairy farm where all surfaces were of gleaming white tiles and for 1939, it was clearly a hygienic and state of the art milking facility.

Life in Abbots Langley was really quite pleasant and our hosts were kind. All of this continued until Christmas 1939 when I travelled to be with my parents who, by now, had moved to Low Fell, a suburb of Gateshead. My brother Ronnie, had moved from Deal to Low Fell while I was evacuated.

Uncle Robert and his family moved to Rectory Terrace in Gosforth, a northern suburb of Newcastle upon Tyne. My parents first stayed with the Fischl family at Carlton Terrace in Low Fell in Gateshead, south of the Tyne until they found a house. Mr Fischl was a Czech refugee who was starting a business in fancy paper goods and I imagine that his wife let rooms in their large terraced house to supplement their income.



My mother shelling peas on the kitchen step of our home in Kells Lane North, Low Fell

After a few weeks, my parents rented a 3 bedroom semi-detached house at Harcourt Park in Low Fell. Uncle Robert and my father were equal shareholders in Loblite Limited and they rented a 6,300 sq.ft. Advance Factory on Team Valley Trading Estate. The Lease was for 21 years with no break clause - at a rent of one shilling (5 pence) per sq.ft. per annum.

By the time the business was established and ready to operate, all raw materials were under the control of the Ministry of Supply. Loblite was instructed to manufacture engineering components for the war effort and we, as Aliens, had written permission to do so.

My father and Uncle were given drawings of components which could be made with the machinery installed. They were asked to estimate the cost and a ten percent profit margin was permitted. The components included brass and steel ammunition parts manufactured on milling, drilling and grinding machines and small presses. These machines were not individually motorised but relied on power delivered by flat leather belts from a main shaft which ran the length of the factory ceiling above the machines.

My father was at the factory at 8 o'clock every morning. To get there he either had to walk or get a tram to Gateshead Station and a bus from there to Team Valley. Ronnie did the same while he was an engineering apprentice at Loblite.

Meanwhile, I had been enrolled into Kells Lane Elementary School in January 1940. This was a few minutes' walk from our home.

Although we all kept our heads down and got on with shaping our future and working hard in the business, by May 1940 it dawned on the British Government that the German Jewish Refugees living in England were in fact German – and Britain was at war with Germany!

And so, the Germans living in Britain were assessed and classified into three groups by a special Tribunal. Category A (high risk - to be interned), Category B (medium risk - subject to restrictions) and Category C (low risk - exempt from both). But with the fall of France and an increasingly nervous population, Winston Churchill was persuaded to extend the criteria for internment to cover the whole of Category B and a large section of Category C - in all some 27,000 'Enemy Aliens'. This, of course, included all German Jewish refugees who ironically had the greatest reason to be against Nazi Germany!

Unlike the German Gestapo, the two British policemen who arrived unannounced at our front door on Sunday morning 10th May 1940 were extremely apologetic and polite. They asked my father and my 16 year old brother Ronnie to first finish their breakfast and then pack a suitcase as they were to be interned.

First they were taken to Fenham Barracks in Newcastle where my mother and I were able to visit them. However, after a few days they were moved to Huyton Camp near Liverpool where they stayed 'at His Majesty's Pleasure'!



Huyton Camp near Liverpool

Huyton was home to three separate camps - a Prisoner of War Camp, a base for American GIs and an Internment Camp. The Internment Camp was adapted at short notice from a newly constructed housing estate, comprising several streets of houses known as the Bluebell Estate. In fact some of the houses had yet to be completed and lacked doors and windows. Fortunately it was the month of May and even those who were billeted in incomplete properties did not get too cold and the missing doors and windows were quickly added.

In order to fulfil the purpose of an Internment Camp, the entire housing estate was secured by barbed wire perimeter fences. Twelve internees were allocated to each house but the overcrowding

was such that many were temporarily accommodated in tents until they could be transferred to other facilities on the Isle of Man.

The threat of invasion by Germany and the fear of collusion by Germans living in Britain was such that all Germans, including even a German cousin of King George VI living in England, was interned.

Huyton Camp mostly held men. A few women were sent elsewhere or not considered a risk – thus splitting families apart. Internees had little or no access to newspapers or to the radio and so they had little idea what was happening outside. The residents were put to work, some taught and others studied. Most of the internees were released before 1942 but some were held until after the war ended.

About two weeks after my father and Ronnie were interned, the nice English policemen returned to our home and told my mother that she and I would also have to leave the area owing to its strategic importance.

Needless to say, having escaped from Nazi Germany, it was a huge shock for the family to have male members locked up and for the women and children to be told to leave their newly established homes. However inconvenient, we at least felt that there was little threat to our lives, as there had been in Germany.

Keswick and my Barmitzvah

My mother and I had heard of a place in the Lake District called Keswick. I can't recollect exactly how we knew of it but there were direct buses from Marlborough Crescent bus station in Newcastle to Keswick, the adult single fare being 7 shillings (about 35 pence).

We packed a suitcase each, made secure our rented house and headed west on the bus. Having experienced my teachers in Abbots Langley knocking on doors to find accommodation for their children, I decided to use the same tactics in Keswick.

My mother and I walked down Bridge Street carrying our cases and began knocking on doors explaining our predicament. At number 96, Mr and Mrs Robert Robinson were kind enough to offer to rent us a spare room which we shared. The Robinsons were a retired couple with a dog, living in a terraced house close to the centre of this small market town.



Here, I revisit 96 Bridge Street, Keswick in 2008

As we had little money and we were not offered any kind of state support, we needed to seek employment. My mother found a job at a private school situated a few doors down the street where she worked as a cleaner earning 1 shilling per hour (5 pence). In those days, mops were not considered adequate and she was instructed to scrub the floors on her knees. Quite a culture shock, having employed a cook and a chauffeur in Bamberg – but I never heard her complain about our plight.

However, I found my first job too hard to sustain and left after one day! The job entailed standing knee deep in manure whilst cleaning out a pig sty and I found it impossible to bear the intoxicating ammonia emitting from the excrement. My mother encouraged me to seek something else and I became a farm labourer at Greta Bank Farm working for the Horne family. This farm was close to Keswick Railway Station.



Greta Bank Farm - still there in 2008

I worked six days per week from 6:00am to 6:00pm each day, earning 5 shillings (25 pence) per week including breakfast, lunch and tea which was of great benefit as I was well fed and this helped preserve our meagre finances.

My first job each morning was to catch Sally the pony, brush her down and harness her into a two wheeled milk trap onto which the farmer loaded his milk for delivery around the Keswick area. The milk was in large galvanised steel churns from which the farmer ladled the full fat, unpasteurised milk into individual jugs which the housewives brought to their front doors. The quantities sold were half pint, pint or quart (2 pints).

While farmer Horne delivered the milk, I had to clean out the cow byre (not knee deep here!) and save the valuable manure to be used as fertiliser. Then I had to thoroughly clean the Alfa Laval milking machine and the stainless steel milk cooler.

Afterwards, I joined the Horne family for breakfast served by Mrs Horne in their large farm kitchen. I was always happy to be included in the conversation which improved my English - and the family were interested to learn how I had arrived in England. The Hornes had a son and a daughter of similar age to me. A farm labourer joined us around the table for breakfast while Mr Horne was out on his milk rounds.

During the day I cut fresh grass with a scythe and carried it in a large hessian sheet into the bull pen where it sustained a large, ferocious animal with a ring through its nose. Apparently the ring was the only way of controlling this beast when it was required to mate with the cows.

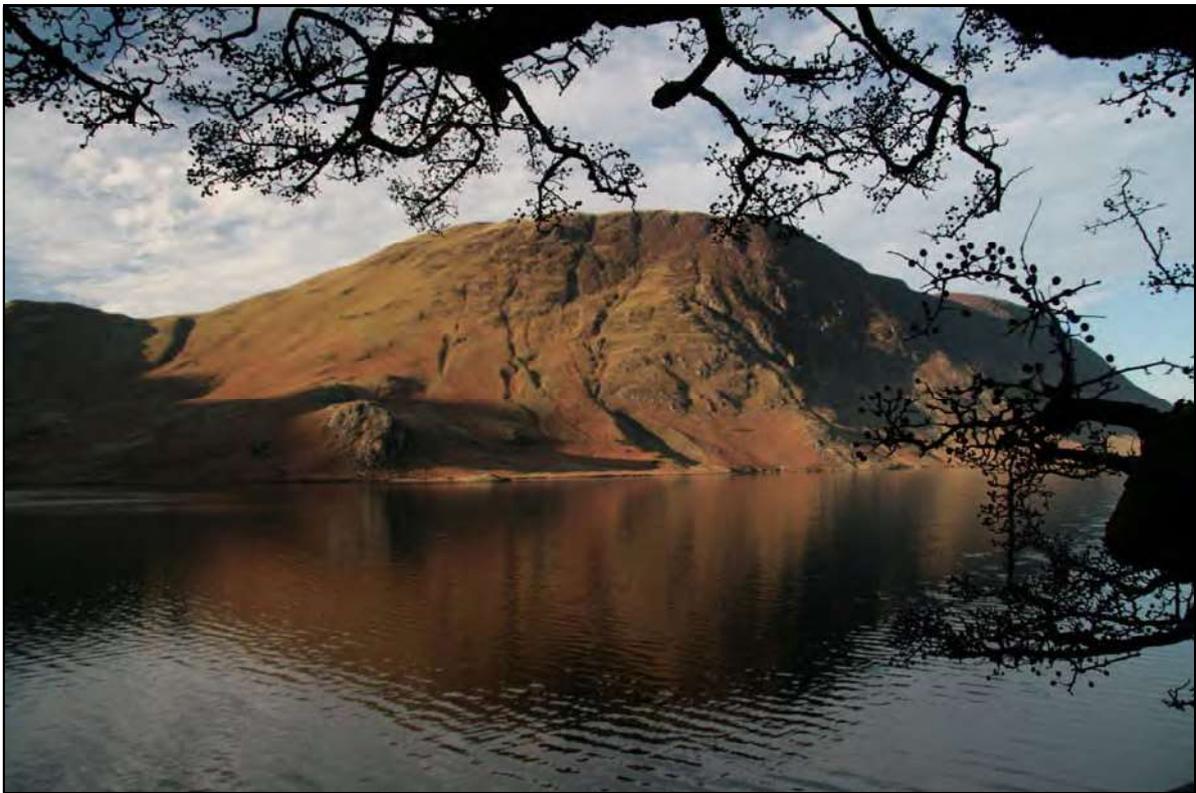
Mr Horne's pigs were relatively clean and somehow had been trained to deposit their excrement in one corner, which made cleaning the sty a more pleasant and simple task than my one day apprenticeship had been.

Further work involved weeding rows of vegetables which were sold locally and hay making. The hay had to be raked and dried (turned over) before it was made into haystacks by hand and stored as winter fodder. On rainy days, we cleaned out drainage ditches and trimmed the hedges to maintain dense growth near the ground in order to contain the livestock.

On Sunday afternoons, my mother and I were occasionally invited to tea at the Keswick home of the Misses Dodds (Ruth, Sylvia and Hope), daughters of the bookbinder and historian Edwin Dodds. These wealthy spinsters had also evacuated themselves to Keswick from Low Fell and knew of my parents. They were well known in the Low Fell area as benefactors of the Little Theatre, built during the Second World War. Situated in Saltwell View, next to Saltwell Park, this purpose-built amateur dramatics theatre housed the *Progressive Players*. Ruth Dodds was an author and playwright as well as a Councillor and Freeman of Gateshead.

In spite of food rationing, the Dodds sisters provided a sumptuous traditional English afternoon tea, something we had not previously experienced. This consisted of sandwiches cut into triangles with the crusts removed, scones and cake.

After a pleasant hour or so of conversation, one of the sisters who struggled to pronounce our family name used to address my mother with the now fondly recalled cue to depart “*Mrs Loerbl, ought you to go, or ought you to stay?*”



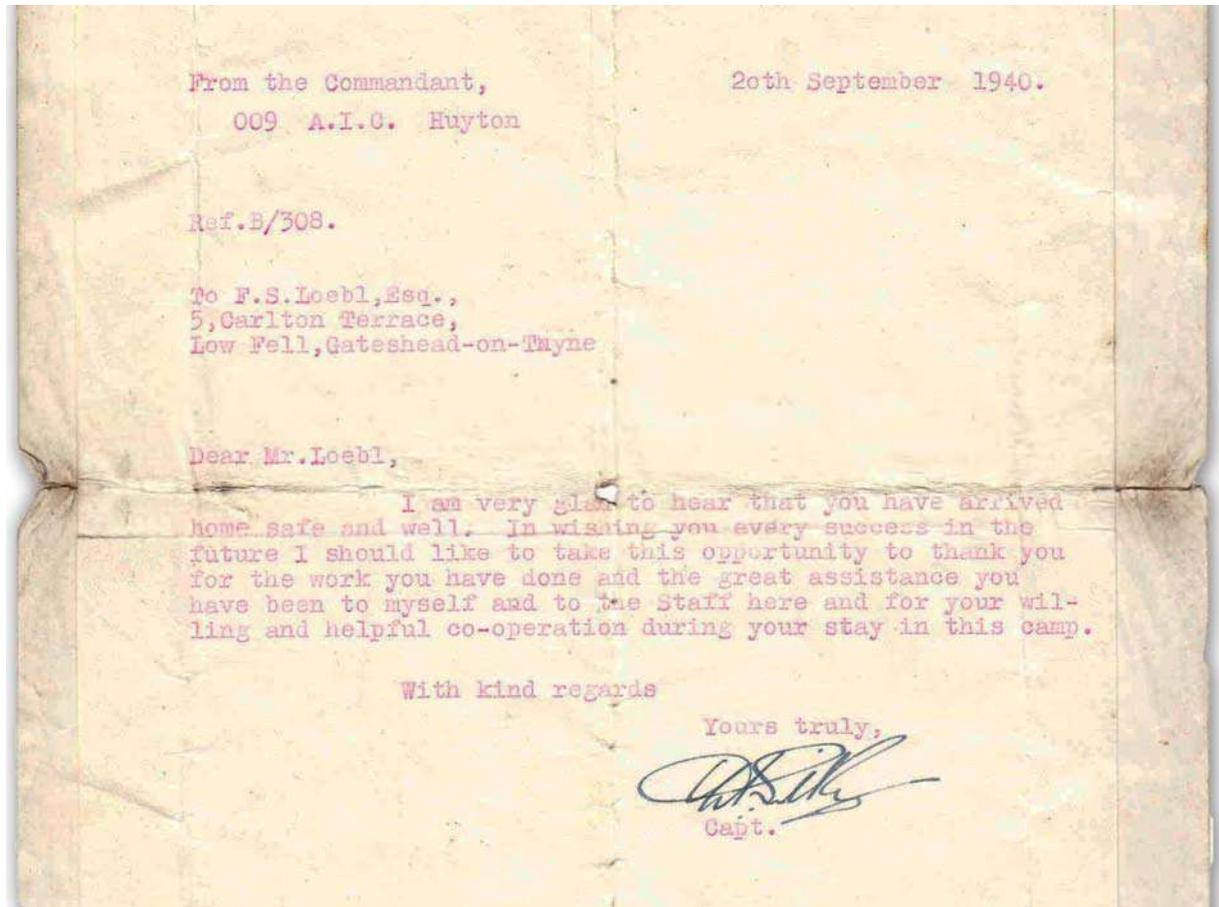
The beautiful English Lake District

Although we enjoyed the relative safety, beautiful scenery and clean air of the renowned English Lake District, we still had to report regularly to the police as Enemy Aliens (after all, we still had German passports). We had very little money, spoke poor English, part of our family were interned in Huyton and we could only maintain contact by post. Life was still far from certain and we felt that our future was unknown.

Our small social circle included Uncle Robert Loebel's wife, Marie with her two daughters Hanna and Lili, Mrs Hede Maier with her two sons Werner and Josef along with other German refugees who were told to leave the North East and found themselves in Keswick. The family of Nathan Science were well established residents of the Newcastle Jewish community who chose to leave for safety reasons because of fear of enemy bombing. Although there was not much bombing in the Newcastle

area, one memorable hit was that of the Manors Goods Station in September 1941. This was used to store supplies of butter and sugar and burned continuously for three days.

Nearby, the town (now City) of Sunderland suffered several bombing raids and the rumour circulated to the effect that the Germans believed that the Sunderland Flying Boats (Short S.25 Sunderland) were built there – but in fact they were built at Short Brothers factories in Belfast, Blackburn and Rochester.



Letter from Camp Commandant of Huyton Internment Camp

Back in Huyton Camp, my father and Ronnie had been classified as Group B (medium risk - subject to restrictions) and my father was in fact released after only 4 months. Ronnie came out a few weeks later. However Uncle Robert and his son Herbert, for reasons unknown, were detained for a whole year.

Herbert wrote in his memoirs " *I found the time I spent in internment not without interest. I met many Jewish fellow internees who had been eminent in German science and music. At Huyton Camp I attended lectures in what we called the Camp University. Friends (the wife of Edward Pace, Professor of Hebrew at the University of Durham) sent instruments which enabled some inmates of the Huyton Camp to create a String Quartet, which reached a good standard. I remember being very angered by a remark made by the commander of the Huyton camp, when he said that he would have much more respect for us if we admitted to being good Nazis! The commander was a Colonel, and we found it very worrying that such an ignorant man should reach a high rank in the British Army*"

My father had been helpful and compliant and the Camp Commandant clearly recognised that he was neither a risk to the security of the country, nor did it serve any purpose to keep him locked up when he could be developing his business and helping with the war effort.

I believe that one of the reasons for my father's early release from Huyton in September 1940, was due to the intervention of Police Inspector William Scott, the Alien's Officer at Gateshead. He had developed a rapport with and respect for my father and was deeply concerned about the management of Loblite, as all the key personnel had been interned.

My father wrote to us after he had returned home to Low Fell and informed my mother and I, who were still in Keswick, that we were permitted to return home.

I returned to Kells Lane School for only one term. This ended my general education at the age of 14 years and 3 months.

Our parents had a few friends, like the Fischl family who owned Metal Paper Works on Team Valley Trading Estate and Mrs Gutsmann whose family owned Tyne Truck and Trolley Company Limited. Close friends were the Hofmanns. Max Hofmann ran Great Northern Knitware at Chirton Trading Estate in North Shields. Vally Sanders was the company's designer and she had conceived the dress for Marlene Dietrich in the 1930 film *The Blue Angel*.



One of Vally's hobbies was to make appliqué pictures. This example was made especially for her good friend, Elsa Loebel, on the occasion of her 70th birthday in 1962

As aliens, our movements became subject to designated curfew hours and were controlled by The Aliens Registration Act of 1914 and entered in everyone's Aliens Registration Book. For example, if Ronnie wanted to attend a dance at the Gateshead YMCA, staying out after the curfew, he had to go to Gateshead Police Station, see the Aliens Officer to obtain permission and have this entered into his Book. If my father needed to take a business trip entailing one or more nights away from home, the process was the same.

Of course we did all this gladly, as we had escaped the Nazis and the local Police were very friendly and helpful. This was in spite of the fact that we were categorised as Enemy Aliens, in the middle of a war, at a time when the German Army had beaten all European armies and was looking at Britain from the other side of The Channel, less than 20 miles away. The Government feared that there were spies or Nazi sympathisers among the refugees. Actions such as showing lights to guide enemy aircraft, using radios to pass information to the Germans, helping German parachutists or other personnel facilitating the invasion, were considered potential threats at such a delicate stage of the war.

Although my thirteenth birthday was in September 1939, my *Barmitzvah* was postponed until 1940 after my father was released from internment and my mother and I had returned from Keswick.

We had little money and as we did not want to postpone the *Barmitzvah* further, I was invited to share my *Barmitzvah* with Ronnie Goldman, son of Frank and Emma Goldman. Ronnie was a rather flamboyant young man who later opened one of the first salesrooms in Newcastle and then made his name nationally as *Romark* (he changed his name to Ronnie Markham), a hypnotist and magician appearing on stage and TV.

Mr Frank Goldman, who was a film distributor, lived with his family in Bemerside Drive, Jesmond. After my *Barmitzvah* lessons with Reverend Drukker, I was often invited back to the Goldmans for tea and remember that they had a miniature cinema on the second floor of their home, built to show Mr Goldman's films. They were very kind in facilitating my *Barmitzvah* and always made me very welcome at a time when some other members of the community were more wary of Jewish refugees, fearing that they would disturb their businesses and way of life.

I was prepared for my *Barmitzvah* and took lessons with Ronnie Goldman at the Jesmond Synagogue in Eskdale Terrace. After the ceremony, we all returned to Harcourt Park for a celebration lunch prepared by my mother.



*My Barmitzvah in 1940 - outside 2 Harcourt Park
Left to Right - Back Row: Elsa Loebel and Ronnie Loebel
Front Row: Aunt Marie Loebel, me, Fritz Loebel, Hannah Loebel,
Uncle Robert Loebel, Lili Loebel and Herbert Loebel*

Establishing Loblite Limited

The plans for our new family business had been severely interrupted over a number of months by the internment of my father and Uncle Robert, who was still detained with his son Herbert. The business had been continued by a skeleton management team, headed by a neighbour of Uncle Robert in Rectory Terrace, Gosforth. He was the owner of a local engineering business and had offered to look after Loblite in exchange for employing his son in our business. Inspector Scott, the Aliens Officer, having no aliens to look after (they had all been interned or sent out of the area) assumed the task of monitoring the many fledgling businesses established by refugees in the Gateshead area. He felt that Loblite needed to refocus and he seemed only too pleased when my father, and shortly afterwards Ronnie, were back in control.



So now the complexities of starting a new business in a foreign country could finally recommence. For the rest of the war years the company was obliged to continue its production of metal engineering components for the Ministry of Supply. The Company machines were operated 23 hours per day for 6 days per week on a 'cost plus' basis and although they were unable to re-enter the electrical business, financial reserves were at last being replenished and we could finally concentrate on establishing our lives in England.

Although this was a steady period financially, my father always considered that this work would come to an end and he planned and prepared for the design and manufacture of electrical products.

I can recall my father earning £5 per week and saving money, some of which he had to lend back to the business from time to time in order to pay the wages on Fridays because the company lacked funds.

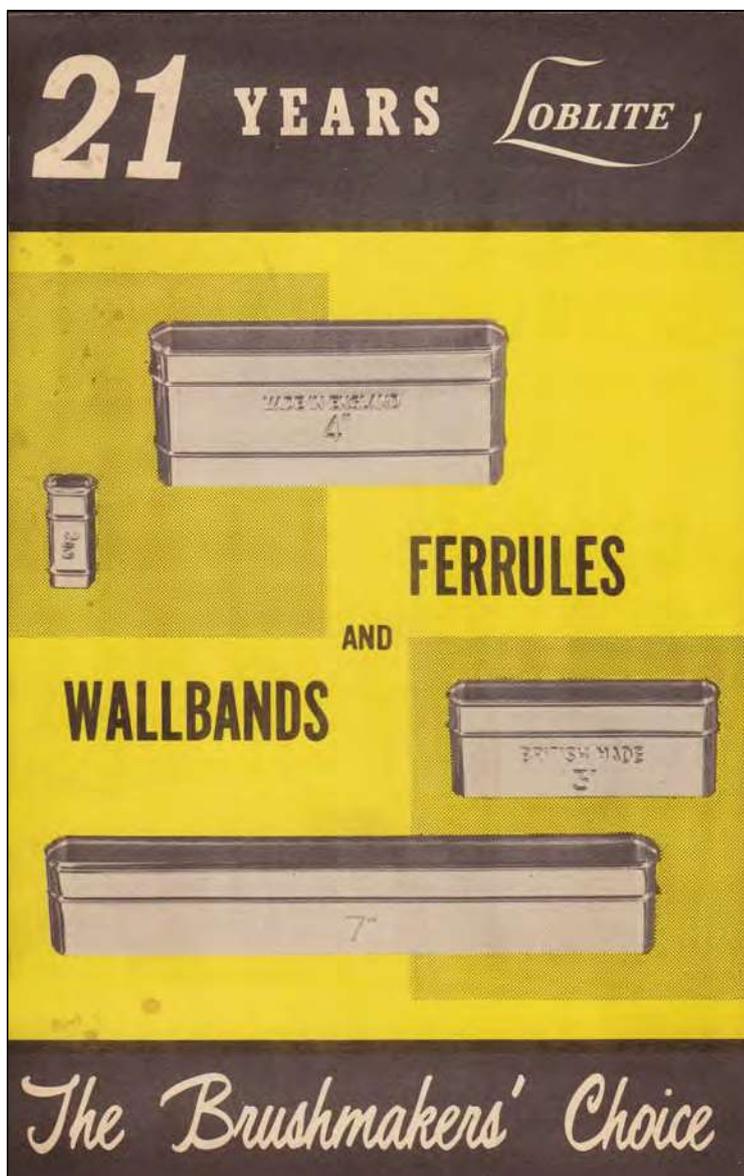
My brother Ronnie was classed as an engineering apprentice at Loblite and he attended evening classes, graduating as a Production Engineer.

After a year, Uncle Robert, my cousin Herbert and Ken Waterman (formerly Kurt Wassermann) were released from Huyton Internment Camp. Ken had been employed as a draughtsman at the factory in Bamberg. In fact he had graduated in electrical engineering at the *Technische Hochschule*

(Technical College) in Munich around 1937 but being Jewish could not find employment and my father and Uncle had given him a job in the drawing office. He had been arrested on *Kristallnacht* and incarcerated in Dachau Concentration Camp. As soon as Loblite was established, the Company wrote to the German authorities offering Ken employment which secured his release from Dachau as well as his entry into England.

The war created all sorts of shortages for an island nation which at that time relied on imports of most foods and many raw materials from mainland Europe and further afield. Shipping space was at a premium and had to be used for essential goods only as the German U-boats caused havoc with shipping in the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea.

One of these materials was box wood, a very close grained timber, which was used to make office and school rulers. Loblite offered to produce these commonly used articles from printed tinfoil. A Government license was obtained to purchase tinfoil sheets from the Steel Company of Wales, in Swansea. These were strapped on heavy wooden pallets and sent directly to the Metal Box Company's tin printing works in Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne. The tinfoil was printed with a yellow background and thin black lines for inches on one side and millimetres on the other.



Loblite's early range of paintbrush ferrules

At Loblite, the printed sheets were cut into strips, on a foot operated guillotine and individually folded so that there were no sharp edges. This operation was carried out by female labour on hand bar folders fixed to workbenches, which created a lot of noise. This went on during the whole of the war period. Once the market was established, the 12 inch (30cms) rulers were made in different colours and profiles. Ten inch (25cms) rulers and 6 inch (15cms) rulers were added to the range as it seemed at the time to be an inexhaustible market.

The off-cuts from the sheets of tinplate were classified as scrap but my father quickly found a good use for these. Mr Schild, a brush manufacturer based in London had asked my father if he could manufacture paint brush ferrules. Father was not familiar with this component and Mr Schild showed him the metal bands which secure bristles onto wooden paint brush handles. This developed into a major new product range.

War ended on 8th May 1945 and work from the Ministry of Supply ceased immediately. I still don't know how my father and Uncle coped financially in the immediate post war period until they were able to manufacture and sell their first electrical product several months later. The first product was a two pin and earth appliance connector (Loblite list No. 550). This consisted of a ceramic, heat-resistant, current-carrying component; a two part *Bakelite* cover with internal brass contacts and terminals and a rubber cable entry sleeve.



*Loblite Limited List No. 550 Earthed,
unswitched appliance connector*

*At that time every electrical appliance
required one of these until many years
later when cables were connected
inside all appliances*

This was based on a design which had been used in Germany but was entirely novel in England and incorporated high quality porcelain stone which was safer and longer lasting than the customary all- Bakelite connector. We bought the mouldings from Universal Metal Products (UMP) in Manchester, which was also owned by a German refugee. Porcelain component manufacturers, mostly located in the Stoke-on-Trent area, were always a problem for us. The potteries in that area were accustomed to making lovely china tableware but did not have much experience with technical porcelain components. Loblite made the metal contacts on power presses.

The next post-war product was a weatherproof, Bakelite, ceiling-mounted well-glass fitting (Loblite List No. 3495) similar to those made in Bamberg. Of course the cable and conduit entry had to be in line with British Standards (using inches instead of millimetres).

These products were followed by different sizes and applications of light fittings and the first of a range of electric socket outlet adaptors. These not only enabled one electric wall socket to supply several electric appliances but also appliances fitted with different plug configurations. Until the introduction of the 13 amp flat pin fused sockets in Britain in around 1948, these were round 2 amp, 2 and 3 pin, 5 amp 2 and 3 pin and 15 amp 2 and 3 pin. At one time we manufactured no less than 28 different socket adaptors.

another Loblite first

Test Adaptor



Here is yet another 'First' from Loblite. The new 13 amp. Test Adaptor No. 501 that lets you test or demonstrate electrical appliances without any time-wasting or bother. It fits all 13 amp. switch sockets to B.S. 1363.

The Test Adaptor Unit No. 502 including the indicator light switch socket is indispensable for all electrical retailers, repair shops, stores and for mass production testing.

Test or demonstrate electrical appliances quickly and safely with the new Loblite Test Adaptor



Team Valley, Gateshead-on-Tyne, 11.

A Loblite Limited Test Adaptor which utilised 1935/6 technology brought from Bamberg (see Hulofix Porcelain Connector shown earlier)

My Apprenticeship

In 1941 I applied to join a company based on Team Valley Trading Estate for an apprenticeship. This firm was called *Sigmund Pumps (GB) Limited*.



After completing an interview and various mechanical aptitude and IQ tests, I was accepted onto the pump manufacturer's first year 'off the job' apprenticeship scheme.

Mr Sigmund, the founder and owner, established apprenticeship programmes which were extremely innovative and advanced in their concept for that time. There were in fact very few other companies offering pay alongside training. In most cases, parents had to pay employers to accept their children onto apprenticeship programmes, so this was rather like a scholarship.

Several hundred well qualified engineers working in the UK and overseas owed their career successes to this one man, Miroslav Sigmund. Mr Sigmund was born in 1907 in Czechoslovakia and died in Newcastle upon Tyne, on 4th March 2004.

The Sigmund family's involvement in engineering commenced in 1868, when Mr Sigmund's grandfather, Ludvik Sigmund, then a humble blacksmith, hollowed out tree trunks to convert them

into reciprocating water pump cylinders. The next generation of the family developed the business with cast iron and brass and/or bronze centrifugal pumps, to the extent that the business, located in Lutin, became one of the most important manufacturers in Czechoslovakia.

As the Second World War was looming and anticipating the invasion of their country, it was thought that international diversification would be prudent. Two of the three sons were sent abroad around 1937 to explore the possibilities. One of the brothers, Jan, remained at home in Lutin. Another brother, Franticek, went to France and Miroslav, the youngest, came to Gateshead. As the company had considerable experience with Civil Defence fire fighting equipment, the British Government ordered an initial quantity of fifty trailer pumps on very short delivery and heavy penalty clauses for late delivery were imposed if these were not met. The company made good its promises and in due course, manufactured 8,000 trailer pumps, 800,000 stirrup pumps and fitted many large pumps onto fire engines. One of these fire engine designs famously became known as the Green Goddess because of its green body colour. 5,000 of these Green Goddess fire engines were delivered across the United Kingdom between 1952 and 1964 and they were of such quality that they were still being used during the firemen's strikes in 1970 and even 2002.

Mr Sigmund's ingenuity was recorded in more than twenty British patents and this enabled the company to supply a diverse range of pumps, as well as other equipment to support the war effort. The designs included poisonous gas filtration equipment used in air raid shelters (including Mr Winston Churchill's war bunker), components for the Bofors gun, the 20mm Polsten gun and the Bren light machine gun (Bren was a name used for convenience as it was designed and developed in the town of Brno). Mr Sigmund gained degrees in mechanical and electrical engineering at Brno University, which awarded him an Honorary Doctorate two years before his death in 2002.

As Miroslav Sigmund was the first member of his family to benefit from a formal education, he benevolently wanted other people to have a similar opportunity. Using his considerable experience, he established a unique apprentice training scheme at his Gateshead factory and I have always been most grateful to him for giving me an opportunity in life and taking me into his company. After all, I was a German enemy alien and my English was far from perfect.



Working on a lathe during my apprenticeship with Sigmund Pumps

The Sigmund apprentices were treated very well and Mr Sigmund always made sure he took a personal interest in what we were doing. He regularly came and spoke to all of us individually on the shop floor. The apprentices learned and worked in a dedicated area in the factory and were even provided with a subsidised lunch every day. We attended college on a part-time basis and this was also paid for and encouraged by our employer.

Not having received any higher level education after the age of 14, I had to enrol in a two year access course in Gateshead where I took the National Certificate course. Thereafter, I embarked on the Higher National Certificate at Rutherford Technical College in Newcastle upon Tyne in Materials' Strength and Properties, Engineering Drawing, Design of Machines and Hydraulics. At that time these courses were not available at Gateshead College, where I had also studied practical mathematics and heat engines.



My parents and I

As apprentices, we worked a forty eight hour, five and a half day week, beginning at 7.30am and finishing usually at 5.00pm (noon on Saturdays). When the apprentices turned 16 years old, they were encouraged to work night shift to help with the war effort. At that time there was usually only one week's holiday per year which took place during Race Week when Mr Sigmund made sure that he provided an opportunity for his apprentices to get away from it all.

Newcastle Race Week had been a firm calendar date in the last full week of June since 1721 when the local annual horse race meeting (during which the Pitmen's Derby, the race for the Northumberland Plate) was held close to the centre of Gateshead's sister town, Newcastle upon Tyne. Around 1882 the horse races had been transferred from Newcastle's *Town Moor* to a purpose-built race course at *Gosforth Park* making way for 'The Hoppings', a huge annual fun fair still held at this time. All of this was hugely popular in days before entertainment consisted of TV and computers. For many of the apprentices whose families were not able to afford a holiday, this was the highlight of the year.

On completion of my apprenticeship at the age of 21 years, I became a production controller at Sigmund Pumps. My first project was to organise and supervise the development of pumps for the petro-chemical industry. Prior to this, most of this equipment was imported from America as there were few oil refineries in the UK. This became a very successful business as it coincided with a growing demand for oil refining in Europe.



Miroslav Sigmund (in the wheelchair) celebrating his 90th birthday with some of his former apprentices and a fire engine with original Sigmund pumps. His daughter, can just be seen in the background

The Terrible Fate of my Grandmothers and other Family Members

While we spent the war years in England, my two elderly grandmothers, Betty Fried (née Bachmann) and Karolina Löbl (née Schloss) remained in Bamberg despite my family's best efforts to get them out of Germany. Notwithstanding all our difficulties in our new lives, they remained at the forefront of our thoughts but communication became impossible and we were very concerned about them.

Before the war began, we could send short messages on special forms via the Red Cross. The telephone was not yet widely used and any conversation would have been monitored and could have been detrimental to them. We never knew whether the messages we sent were received. To my knowledge we only received one short reply from Karolina attempting to reassure us of her well being shortly after my parents left Germany.

As a result of my family's efforts, both of my grandmothers obtained visas to emigrate to Cuba. However, these had to be supported by an American guarantee which was limited by a quota, meaning that only so many people were admitted each year. My grandmother's nephew, Tom Zimmer (son of Martha Zimmer née Bachmann), had already emigrated to the USA and was instrumental in organising the requisite visas and guarantees. After the outbreak of war, the 286 Jews remaining in Bamberg, including both my grandmothers, were forced to live in a Jewish Ghetto at 17-19 Zinkenwörth in the centre of town, where the authorities could keep an eye on them. Here they awaited their turn in the quota system to be able to leave for Cuba. Unfortunately, after the war started it was impossible to leave Germany.

This Ghetto was on the site of the former *Brauerei Weisse Taube* (White Dove Brewery) which was founded after 1588 and closed in 1917, although it continued to sell beer after this date, retaining its name whilst selling beers from Bamberg's *Hofbräu Brewery*. After 1917, it became a restaurant with adjoining beer garden situated near what had been the old Jewish quarter of the city and the site of a former Synagogue. In 1935, the site was acquired by the Bamberg Jewish Community and the restaurant was incorporated into a new Jewish Community Centre. After *Kristallnacht* and as a result of restrictions on Jews, a prayer hall and Jewish school were added. Known as the *Judenhauser*, this was the first Jewish Ghetto in Bamberg's history.

The *Weisse Taube Ghetto*, like most, was extremely cramped but at least they shared the camaraderie of other Jewish people who were also unwittingly trapped by these circumstances. Since the Jews were no longer permitted to go to cafés, restaurants, theatres and other public places during more than two years of detention, they created a social life and daily routine as best they could.

My grandmother Karolina was extremely observant and rigidly followed the dietary laws. Of course *shechita* (Jewish ritual slaughter of meat and poultry) had already been prohibited from April 1933. Added to this, the information which we now have about life in the Bamberg Ghetto indicates that there was a severe shortage of food and undoubtedly, the food available would not have been kosher.

After Karolina was compelled to leave her home and move to the Jewish Ghetto, her maid Kuni Lieb was employed by Lorenz Zahneisen who, in 1933, assumed the office of Oberbürgermeister (Chief Mayor) and District Leader of the NSDAP (National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei) – the senior member of the Nazi party in the town. He had been trained as a metal worker, volunteered for the German Army in the First World War and was a very early member of the Nazi Party.

84 *
 84 NEWYORK 5486 22 20 2130 = VIA TRANSRADIO GEPR TA FFM =

Aufgenommen Tag: Monat: Jahr: Zeit: 21.10.1941 14.30 von: durch:	NLT = ZIMMER GABELSBERGER 4 FUERTHBAVARIA =	Übermittelt Tag: Zeit: an: durch:
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= CUBANISCHE VISAS EINGEREICHT STOP REGELT SCHIFFSKARTEN MIT
 ALTREU HILFSVEREIN BERLIN UND ANTWORTET STOP THEO UEBERNIMMT
 BETTY = TOM +

Sie dienliche Rückfragen

VGL CUBANISCHE VISAS + 4 +

21st October 1941

Cuban Visas applied for.

Arrange ship tickets with
 Altreu Assistance, Berlin
 and reply.

Theo will pay for Betty
 [Fried]

Tom [Zimmer]

29 *
 Telegramm Deutsche Reichspost
 aus 29 NEWYORK 33 12 2 2032 = VIA TRS GPA RA FFM =

Aufgenommen Tag: Monat: Jahr: Zeit: 1.11.1941 14.30 von: durch:	LC = ZIMMER GABELSBERGER 4 VUERTHBAYERN =	Übermittelt Tag: Zeit: an: durch:
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ZIMMERS CUBAVISUM NUMMER 802 FRIEDS 8308 = TOM +

Sie dienliche Rückfragen

VGL ZIMMER + ZIMMERS 802 FRIEDS 8308 +

1st November 1941

Zimmers Cuba Visa
 No:802, Frieds 8308.

Tom [Zimmer]

028 *
 Deutsche Reichspost
 aus 28 NEWYORK 7082 25 29 1544 = GEPR TA FFM =

Aufgenommen Tag: Monat: Jahr: Zeit: 30.11.1941 9.15 von: durch:	NLT = FRIED SOPHIEN 7 BAMBERGBAYERN =	Übermittelt Tag: Zeit: an: durch:
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VISANUMMER 8308 STOP BESTIMMT IN BERLIN STOP KABEL
 WIEDERHOLUNG VON CUBA NACH BERLIN VERANLASST STOP
 PHOTOSTATICH COPY AIR MAILED = TOM +

VGL 8308 + COPY AIR MAILED +

Sie dienliche Rückfragen

30th November 1941

Visa No:8308.

Certainly in Berlin.

Repeat from Cuba to
 Berlin arranged.

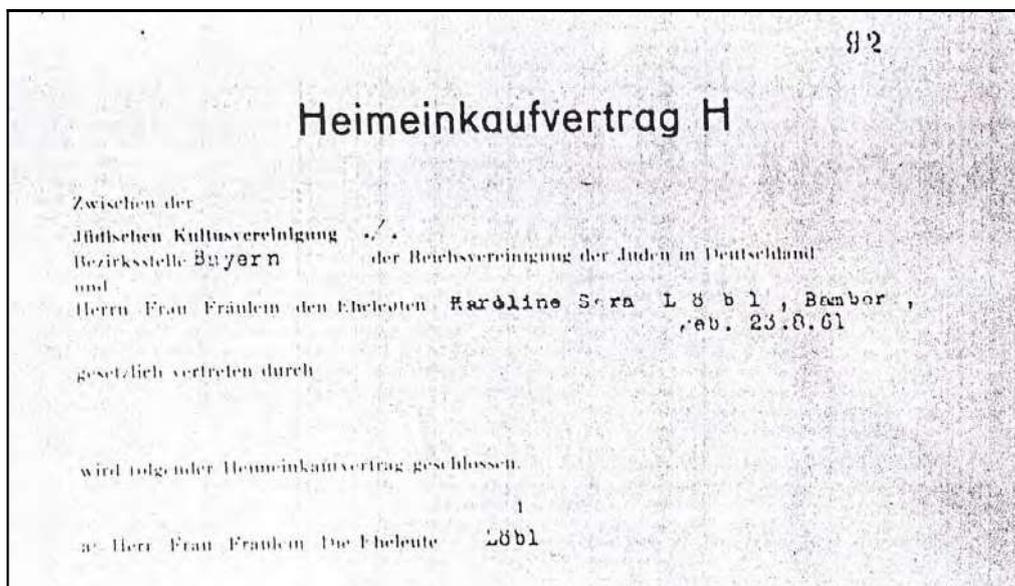
Photocopy airmailed.

Tom [Zimmer]

Herr Zahneisen lived in a ground floor flat at 18 Hainstrasse, immediately next door to our house. He permitted Kuni to go to Church daily and he apparently enjoyed *challah* (the Jewish plaited loaves eaten traditionally on Friday evenings and locally known as *Berches*) which Kuni baked for him. After the war, Kuni told us that she took food to grandmother Lina in the Ghetto and had to throw it over the wall surrounding the Ghetto during the hours of darkness. If she had been caught, she would have been shot or sent to a concentration camp as helping Jews was strictly forbidden. Kuni was a modest lady who described herself as a "simple woman" but she undoubtedly risked her life to assist her former employer.

From November 1941 onwards, the *Weisse Taube Ghetto* was used as a collecting point for all Deportation Transports for residents of an area beyond Bamberg including Coburg, Bayreuth and even Nuremberg about 40 miles away.

Around 10th September 1942, two Transports were arranged to remove all the Jews from the Ghetto. After harassing 'bureaucratic formalities' were completed, the Jews were taken to the Bamberg railway station under strict guard. I know that Karolina was informed that she was being transported to a retirement home. With true Nazi efficiency and great subtlety, she was made to sign a Retirement Home Contract. This Contract dated 1st September 1942 lists her remaining assets, the cost of the transportation and food for the journey. It also asks her to confirm her state of health and list her next of kin. Her assets were confiscated, allegedly for charitable purposes, after deduction of the carefully calculated costs for transportation and food. Little did they know that they were actually paying towards the costs of their own extermination!



The title page of the Contract for my grandmother Karolina's 'Retirement Home' - obtained a few years ago by my cousin Herbert Loebel from archives of the SS

The Transports turned out to be cattle trucks into which all of the Jews and other detainees were herded. Despite the specific signed Contract provisions, specified or implied, there was no comfort (standing room only), sanitation, food or water. This must have been a really terrifying ordeal for these two elderly ladies and others travelling with them.

I now know that both my grandmothers were initially deported via Nuremberg to the promised 'Retirement Home' which we later found out to be Theresienstadt (also known as Terezín) Concentration Camp.

The conditions here were far from a genteel and caring old age facility. At peak capacity, in September 1942, Theresienstadt held approximately 60,000 prisoners crammed into a very limited area. Supplies of food and medicine were reportedly insufficient, particularly for support of the elderly and the frail. In actual fact, this was mainly a transit camp where prisoners were 'processed' en-route to the Death Camps. It is worth noting that almost all the Death Camps were located outside Germany in Poland, a country renowned at this time for its violent anti-Semitism.

My grandmothers remained in their 'Retirement Home' for less than 3 weeks. They were then transported by train to Treblinka, a Death Camp situated 100 kms or 65 miles North East of Warsaw.

Both of my grandmothers as well as Uncle Leo Löbl and two aunts, Gisela Löbl née Platz and Martha Zimmer née Bachmann, together with her handicapped son Albert Zimmer, were murdered. My grandmothers are believed to have been gassed and disposed of in mass graves. The records show that one grandmother was asphyxiated by carbon monoxide from the exhaust of a lorry, a technique used to supplement the facilities of the gas chambers when additional capacity was required. The final record (at the Bundesarchiv) for both my grandmothers simply summarises their fate:

"29. September 1942, Treblinka, Vernichtungslager" (Extermination Camp)

The Nazis used the euphemism "Endlösung der Judenfrage" (the Final Solution of the Jewish Question) to disguise their systematic murder of most of Europe's Jews. The *Final Solution* murders were initially undertaken by the *SS Einsatzgruppen* death squads. The initial extermination method of shooting people in burial pits proved logistically inefficient and so, in late 1941 and early 1942 at the Wannsee Conference, the Nazis finalised plans for camps to be adapted specifically for mass extermination using gas chambers. The estimated number of people killed in these camps is 2,814,500 of which around 800,000 took place at Treblinka.

One can only imagine the horrors that my two beloved grandmothers must have suffered both psychologically and physically along with millions of others. The loving memories of both these wonderful matriarchs of our family have lived with me throughout my life and they have been a constant inspiration to me through their fortitude and bravery.



Stolpersteine (memorial plaques) in the pavement in front of the former homes of Karolina Löbl in Luitpoldstrasse and Betty Fried in Promenadenstrasse, Bamberg

My Grandmothers ז"ל



*Karolina Löbl née Schloss
born 1861
murdered 29th September 1942
in Treblinka*



*Betty Fried née Bachmann
born 1867
murdered 29th September 1942
in Treblinka*

Almost two years after my grandmothers had been murdered in Treblinka, we were in England, extremely anxious about them and unaware of their fate.

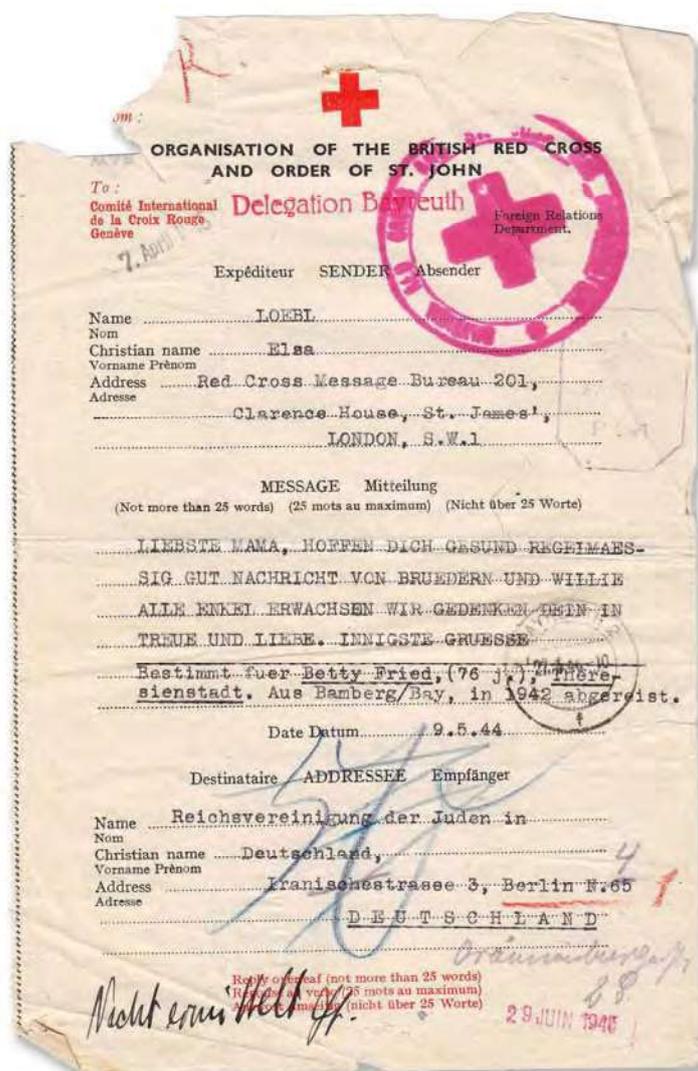
On 9th May 1944, my mother attempted to send her mother, Betty Fried, a message (limited to 25 words!) via the British Red Cross and Order of St John.

"Dearest mother, hope you are ok. Good news from the brothers [Carl and Stefan Fried] and Willie [Willi Loeb]. All grandchildren are growing up. We are constantly thinking of you with great affection.

For the attention of Betty Fried, (76 years of age), Theresienstadt. Departed Bamberg, Bavaria in 1942. Dated 9 May 1944

*Office of the Jews in Germany
Iranischerstrasse 3, Berlin 65"*

The hand-written note at the bottom says "Not found" with date stamp 29 June 1945



WAR ORGANISATION
of the
BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY and ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
Chairman:
MAJ.-GENERAL SIR JOHN KENNEDY, G.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.
Director:
MISS S. J. WARNER, C.B.E.

WIMBORNE HOUSE,
22, ARLINGTON STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1

9th May, 1946

Mrs. E. Loebel,
13, Kells Lane North,
Low Fell,
Gateshead-on-Tyne.

Dear Madam, Frau Betty Fried

We very much regret to have to return to you herewith a message you sent to your mother in 1944, as it has not been possible to trace her. Her name does not appear on the register of the Juedische Gemeinde in Berlin, and they have therefore been unable to give any information about her.

In view of your mother's age, we fear that there can be very little hope that she survived from Theresienstadt, but we shall, of course, inform you immediately if we receive any news

p.t.o.

of her at a later date.

Sympathising with you in your anxiety,

Yours truly,

M.R. Carden

M.R. CARDEN
Other Nationals Section

In May 1946, a year after Germany surrendered and the war ended, my mother Elsa was still trying to find out what had happened to her dear mother, Betty Fried née Bachmann

Deportations from Weisse Taube Ghetto, Bamberg

27 November 1941	to Riga	119 persons
24 March 1942	to Lublin	22 persons
25 April 1942	to Lublin	13 persons
9 September 1942	to Theresienstadt	68 persons
23 September 1942	to Theresienstadt	2 persons



Outside the former home of Betty Fried née Bachmann at Promenade 5 (now Promenadenstrasse). Left to Right: my daughter Monica Stern née Loble, my cousin Bill Fried and his wife Claudia from Dayton, Ohio, USA

Bamberg was liberated in 1945. The town surrendered following the intervention of Professor Dr Lobenhofer, a surgeon who had treated my tubercular glands before the war. He persuaded the German authorities and army to surrender in order to protect both lives as well as the many beautiful historic buildings.

By a strange quirk of fate, my eldest brother Bill who was a sergeant serving under General George Smith Patton Junior in the United States Army, was one of the first to enter Bamberg which capitulated without resistance. Bill, a fluent German speaker, was an interrogator of prisoners of war and had been positioned towards the front of the occupying troops entering the town in order to assist with the surrendering German armed forces.

As he drove into the town in an open Jeep, from the onlooking crowd of residents came the shrieking voice of my grandmother's former maid, Kuni Lieb, who had recognised him and shouted (in German) "Jesus Christ, there is our Willi!".



*Visiting
Kuni Lieb
aged 91 years
in Bamberg,
1999*

My family were reunited with Kuni after the war. Over the years that followed, my cousins Herbert and Werner as well as Ronnie and I visited her in a Catholic Old Age Home in Bamberg and the stories of what happened unfolded during these memorable meetings.

Living in the Big City

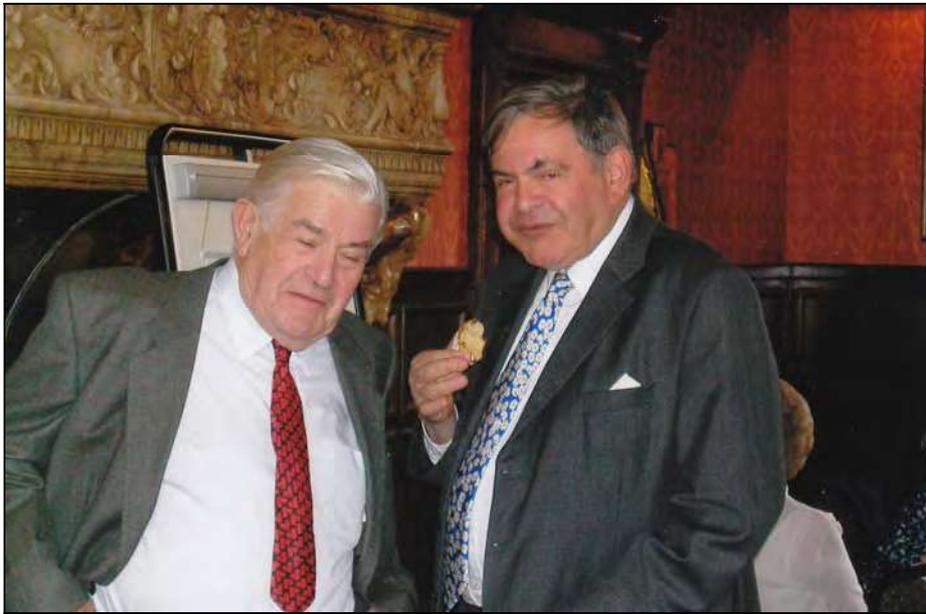
In 1949, Sigmund Pumps offered me a position as sales estimator at their London office in BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation) House in Grosvenor Gardens, London. The company paid for my accommodation at a small hotel near Victoria Station until I found suitable lodgings. Through the recommendation of my Aunt Jenny Sternglantz née Fleissig, my father's first cousin, I went to live with Mrs Vollmer at 58 Canfield Gardens, just off Finchley Road.



*The young bachelor
hits London*

Mrs Vollmer was a widow from Berlin whose sister, Betty Levy, lived with her and they let a spare room to me. For the cost of 4 Guineas (£4 4s 0d) per week she provided heating, a shared bathroom, half board during the week and full board at weekends. At that time I earned £6 15s 0d per week equivalent to £6.75 today. I had a small, thick hessian sack with eyelets and a padlock which was mailed back and forth to my mother in Low Fell who laundered my clothes and returned the contents in the same sack.

While working for Sigmund Pumps I attended night classes at the Regent Street Polytechnic, previously called the Quentin Hogg School in Upper Regent Street to add qualifications in hydraulics and industrial administration. While I was there, I met and became friendly with Gerhard Goldberg who became known as Gerald (Gerry) Gobert.



*Left to Right:
Gerry Gobert
talking to Claud
Heinemann at my
75th birthday party
at the Grimsdyke
Hotel, Old Redding*

In my job I had several major petro-chemical construction companies as customers. After around two years, one of these companies, Foster Wheeler Limited, offered me a significant promotion to Mechanical Equipment Engineer based at their office in South Kensington.

In all, I spent ten very happy and extremely constructive years working for Sigmund Pumps. After the war, the firm ceased armament production and returned to its traditional products by developing and producing pumping equipment for water and other liquids. It also developed pumps for use in the petro-chemical industry, for agricultural irrigation and the growing central heating market. Sigmund Pumps went from strength to strength, employing 2,000 local people.

For the first time I was living independently away from my family, in the big city of London, meeting people and learning to socialise. I found this transition difficult at first but through Jenny Sternglantz's family, I was introduced to their Jewish friends and various organisations. My second cousin, Gerald (originally Gerd) Hellman took me to Dennington Road Synagogue in West Hampstead, the Candlelight Club in Broadhurst Gardens and the *Overseas League Club* in St James'.



*My second cousin
Gerald Hellman
in September 2011*

I met many youngsters from similar Jewish continental backgrounds and Gerald, Gerry and I met with a few of them on a regular basis at the *Wayfarer Café* in Orchard Street. The owners of this Czech owned café which served coffee and delicious pastries were welcoming and patient and we were allowed to 'hang out' over many evenings. They didn't seem to mind if we spent the whole evening over just a single cup of coffee (each!).

Gerald Hellman, a Cost and Works Accountant became manager of a fine art printing company and settled in Kingsbury with his wife Marianne. Gerry Gobert was a mechanical engineer like me and went on to form a highly successful business called *Protim* which undertook timber preservation.

Another friend, John Stanton (formerly Hanus Spitzer from Czechoslovakia) went into his father's newly re-established shirt manufacturing business in London. Finally, Frank Harry Schiller, a young Czech food chemist, went on to make his fortune in America becoming a Vice President of several Coca-Cola franchise companies.

John Rosenblatt, a second cousin living in Washington, DC, joined our group for a period while he was studying in London to become a Rabbi. After his ordination, he served as a Rabbi in the US Navy stationed in Hawaii. We met his widow, Barbara, in Israel in 2011 and are still in touch with her.

At the time we had little spare money and were all establishing our careers in a new country. But our common bond was the mutual desire to develop ourselves and our careers, make our way in life and establish our own families.

To this end, I was introduced to a number of eligible young ladies. I was often invited with Mrs Vollmer to her daughter's home on Friday nights. We travelled by Underground to Wembley Park. Ken and Margot Stern née Vollmer were extremely hospitable and laid a beautiful Shabbat table. They had arrived in England some years earlier and were well established. Ken ran a business importing Montblanc and Rotring pens, playing cards and textile ribbons.



*A young lady called
Eve Heinemann*

One Friday night, the Sterns invited a young lady called Eve Heinemann to dinner. She was introduced as a relative, the daughter of Ken's second cousin, Gertrud Heinemann née Stern. She was very beautiful, cultured but modest and shy. I immediately felt attracted to her and my goose was cooked!

In those days if one invited a girl out more than a few times, hopes were immediately raised and I was conscious that I was still building my career and was not yet inclined, nor in a position to consider marriage. So, whilst dating Eve, I maintained friendships with other young ladies!

I thoroughly enjoyed the variety of culture and entertainment in London but missed my family in Low Fell. I enjoyed weekend visits and holidays back home or occasional visits by my father to London on business.

On 12th May 1949 I received the dreadful and shocking news that my Uncle Robert had collapsed and died at New Street Railway Station in Birmingham. His doctor had been treating him for stomach ulcers but he died from a massive heart attack. This was not only a blow to the family but also to the fledgling family business in Gateshead. My father and Uncle Robert had been business partners since 1928.

After Uncle Robert's death, Aunt Marie was made a director of the company in order to support her financially. Sadly, the harmonious working relationship which existed between my father and Uncle Robert came to an abrupt end. My father found almost immediately that frictions arose over many details with Aunt Marie and my cousin Herbert. This resulted in my father buying Uncle Robert's shares but worse still, the family were no longer on speaking terms.

Falling in Love

One evening I attended a Jewish community dance for young people in the Stern Hall of the West London Synagogue. I believe that I went there with a young lady recommended to me by Jenny Sternglantz née Fleissig, my father's first cousin and the mother of Margot Pretzfelder. However, during the evening I noticed that Eve Heinemann was there and somehow I spent most of the evening with her.

There was instant attraction and subsequently I took her out quite a few times. She was a very attractive young lady, elegant and from a similar family background. I could not see her a great deal during the week because of my work and study commitments, but we visited cinemas, theatres and a Jewish club in Goldhurst Terrace most weekends. We soon discovered that we were kindred spirits. After a few months, in February 1952, I took Eve to dinner at the Arts Club in Soho and I asked her to marry me. She said "yes"!



I had met Eve's parents, Fritz (known as Fred) Heinemann (born 1894 in Dusseldorf) and Gertrud (known as Trude) née Stern (born 1906 in Dusseldorf) once or twice during family outings and at their home in Northwood. They lived in a beautiful, detached house with a large garden located 15 minutes walk from Northwood Tube station. The house was situated in a leafy suburb making each visit a particularly relaxing, pleasant experience.

Eve's father was much stricter with her than with her younger brother, Claud. When she arrived late for work at her father's office after a New Year's Eve party, he immediately terminated her employment with him and told her to find herself a job elsewhere!



*Gertrud Heinemann née Stern
1906 - 1994
Eve's mother*



*Fritz (later Fred) Heinemann
1894 - 1993
Eve's father*

Eve's father was a very keen gardener and I remember being impressed that he successfully cultivated tomatoes and other vegetables outdoors in a vegetable plot, something which could only be done under glass in the North of England. He gave me gardening advice which I have followed throughout my life - if you keep the edges neat, your whole garden will look neat.



*The Heinemann home
In Northwood*

I was always made very welcome and was entertained generously by the Heinemanns in their elegant home. After Eve had agreed to marry me, I arrived in Northwood one Saturday afternoon and after the usual pleasantries, Claud was sent out by Eve's father to collect a glass of water, allowing me an opportunity to ask for Eve's hand in marriage.

Both Fred and Trude responded favourably and we then discussed some of the practicalities ,including my prospects! Eve's parents had been able to leave Dusseldorf and their thriving Heinemann family sausage casings business, as well as the only independent margarine factory (Neiderreinisches Margarinewerk, situated in Neuss) in 1936. They emigrated to The Hague in Holland where they spent three years. Despite some bureaucracy, they were able to move to England in 1939 as Eve's grandmother, Minnie Stern née Stern, was a British citizen, born on 6th April 1885 in London.

In fact, the Nazis accused Fritz Heinemann and his brothers of illegally smuggling their money out of Germany and they were sentenced to substantial jail sentences and fines in their absence. Many years after the end of the war, in 1958, Fritz was able to have their sentences quashed and could finally deal with the family restitution claims. This story is told in more detail later in this book.

Glatter Freispruch für Heinemann

Staatskasse übernimmt die Prozeßkosten — Nach zwanzig Jahren rehabilitiert

Seit dem 5. November 1957 hatte sich die I. Große Strafkammer Düsseldorf mit dem von dem ehemaligen Düsseldorfer Kaufmann Fritz Heinemann angestrengten Wiederaufnahmeverfahren zu befassen. Im Jahre 1939 war in Abwesenheit Heinemanns wegen Devisenverbrechens und Betruges ein Urteil über neun Jahre Zuchthaus und mehrere hunderttausend Mark Geldstrafe über ihn ergangen. Das Wiederaufnahmeverfahren endete gestern mit einem glatten Freispruch für Heine-

mann, wohl sei ein Teil verblieben, bei dem ein gewisser Verdacht auf Devisenmanipulationen aufgetaucht sei, der jedoch zu einem Schuldbeweis nicht ausreiche. In den Restfällen habe sich kein hinreichender Tatverdacht ergeben. Es habe sich weiter herausgestellt, daß die Firma Heinemann ein Kalkulationsbuch geführt habe, wozu sie nicht verpflichtet gewesen sei und das sie nicht geführt haben würde, wenn sie Devisenverstöße geplant hätte. Selbst wenn sich jetzt Devisenverstöße der Firma herausgestellt hätten, dann hätte ihr ein

Extract from Düsseldorf Nachrichten "In the Dusseldorf Criminal Court No 1 in 1958, 20 years after the event, Fritz Heinemann clears his name of charges for alleged currency smuggling and fraud during his absence from Germany".

In line with society expectations at that time, the Heinemanns had clearly wished that their daughter would marry a well-to-do professional such as a doctor, dentist, lawyer or accountant! In those days an engineer was not considered a profession and furthermore, my parents had come out of Germany with hardly any money and so I was concerned about my suitability. My fears were in fact totally unfounded. Fred and Trude made me feel very welcome into their family.



Left to Right are Claud (Eve's brother), Trude, Eve, me and Fred

I telephoned my parents with this news and they were delighted, but of course they had not yet met my fiancée or her parents and we arranged for them to come to London. I remember the first meeting between our families in Ebury Close, Northwood. I particularly recall Eve's grandmother, Minnie Stern, a lady born in Victorian times, sitting bolt upright in the lounge with a handbag on her lap wearing an elegant hat!



Left to Right are Trude Heinemann née Stern, my father Fritz Loebel, Fritz (Fred) Heinemann, my mother Elsa Loebel née Fried, Eve and I

One event I vividly recall from our period of engagement was returning to Northwood from an evening at the theatre in London. At that time, central heating was in its infancy and most homes had coal fires in several rooms. The smoke from these fires combined with thick fog, which was prevalent in the post war years, and became known as smog, not only limited visibility but also clung to our clothes. Many people wore handkerchiefs across their noses and mouths to filter the smog, and after a while this left a black residue on one's clothes and faces.

On this evening, the smog was so thick that I offered to walk in front of Fred Heinemann's *Wolsley* motor car to guide them home with a torch, as one could not even see the kerbs marking the edge of the road. The street lighting did not help and even during daytime, the smog created darkness. Fortunately, traffic circulated very slowly in any event, unlike today.

I spent many weekends at Eve's parents' home although of course I had to return to my lodging each evening as it was considered inappropriate to spend a night under the same roof as my fiancée!

During one of my brother Bill's rare visits to the UK (it may be that this was a business trip since he worked for the American Celanese Corporation as Export Manager) he stopped in London to meet Eve and her family. On arrival in Northwood, the Heinemann's German maid opened the door to Bill and he exclaimed "Elfriede what are you doing here?"

Unbeknown to me, Elfriede, had worked in a telephone exchange close to the Russian Border immediately after the war. My brother had been assigned to the US Army Counter Intelligence Corps and had met Elfriede in the course of his work. Another amazing coincidence!

Time and funds permitting, I made the best of the diverse range of culture and entertainment available in London. I visited theatres, the Albert Hall, the new Festival Hall, museums and art galleries, frequently alone as I could not afford tickets for a companion. I had a wonderful time for about three years but my time there came to an abrupt end.

An Enforced Move Back Up North

In Spring 1952, I was aware that my father was increasingly affected by illness which was later diagnosed as lung cancer. He had smoked *Rinn & Cloos* cigars all his life in Germany. As he could no longer afford cigars in England, he had switched to cigarettes and an occasional pipe.



My parents in Garmisch-Partenkirchen 1953

My brother Ronnie, who at that time was a trainee salesman with a fancy goods agent in Manchester called *John H Auerbach*, and I were recalled to the North East to assist in running the business. It quickly became clear that Eve and I would have to make our home in the North East. Fortunately, I had finished my studies in London and had gained some valuable commercial experience.

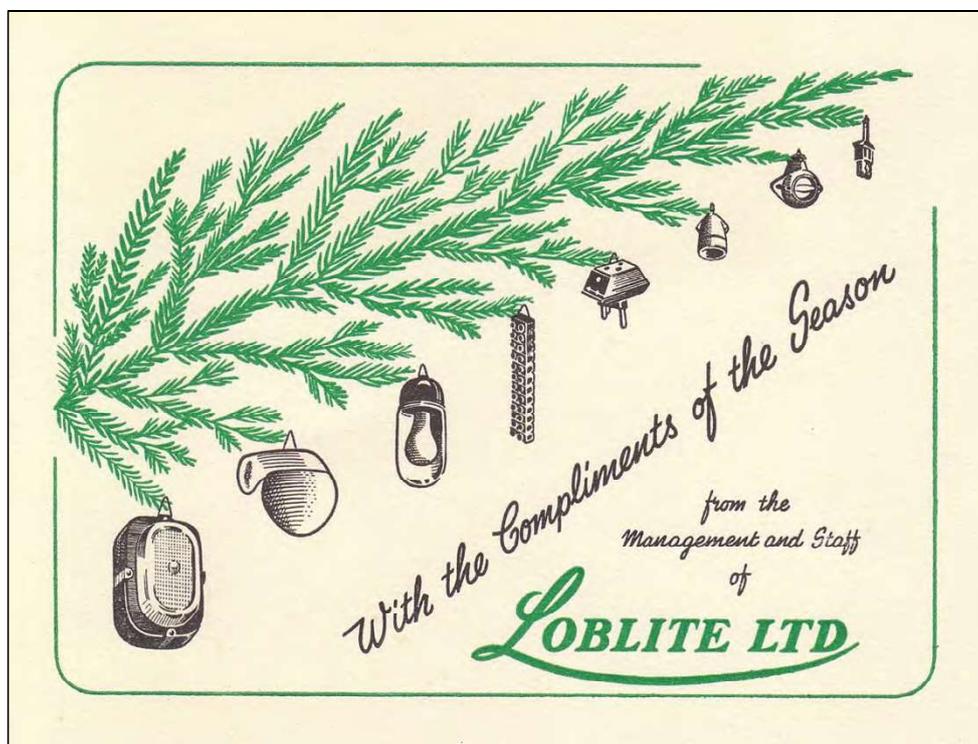


Ronnie

Working for a family business was different from the nine to five office hours in a large company. We worked much longer hours, and while both Ronnie and I lived at home we were able to concentrate on the business and our social lives were fairly limited. We had lost some of our local contacts but at least we were with our family again.

In 1952 Ronnie became quite ill but in due course recovered his full vigour. With hindsight this was probably the onset of a more serious illness to follow. At the same time, our father was becoming weaker and only came to the office on a part time basis.

Ronnie and I took our holidays together and made the most of being bachelors - but not for much longer! We were very much thrown in at the deep-end as we were engineers with little business or management experience. By this time, Loblite Limited employed around 120 people, mostly female operators and a few male toolmakers, machine setters and ancillary support staff but with little effective management. We quickly ascertained that the works foreman was not effective and so we sacked him, something one could do at that time without warning, and we took personal control.



We soon grew tired of unreliable suppliers. The situation worsened when the Korean War started in 1950. Deliveries lengthened and prices increased, so we decided to become self sufficient. We were already making all the pressed parts for our products from brass, phosphor bronze and copper materials bought in coils.

We bought some single spindle automatic turning machines to make terminals, bushes and contacts ourselves. This was a learning exercise, as we had no knowledge of these. We found an experienced machine setter but had to discover how to design and make the cams; the profiled steel components which push the tools and slides in the right direction at precisely the right time. We succeeded with this in due time and then needed to buy only standard items, such as nuts, screws, springs, eyelets and rivets.

Pressed and turned parts now being manufactured in-house, the next step was to manufacture plastic mouldings. Again, we had no experience of making these. We bought a second hand moulding machine and learned. Once we knew what we were doing, we bought several new moulding machines and eventually manufactured all our requirements for injection moulded parts, including polycarbonate impact-resistant lighting diffusers.

All these processes required tooling. Fortunately, both Ronnie and I were trained fitters, turners and press tool makers. We bought the latest machines for the tool room, took in one additional apprentice each year and soon became completely self-sufficient in this area.



Most of our products were innovative and in many cases the first on the market. Ronnie and I developed these ideas in our spare time. We then took our rough sketches to the drawing office to have initial drawings made. Once these were worked up and perfected, we made cardboard models in the drawing office and working models in the tool room. These were tested and the drawing office then made working drawings for the individual components and tooling. A new product usually took one year from idea to market.

I always thought that it must be a similar feeling to being a first-time mother seeing her new baby! Our Scottish Agent, Mr Stefan Pauson, had a novel way of selling our new products. He would call on an electrical wholesaler, put the product in the buyer's hand and say "You know more about this than I do, what do you think?" It never failed to get an initial order!



NEW

LOBLITE

13 AMP. FLAT PIN MULTI PLUG ADAPTOR

For the **FIRST** time
PRINTED CIRCUIT

Reliability
in
MULTI PLUG ADAPTORS

With one 13 amp and one 5 amp fused outlet.
Both outlets shuttered.
Also available with one additional wireable outlet protected by 5 amp. cartridge fuse.

PRINTED CIRCUIT
WITH RIVETED CONTACTS AND TERMINALS

TWO DOUBLE SAFETY SHUTTERS OPEN ONLY ON INSERTION OF ALL 3 PLUG PINS

SUITABLE FOR ALL TYPES OF 13 AMP. B.S. SOCKETS
PIN AND SOCKET DIMENSIONS TO B.S. STANDARD
SHUTTERED AND FUSED FOR SAFETY

List No.	Outlets	Price each	
		BROWN	WHITE
513F	1 Outlet, 13 amp., 3 pin, flat 1 Outlet, 5 amp., 3 pin, round 5 amp. outlet FUSED	9/3	10/3
513/3F	1 Outlet, 13 amp., 3 pin, flat 1 Outlet, 5 amp., 3 pin, round 1 wireable outlet 5 amp. Outlet and wireable outlet FUSED	10/6	11/6

ONLY 3/4" OVERHANG TO SUIT SOCKETS ON VERY LOW SKIRTING BOARDS

INSIDE VIEW OF BASE WITH 5 AMP. FUSE

LOBLITE LTD
THIRD AVE. TEAM VALLEY
GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE II

Launched in June 1958, this revolutionary 13amp flat pin multi-plug adaptor was one of the first to incorporate printed circuitry

As we manufactured a range of shaver adaptors and sockets, we decided to promote these items directly to the public and in 1964 we established the *Newcastle Shaver Centre* in Newbridge Street, Newcastle. We retailed most brands of electric shavers and our novel showroom comprised several private cubicles with our sockets and mirrors, where clients could test these products.

Shaving with a razor blade is prohibited under Jewish law, based on rabbinic interpretation from the Book of Leviticus. However, the electric razors which cut like scissors were arguably considered *kosher* by some members of the community who came to our shop.

Several years later we sold the *Shaver Centre* to one of our engineering apprentices as it was no longer compatible with our other activities.



My parents enjoyed listening to the Phillips radio with Bakelite casing during the war



The Loebel brothers, Bill, Ronnie and George circa 1946

Tying the Knot

Despite me living and working in Gateshead to help run the business, plans still moved forward for my marriage in London to Eve and our quest to find and finance our marital home back in Gateshead.

At the same time, Ronnie met Eva Buxbaum from Blackburn, Lancashire, whom he knew as a child. Eva had lived opposite us in Hainstrasse in Bamberg. Ronnie and I had returned to Bamberg several times after the war to deal with restitution arrangements agreed by our father. In the course of being in Bamberg for some days, we visited various acquaintances and by chance, Eva Buxbaum was visiting one of these, a Dr Thomas Dehler. He was a local personality, a politician with a Jewish wife who somehow survived the war.

The restitution claims initiated by my father, which Ronnie and I attended to on behalf of not only our family but also our Uncles Robert and Sali, were quite extensive. These involved the business, Hugo Löbl Söhne, the factory and the home of my grandmother, Karolina, in Luitpoldstrasse.

Inevitably, Kurt and Hans Joachim Lindner, were not very keen to confront the issue of restitution knowing that there was a huge difference between the price at which they had been able to acquire the business under the Nazis and the actual value. The factory which had been well maintained by our family had become very run down and the Lindner brothers pleaded poverty, telling us that they had made no money during the war years.

We finally negotiated a deal which permitted Lindner GmbH to make regular restitution payments over a number of years as well as granting Loblite Limited the sole agency for Lindner products in the UK, some of which had originally been manufactured by Hugo Löbl Söhne in Bamberg.

The property in Luitpoldstrasse was eventually recovered and sold at market price to two different parties. The front multi-storey residential building was purchased by Mrs Käte Kraus who planned to make part of it into a department store. The two buildings at the rear were acquired by a shirt manufacturer called Schmutzler und Finke who also paid by instalments.

Accompanied by her parents, Eve made several visits to view prospective homes in Low Fell and to discuss a wedding venue and date. At the time, there was a tax benefit to marrying before the end of the tax year and so a date in March 1953 was chosen for the civil marriage ceremony at Gateshead Registry Office.

Ronnie and Eva were married at the Leazes Park Road Synagogue the following day by Rabbi Shlomo Toperoff.

After Ronnie's wedding, Eve and her parents returned to London and we were re-united for our religious wedding conducted by Rabbi Dr Eschelbacher at the West London Synagogue of British Jews in Seymour Place in April 1953. Rabbi Dr Eschelbacher had conducted Eve's parents' wedding in Dusseldorf in 1926 and he too had escaped from Nazi persecution and come to England.

The *Chuppah* (ceremony beneath the religious marital canopy) took place at 1.00pm followed by afternoon tea and dancing at the Rembrandt Hotel, opposite the Victoria & Albert Museum. We spent our first night at The Athenaeum Court Hotel on Piccadilly, just as stands were being erected in preparation for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, although this did not take place until 2nd June.



Left to Right are my father-in-law Fred Heinemann, bridesmaid Renata Kaufmann, my bride Eve, me and my parents Fritz and Elsa Loebel

Eve's cousin, Lotti Wertheim (née Heinemann) and my brother Ronnie conspired together and we entered the Athenaeum Club trailing confetti from our clothes and luggage.

The following day, we flew to Nice to spend a two week honeymoon at the Hotel de Venise in Menton. We enjoyed exploring the south coastal area of France in fine weather.

ATHENÆUM COURT HOTEL

Telephone : GROSVENOR 3464

W.1

Telegrams : ACROPOLIS, AUDLEY, LONDON.

Mr. & Mrs. G. Loebel

138.

Name

Room No.....

Date of Arrival 12.4.53.

REMARKS	DATE	DETAILS	CODE NUMBER	AMOUNT	CREDIT	BALANCE DUE
	1 12 APR 53	ACCOM ...	—	* 3-0-0		* 3-0-0
	2					
	3					
	4					
	5					
	6					
	7					
	8					

No 20486

ATHENÆUM COURT,
116, PICCADILLY, W.1.

Received from *Mr. Mrs. Loebel*

Room No. *138* Date *13-4-1953*

The sum of *Three* Pounds
.....Shillings.....Pence

ATHENÆUM COURT HOTEL
(PICCADILLY) L

£ 3 : - : -



N. C. R. / P28949

FOR EXPLANATION OF CODE CHARGES
PLEASE SEE OTHER SIDE OF THIS BILL.

QUERIES CANNOT BE ENTERTAINED AFTER ONE WEEK.
CHEQUES CAN ONLY BE ACCEPTED BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT
AND ACCOUNTS ARE PAYABLE ON PRESENTATION.

UNLESS
OTHERWISE
STATED, THE
LAST BALANCE
IS THE AMOUNT
DUE.
P. T. O.

*Receipt for our wedding night complete with a 2d stamp which was compulsory
Stamp Duty on receipts at that time indicating that the sales tax had been paid.
This was abolished from 1st April 1971*



Your room by day . . . becomes a bedroom by night



In the Floral Restaurant there is a first-class cuisine



At the cocktail bar—your favourite drink.



A private dining suite



A page from the The Athenaeum Court Hotel 1953 brochure



Eve and I with our former bridesmaid, Renata Knobil née Kaufman in 2005

In anticipation of our marriage, we bought a three bedroom, semi-detached house with garage and garden in Low Fell. We made some improvements to the house by installing gas central heating, a relative novelty, as at that time most houses had coal fires. I remember that we also added the modern invention of a door bell to replace the traditional door knocker! The house was convenient to both my parents' home in Kells Lane North and to the factory on Team Valley Trading Estate.

Although I celebrated my Bar mitzvah at the Jesmond Synagogue in Eskdale Terrace, my parents became members of the Leazes Park Road Synagogue situated in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. The only Synagogue in Gateshead was run under the auspices of the ultra orthodox *Charedi* community where we did not feel comfortable.

Having been accustomed to services at the Deutsche Liberale Synagogue in Bamberg, the Leazes Park Road Synagogue, together with its orthodox Rabbis (who were at that time quite judgemental and forthright), did not fulfil our more liberal spiritual needs and we yearned for a more tolerant and modern approach to the Jewish way of life. Our entire focus at that time was on rebuilding our lives and securing a weekly income and we were not very regular Synagogue attendees. Many of our friends were fellow Jewish refugees who were also setting up their businesses in the area.

Our neighbour, Mr Topping, owner of the Central Garage in Low Fell, suggested that I join the Gateshead *Round Table*, a service organisation for men under forty years of age. At the same time, Eve joined a parallel organisation called *Ladies Circle*. We later progressed to the *Rotary Club* and the *Inner Wheel*. Our circle of friends grew and I was delighted that through these organisations we could also help those less fortunate than ourselves.

In Autumn 1954, we were delighted to discover that Eve was expecting our first child. Monica Frances Loebel was born in 1955 at the Bensham Hospital in Gateshead. We were all overjoyed. Eve's parents who tired of waiting at the Royal Station Hotel in Newcastle for the birth, arranged to spend a few days at The White Swan Hotel in Alnwick until they received news of the safe arrival.



Monica Frances Loebel (became Loble) 'in all her glory' born 1955

Eve returned from a week in hospital with baby Monica and as this was our first child, we had arranged for Nurse Derek to help and guide us. Monica was a good baby and a joy to be with. Seeing her grow and develop was a pleasant distraction from the concern about my father's deteriorating health.



Circa 1956, Left to Right: Eve holding Monica, my mother Elsa, Bill (on a rare visit from America), my father Fritz, Eva holding Susan, Ronnie

Despite his very energetic lifestyle, his commitment to the business and his interest in fitness, lung cancer was taking hold and spreading throughout his body. He became bed-bound, during which time his upper arm broke due to the invasive illness for which I cannot recall any significant treatment being given by his doctors.

My mother was most caring and did everything to make my father's life as comfortable as possible but unfortunately we all watched his steady decline and he passed away at home in 1956. He was buried at Hazelrigg Jewish Cemetery in Newcastle.

My mother was the archetypal German Jewish *Hausfrau* and mother. No family gathering was ever too large. She loved to cook and bake and her *Apfelstrudel* was a three day labour of love as she made her own pastry using a traditional recipe handed down by her grandmother. Her greatest satisfaction was watching her family devour the food and urging them towards second and even third helpings, arguing that her cakes had "*fast keinen Boden*" (virtually no heavy base)!

In later years, her local grandchildren (Susan, Monica, Steven and Peter) on whom she doted, spent a great deal of time with her and they happily satisfied her passion to cook and care, although as first generation English speakers, they were also amused by her heavy German accent.

Her repertoire was of Bavarian cuisine which included *Pflaumen Kuchen* (plum cake), *Faschingskrapfen* (doughnuts filled with rosehip jam), *Linzertorte* (an Austrian cake), meat with red cabbage and *Kloese* (potato dumplings), *Sauerbraten* (soused beef with raisins) and ox tongue (which she pronounced *tong*) which she pickled herself.



Elsa's beloved bungalow and garden in Westmorland Gardens, Low Fell

Elsa had always wanted to live in a bungalow and within a short period after my father's death, she moved to a semi-detached bungalow in Westmorland Gardens, Low Fell. She installed central heating and added a terrace overlooking her garden which was another of her passions.



*The Loebel cousins -
Back: Steven and Peter
Front: Susan and Monica
circa 1961*

My mother was a naturally caring person and even in her eighties, insisted on shopping for her younger neighbour whom she referred to as “the old lady”. She was very sociable and held court at the *Chatterly* coffee shop in Binns department store each week, travelling by bus until she was well into her eighties and networking with other Jewish refugee contemporaries, pronouncing on world events.

Almost to the end of her life, she also travelled further afield to visit her son Bill and her brother Stefan Fried and their families in the USA. She was intrepid and had also travelled, often unaccompanied to Germany, Switzerland, Morocco, Israel and Tenerife well into her 'golden years'.



*Back Left to Right: Stefan
Fried, me, Peter, Front: Elsa,
Margot Fried
née Israel, Eve*

Elsa also took the grandchildren, as they reached the age of eleven years, on holiday to Bamberg and Garmisch Partenkirchen in Bavaria, giving them fond and lasting memories.



Elsa outside Hotel Leiner in Garmisch

Monica attended a Jewish kindergarten run by the *Charedi* community in Gateshead. The community were very welcoming and Monica was even invited to the wedding of one of the teachers, held out of doors in a garden.



*Peter Frederick Loebel
born 1958*

Whilst the business was growing and developing, so was the family. Peter Frederick Loebel was born in 1958 at the Princess Mary Hospital in Newcastle and he completed our family. Peter weighed 9lb 4ozs at birth and was a placid and well behaved baby. Nanny Kathy Cockburn was retained to help Eve care for our children.

By now our family were becoming well integrated into the British way of life and Eve and I took the decision to anglicise our name. The Deed Poll dated June 1960 changed Loebel to Loble. All documents such as passports, bank accounts and driving licences had to be changed.

846 28 JUL 1960 S/C
 WED 30th June 1960

MR. G. F. LOBLE

DEED POLL

TEN SHILLINGS

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE
 ENROLMENT DEPARTMENT
 CENTRAL OFFICE

Enrolled in the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature the twentieth day of July in the year of Our Lord 1960
 N.B. Enrolment does not invest this deed with any validity which it does not otherwise possess.

This is the Deed Poll marked "X" referred to in the Declaration of Percival Thomas Duxbury made before me this 1st day of July 1960
J. W. G. Lovell

BY THIS DEED POLL which is intended to be enrolled in the Enrolment Department of the Supreme Court of Judicature I the UNDERSIGNED GEORGE FREDERICK LOBLE of 48 Lyndhurst Grove Low Fell, Gateshead in the County of Durham Company Director a Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies by Naturalization DO HEREBY absolutely renounce and abandon the use of my former first name of Gunter and in lieu thereof do assume the first names of George Frederick and I DO HEREBY for myself and my wife EVE MARION LOBLE and infant children MONICA FRANCES LOBLE and METER FREDERICK LOBLE and remoter issue absolutely renounce and abandon the use of my former surname of LOBEL and in lieu thereof do assume as from the date hereof the surname of LOBLE

AND IN PURSUANCE of such change of first names and surnames as aforesaid I HEREBY DECLARE that I shall at all times hereafter in all records deeds and instruments in writing and in all actions and proceedings and in all dealings and transactions and upon all occasions whatsoever use and sign the said names of George Frederick Loble in lieu of the said names so renounced as aforesaid

AND I HEREBY AUTHORISE and request all persons to designate and address my wife and children and remoter issue by such assumed surname of Loble only

IN WITNESS whereof I have hereunto signed my assumed names of George Frederick Loble and my relinquished names of Gunter Loebel and have set my seal this thirtieth day of June 1960

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the above-named GEORGE FREDERICK LOBLE in the presence of:-
Chandrian
Solicitor
Gateshead

George Frederick Loble
 Formerly known as Gunter Loebel

Declaration filed.
 Certificate of Naturalization N^o 52.1768 produced.

J. A. DIXON & SON
 GATESHEAD

Deed Poll dated 1960 which officially changed our family name from Loebel to the more English form, Loble

Turning our thoughts to the children's future, we made enquiries and could by now just about afford private education. The schools with the best reputation were in Gosforth and this motivated us to move over the river to that area. We bought a house in Gosforth, a four bedroom mock Tudor detached house, for £6,500 having realised £3,100 on the sale of our previous home. This was a huge step for us at that time and involved a big new mortgage.



*The caring big sister
Monica with baby Peter*

We lived there for thirty happy years. We installed a new downstairs toilet in the cloakroom although there was a toilet in one of the outbuildings next to the coal house. We added a second garage for Eve's car, a Ford Popular.

In 1970, we remodelled the kitchen and scullery into a modern kitchen and breakfast room, divided by a bar counter with cupboards above. We retained the original walk-in larder.

At the tender age of five years, Monica was required to undergo extensive aptitude tests before eventually being accepted into the Central Newcastle High School.

In 1960, Ronnie and I bumped into cousin Herbert at Newcastle Railway Station. We had not seen each other or spoken for several years and after breaking the ice, Herbert suggested that we set aside the unpleasant family dispute which had broken contact between our families. Both my father and Uncle Robert were no longer alive and we were delighted and readily agreed.



*Our family
Circa 1960*



A family reunion in 1961
Back Row: Me, Eve, Bill's second wife Helen Loebel née McCarton, Bill
Middle Row: Peter, Monica and Eva Loebel (now Schapira) née Buxbaum
Front Row: Susan, Elsa Loebel née Fried, Steven and Ronnie

Challenging Times Indeed

From 1963 onwards, we had really a number of traumatic years in the family which also affected the business. In August of that year my lovely wife, Eve, was diagnosed with a brain tumour (meningioma). She was operated on by Mr Lawrence Lassman, one of only five neurosurgeons in the UK at the time (or so I was told). Larry, as I eventually came to know him, had come from Birmingham to head the Department of Neurosurgery at Newcastle's General Hospital where a new unit, incorporating Wards 30, 31 and 32, had just been built.

Not only was Larry enormously capable but he was also very sympathetic to our plight and by chance he was also Jewish. On the day of the operation, he told me to go to work as normal and promised that he would call me after the operation. Needless to say this was an extremely difficult time and the surgery took well over three hours. When I got to the hospital, Larry told me that the tumour he had removed was the size of an orange and that he did not think that it looked malignant. That had yet to be determined by pathology of course, and it was an anxious time waiting to hear. I was allowed to see Eve. She looked like a Panda, with huge black circles around her eyes and she lay in bed unconscious for three long days.

Her first movements were slight flexing of her fingers and her first word was "no", a word she used frequently thereafter! After a while, it became clear that there had been quite some damage to her word memory, called aphasia. Unfortunately, this was not the end of this story.



*Eve in Portugal
after her surgery
in 1963*

After a few weeks of recovery, we were advised to go on holiday and we chose Estoril, not far from Lisbon, in Portugal. One day, when Eve tied her shoes and sat up, a stream of liquid suddenly poured from her head, which beneath a wig was still completely shaven. We phoned Larry who reassured me and advised me to continue with the holiday but made an appointment for us on our return home.

It was found that the bone flap, which had been created to permit removal of the tumour, was too large to grow back in place. On our return, the bone flap was removed and the skin closed. As there was nothing to support the skin, it literally hung over Eve's left eye. Eve had to wear a plastic skull cap under her wig, so that her brain did not suffer any further damage. It took a few weeks for the edge of Eve's skull to heal before a plastic prosthesis could be inserted. This worked well and Eve had no further problems with this.

However, fate had not yet left us alone. A few years later, Eve was found to have a tumour on her left optic nerve which also required removal. Fortunately, her brain tumour had been on her left side, so this operation could be done below the plastic prosthesis fitted to her skull.

Eve's head has been opened for surgery no less than four times. Bearing in mind the severity and complexity of these operations, we feel extremely fortunate that Eve has survived and been able to continue to enjoy life, albeit with some impairment.

Eve's inability to express herself had a considerable effect on her everyday life and on our social life. She underwent several series of speech therapy sessions over the years but sadly her aphasia did not improve. Yet, fifty years after this ground breaking surgery, Eve is still alive and pretty well, considering her advanced years.

In 1971 Eve also discovered a melanoma on the left leg which was widely excised.

As if this was not enough, while Eve was ill with her first brain tumour, my dear brother Ronnie's Multiple Sclerosis became increasingly debilitating. Ronnie was not only my brother and my business partner but also my best friend. We used to socialise in the evenings and went on holidays together before we were married and continued to have a close relationship between our wives and young families.

Ronnie and Eva had two children, Susan Elisabeth Loebel (became Loble) and Steven Frederick Loebel (became Loble).

Our mother, Elsa, was over seventy years old at this time and fortunately still very active and devoted to her family. She was an indispensable help to both families often having our four children to stay, feeding them and entertaining them in her home or with days out around the area.

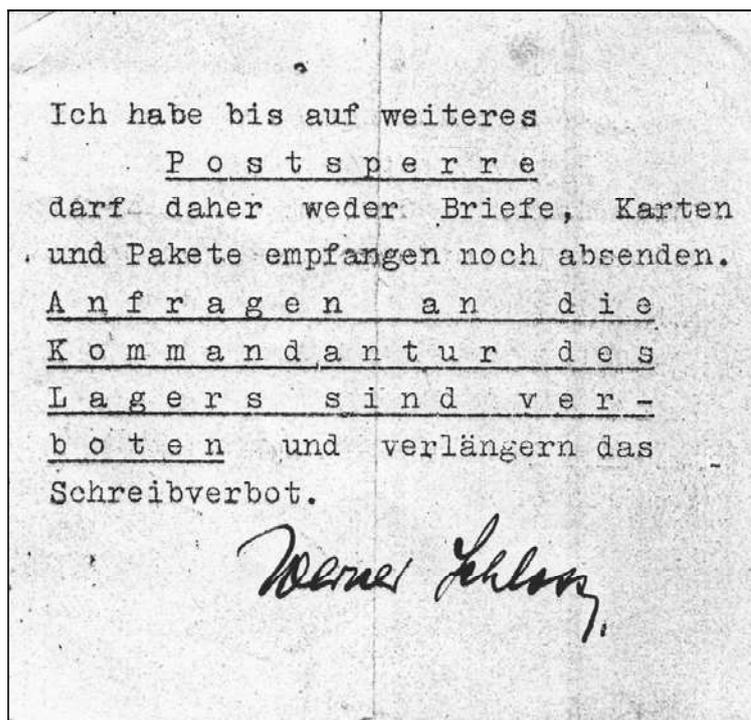
Eva and Ronnie bought an apartment in Torremolinos, Spain, hoping that the warm climate would help Ronnie's condition but in fact he only stayed there once with the help of my mother and Bernard Rutherford, a family friend, while Eva remained at home to care for the children.

Although physically disabled, Ronnie's mind continued to be as sharp as ever and he was still determined to attend the factory; at first using a stick, later a walking frame and finally a wheelchair. Eventually, he contributed by regular phone contact and of course I popped in to see him after work.

Ronnie died aged 42, in February 1965. This was a heavy blow to all of us, but especially to his wife, Eva, and to our mother, Elsa. Parents can never be prepared for their children to die before them. After Ronnie died my mother never attended Synagogue again.

This, as well as my constant worries about Eve, most probably had some effect on the business. I found concentrating on my work useful to take my mind off our personal concerns at least for some of the time. Furthermore, I was now without Ronnie and virtually a one man business. I was fortunate in finding very good staff, both in the office and factory. I interviewed every employee myself not only to assess their capabilities but also their work ethic.

One of my most trusted employees was our Sales Manager, Bernard Rutherford, who had changed his name from Werner Schloss. He was also a Jewish refugee from Wunstorf who spent some time in Buchenwald Concentration Camp as a teenager.



A printed notice which inmates of Buchenwald were forced to sign saying "I am not permitted to receive or send any mail - letters, cards or parcels until further notice. Enquiries to the Commander of the Camp are forbidden and will simply extend the prohibition".



*Werner Schloss who became Bernard Rutherford
1911 - 2005*

222

Konzentrationslager Buchenwald
Kommandantur

Weimar-Buchenwald, den **5 Dez 1938** 19...

Entlassungsschein

Der Schutzhäftling **Werner Schloss**,
 geb. am 22-11.11. in Wunstorf hat vom 11. 11. 38.
 bis zum heutigen Tage im Konzentrationslager Buchenwald eingesperrt.
 Auf Anordnung des Stapoleit. Hannover vom 2.12.38.
 wurde er nach Hannover entlassen.

Der Lagerkommandant
[Signature]
#-Standartenführer



K. Borkmann, Weimar

Copy of
Werner Schloss's
release from
Buchenwald
Concentration Camp

Kennort:	Wunstorf
Kennnummer:	A 0000 2
Gültig bis:	22 März 1944
Name:	Schloss
Vornamen:	Werner Israel
Geburtsort:	Wunstorf
Geburtsort:	Wunstorf
Beruf:	Werkführer
Unveränderliche Kennzeichen:	Passion
Veränderliche Kennzeichen:	An der Oberlippe blauer am linken Oberarm
Bemerkungen:	Wun



Rechter Zeigefinger



Linker Zeigefinger



Werner Israel Schloss
(Unterschrift des Kennkarteninhabers)

Wunstorf, den 24. März 1939,
Der Bürgermeister
als Ortspolizeibehörde
in **Wunstorf**

(Unterschrift des aufgestellten Beamten)

Copy of Werner
"Israel" Schloss's
German identity card

He was an only child who came to England with the *Kindertransport* and lost his parents in the *Holocaust*. He was interned by the British Government and sent to Canada. On his return to Britain, he joined the Pioneer Corps and later the British Army where he became a sergeant in a gunnery regiment. After the war he developed a career in sales and joined Loblite in the early 1960s, staying with me until he retired. He was a successful, hard working and sincere person who was well loved and respected by customers who sent him Christmas cards and gifts long after his retirement.

Bernard and his wife Joyce had no children of their own and doted on the young Lobles, giving them birthday and Chanukah gifts and taking them all out to the Swallow Hotel in Gateshead for lunch once a year.

During the latter stages of Ronnie's illness and while Eve was convalescing, we needed some extra support in caring for Monica, Peter, Susan and Steven.

Eva and Ronnie had engaged a young girl from Holy Island (Lindisfarne) called Gwen Patterson. Her parents Rachel and Dick owned the Britannia Boarding House on the Island and they welcomed the four cousins to stay on a number of occasions.

This was a great adventure as the island was accessed via a causeway and was inaccessible at high tide. The children travelled from Newcastle by bus to Beale on the A1 where they were collected by Gwen's brother known as Young Dick in his flat bed coal truck. The children's bicycles were sent ahead by train.



Sitting outside the Britannia, a Bed and Breakfast made famous by and featured on pop group Lindisfarne's album cover "Meet me on the Corner" are Left to Right: Gwen Patterson (holding Astor the dog), Peter, Monica, Susan, Steven and Mavis the mother's help

These were idyllic times for the children who were allowed to roam fairly freely around the island, particularly in view of the difficult circumstances at home. Susan and Monica's daily responsibility was to walk to the farm with a milk pail to collect fresh milk for their breakfast.

Developing New Products and Markets

As a small manufacturer, we were always looking for new products and niche markets where we could make a decent profit margin. Part of this strategy required investment in new processes and we were always keen to become independent and self sufficient. We were also mindful of new developments which could facilitate our progress.

Our tinplate off-cuts made the manufacture of paint brush ferrules extremely labour intensive and required six separate operations to manufacture a paint brush ferrule. At this time, we employed over 100 people.

After the War, the availability of nickel plated steel strip in coil form enabled us to evolve our own mechanised and subsequently automated ferrule machinery as no standard production machines existed due to the limited market. These were manufactured in-house, with our own drawing office and engineering departments working up my own paper concepts.

As demand increased, we developed techniques to process solid copper, brass and even stainless steel ferrules which were notoriously difficult to form and weld. During the war we handmade orders of 1,500 pieces per size but once our production was automated, we could easily produce 100,000 pieces per size. The six separate operations were reduced to two and eventually a single process, employing fewer people.



Our range of ferrules and brush components also expanded in terms of size and application, extending from nine inch distemper wall bands down to half inch ferrules as well as aluminium paint brush inserts. We were regular exhibitors at the Freiburg im Breisgau International Brush Component Exhibition and in time, we won export orders to all parts of Europe, South Africa and the Middle East.

On the electrical side, I took my inspiration for products from ideas I saw overseas which were not yet commercialised in the UK, as well as gaps that I spotted in the market place. Sometimes customers would ask if I could make a particular item to their specification.

The standard electric plug and socket was redesigned to British Standard 1363 after the War in order to replace the many types of un-fused round pin designs. It was a stroke of good fortune that from the mid 1960s, BS 1363 was enforced and we benefited enormously from the demand created by commercial and domestic installations being upgraded. We provided a comprehensive range of adaptors, allowing existing round pin plugs fitted to appliances to be used in the new sockets. Later, we developed and launched the first moulded-on 13amp 3 flat pin fused plug which we sold to appliance manufacturers. Loblite was also the first company in the UK to manufacture electric cable extension reels with moulded-on plugs.

Our product range became extensive, encompassing shaver sockets, electrical connectors, porcelain ceiling roses and lamp holders. We designed and manufactured weatherproof light fittings together with weatherproof switches, sockets and fittings which formed a comprehensive industrial and commercial range. These were sold in different pack styles and also on merchandising stands.

We complimented our own manufactured range with porcelain and glass lighting fittings as well as international plug and socket systems supplied by Lindner GmbH in Bamberg but sold under the Loblite Lindner brand.

As the business grew, we needed additional factory space, so we rented adjacent factory buildings and in 1971 we took a major decision to add 18,000 sq.ft. onto our original factory in Third Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate, giving us around 34,000 sq.ft. in total. This enabled us to improve the layout of our manufacturing and assembly facility.

Our electrical goods were shipped throughout the UK by haulage, but we had our own vans for local deliveries and for ferrules which were much bulkier.

In order to develop our export sales we attended the Hanover Trade Fair which was held in April every year. In the late 1950s, it was an expensive venture for us to travel to such an event and in those days, Ronnie and I visited the exhibition on alternate years. To mitigate cost and because of a lack of hotels (there were tens of thousands of attendees and much of Hanover was under reconstruction following the allied bombing), we stayed in private homes, some of which had no hot running water.

The accommodation was allotted by the exhibition organisers. On my tenth visit, I wanted to bring Eve and requested an upgrade to a better room. From then on I stayed at Hotel *Am Rathaus* for the next twenty six years, by which time the proprietor's children were managing the hotel.

We did not have our own stand at the exhibition but we based ourselves on the Lindner stand from which I visited other exhibitors, many of whom became customers or suppliers. At the end of each day we continued to meet customers and suppliers over dinner and I always enjoyed sampling German food, reminiscent of my childhood.

Loblite employed three full time sales representatives and a network of agents throughout the UK for our electrical products. In the 1960s, our London representative, Mr Eddie Pankhurst was sent on a "TACK" sales training course and on graduation, he instructed me that he required not only printed business cards but also a bowler hat!

Our ferrules were sold throughout the UK by Mr Leon Syder, a bristle merchant (Britain & Overseas Trading Company). He was the longest established bristle merchant in the UK and was well connected to the buying departments of all the brush manufacturing companies.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a great deal of business was still done at a high level on a personal basis and 'financial inducements' were expected by some buyers. I remember accompanying one of

our agents who had briefed me before going in to see one of our customers that I should excuse myself towards the end of our meeting. I later found that this was to enable him to hand over some cash! Christmas presents were often expected and their value was based on the amount of trade done during a year.

I was thrust into the sphere of trade associations after reading an article about the proposed prohibition of multi-socket adaptors (an adaptor enabling several plugs to connect to a single socket outlet). As previously mentioned, these adaptors were big business to Loblite. The article, which appeared in a trade magazine in the early 1960s was written by a senior trading standards officer in London, who recounted to me later that his mother had received an electric shock and stated that such items should be banned.

I went to London to see the author of this article together with my local Member of Parliament. We managed to persuade him to hold off taking action for one year so that the industry could consider the safety aspects of this type of product. This prompted me to join *EIEMA (the Electrical Installation Equipment Manufacturers Association)* which incorporated as its members all major UK electrical accessory manufacturers. As none of them had spotted this article, I was instantly welcomed into their ranks and this introduced me to the larger manufacturers and drew me into a long association with the industry's technical committees.

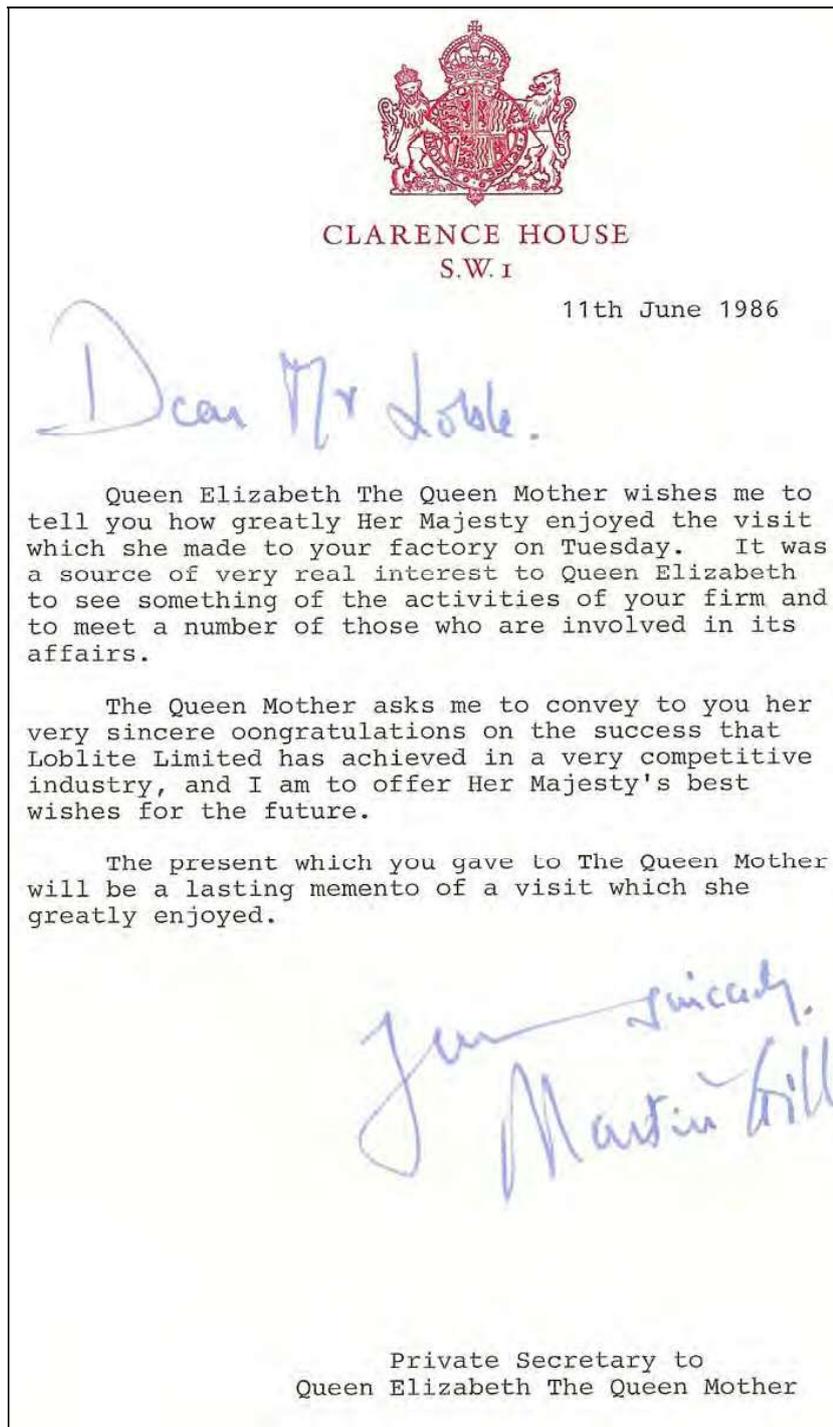
In due course, I was invited to join a technical committee of the British Standards Institution (BSI) in London where new British Standards were evolved, published and enforced. This took a great deal of time as none of the meetings took place locally. However, it was useful for Loblite to know about legislative changes ahead of time and of course I met many influential and useful people in the course of doing this work.

*Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth
The Queen Mother visits
Loblite Limited
10th June 1986*



One of the highlights for the employees and our family was a visit on 10th June 1986 of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Team Valley Trading Estate. Loblite was actually the longest established manufacturer in existence on that industrial park.

Her Majesty toured our production line and spent time talking to our family and the staff. She was very interested in the automated machinery and processes and afterwards we received a very complimentary thank-you letter.



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother very politely sent a thank you letter for the Lindisfarne silver rose bowl which I had presented to her

Another Royal encounter followed twenty five years later when I was invited by the owners of the Team Valley Trading Estate to lunch with His Royal Highness, Prince Andrew Duke of York.



Left to Right: HRH Prince Andrew Duke of York, Mrs Helen Sherlock JP daughter of Miroslav Sigmund (my first employer) and wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear and me!

Not having the advantage of being long established indigenous manufacturers, we became active networkers, acquiring useful information and contacts. Loblite joined organisations such as the Engineering Employers Federation, (EEF), the National Union of Manufacturers, (NUM), which became the Federation of British Industries (FBI) and is now called the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) and the British Brush Manufacturers Association (BBMA). All of these published magazines, held seminars, conferences and annual banquets. When attending, Ronnie and I, who took turns as one of us usually stayed at home to 'mind the shop', were sometimes asked to propose the Loyal Toast, a vote of thanks or even give an address on a relevant topic. We were especially thrilled when asked to propose a loyal toast as this implied that we were no longer regarded as foreigners!

An occasional advertisement in the trade press helped to establish the Loblite name. As computers and computer graphics were unheard of, the advertisements required the creation of artwork, from which printing blocks were made and sent to the printers or publishers. As there was no internet or Google, we advertised in a very thick annual trade directory, called Kelly's Directory, roughly the equivalent to *Yellow Pages*. All of this took time and money, but was necessary to help raise the profile of the company.

Loblite Limited 'firsts' in the UK

1954 13 amp shaver adaptor, No. 135. Our most successful of these was the fused shaver adaptor, of which we made several million.

1958 13 amp flat pin to 5 amp 3 pin adaptor No. 513. This was the first socket adaptor, ever, based on a printed circuit, eliminating several internal metal pressings, allowing sockets to the new British Standard flat pin ring main system to be used with old round pins.

1960 13 amp flat pin adaptor, No. 213 connecting two 13 amp plugs to one socket. This had a variation for a third connection. Terminals and a cord grip were provided inside this adaptor, so that one appliance could be wired into it and the adaptor used like a plug.

1961 13 amp to 5 amp 2 pin bedside adaptor. No. 1313. This incorporated a socket within the plug for appliances such as vacuum cleaners.

1967 A range of round and flat pin plastic Safety Socket Covers, to prevent children from touching the electric contacts in socket outlets thus avoiding electric shocks. This was before the introduction of safety shutters in socket outlets.

1970 Plastic extension cable reels, No. 3800, with a moulded-on fused 13 amp plug. These were far reaching innovations and later copied by several competitors. So much so, that presently all appliances have to be supplied with moulded on plugs.

1976 Shuttered electric shaver socket, No. 452 widely used in homes and caravans. Shaver adaptor plug, No 521, a complex assembly of pins inside a moulding, which could be selected and secured on the outside, to fit round or flat pin sockets worldwide.

1981 Plug-in Glowlite, No. 133 , to emit low level light from a socket for nursery and security use.

1986 UK 13 amp to Continental earthed adaptor, No. 143

1988 UK 13 amp flat pin re-wireable plug, with externally accessible working fuse and spare fuse. This was a real innovation, as hitherto one had to open a plug to replace the fuse.

Quite apart from these genuine Loblite firsts, we also manufactured a range of established electrical accessories, many with innovative improvements.

Our Family Develops

Despite working all hours to accommodate the growing business, my family were always at the centre of my universe.

Eve thankfully has a remarkable strength and constitution which has carried her through the challenging times of surgery. However, despite many years of speech therapy her word recall was permanently impaired and she suffers from aphasia which will be with her for the rest of her life. Her brain functions fairly normally but she is unable to explain or express herself either vocally or in writing and this became an increasing frustration for her, for me and for our children.

This did not prevent her from endeavouring to lead an entirely normal life; shopping, keeping our home, cooking (in her youth she attended a summer course at the Cordon Bleu Cookery School in Paris as well as Berridge House in London), attending synagogue and meetings - although the meetings were at times quite challenging. She devoted herself to the family and in later life doted on her grandchildren.

Eve received a considerable amount of help from my mother, from au-pair girls and from some friends in respect of school transportation and post school entertainment.

Monica contracted whooping cough when she was four years old and we made a special trip to Arosa, Switzerland, having been advised that the climate and altitude would help, which it did. We left Peter at home in Newcastle with my mother and Kathy Cockburn. We decided that Monica would be happier in a children's holiday home rather than a hotel. However, she did not settle here and many years later, she accused us of putting her into an 'orphanage'. A very expensive one it was too!



Monica and Peter



Monica developed a vivacious and outgoing personality and was always sociable and enjoyed the company of others. She loved younger children and after graduating from Central Newcastle High School went to London to study for a Certificate in Education.



*Left to Right:
Eve, my mother, Peter
and Monica*

She always enjoyed her food and whilst we tried to limit her intake of sweets, on one occasion we discovered a stash concealed under her school hat! She was fashion conscious from an early age

and when mini-skirts were in vogue, Monica developed the technique of rolling up her compliant length school skirt around the waist to make it into a mini-skirt.

Our financial constraints meant that Monica's first adult bicycle was black, second-hand and somewhat utilitarian. Monica disowned it from the word go!

Monica's *Batmitzvah* (a girl's equivalent ceremony to a *Barmitzvah* for boys) was the first such ceremony to take place in Newcastle (at the Newcastle Reform Synagogue) where the female celebrant was called up to read from the *Sefer Torah Scroll* (Five Books of Moses). She acquitted herself very well indeed not only reading from the scroll (in Hebrew and without vowels) but also conducting part of the service with Rabbi Henry Brandt from Leeds.

Peter had an entirely different character, was very shy and quiet, possibly affected by witnessing Eve's rather traumatic health problems. Peter was always very well behaved especially at Ascham House School.

Our friends, Hans and Bronda Lesser, who lived nearby, very kindly arranged to take Peter to and from school. Hans Lesser was a successful clothing manufacturer and Peter and their son, Charles, were transported in their chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce. The protocol for thanking and acknowledging Cooper, the chauffeur, was to tip their red school caps and say "Thank you for the lift".



Commemorative stamps were produced for Peter's Barmitzvah by his grandparents, Trude & Fred Heinemann

After his *Barmitzvah* in 1971, held at the Newcastle Reform Synagogue, with a party afterwards at the Gosforth Park Hotel, Peter was enrolled at boarding school in Northamptonshire. We had been advised that this public school had a very good engineering department and I had hoped that this might enable Peter to join the family business.



*Family photo at
Peter's School
circa 1974*

Peter trained with an international firm of Chartered Accountants and qualified as a Chartered Certified Accountant. He moved to London and lived in Canfield Gardens, West Hampstead - coincidentally, where I had lived when I first went to London. Peter remained in the profession for a few years before switching to the London insurance market where he worked for a number of large insurance companies.

In 1977 we celebrated my parents-in-law, Fred and Trude Heinemann's Golden Wedding with a delightful luncheon at Claridge's Hotel in London.



*Claud and Eve standing behind
their parents at their Golden
Wedding celebrations at
Claridge's in 1977*

Trude had obviously never been introduced to the modern drink of Bucks Fizz (fresh orange juice mixed with champagne) and the grandchildren were highly amused when she complained that her orange juice tasted "off"!



*August 1979, my mother Elsa's 87th birthday celebrated on her beloved terrace in Westmorland Gardens, Low Fell.
Left to Right are Monica Stern née Loble, Eve Loble née Heinemann, Elsa Loebel née Fried, me, my son-in-law Gerald Stern, Peter Loble*

Sadly after a short illness, my mother, Elsa Loebel née Fried died of a heart attack at home in Low Fell in 1981 aged 88 years. She had been a tower of strength to both Ronnie and me and to our families. She was adored by her grandchildren and admired by her friends and neighbours.



My Communal Activities

Alongside the family, our business and following my parents' example, I have always felt drawn towards voluntary work.



Former Gateshead Round Tablers reunion in 2010. Left to Right are Roy Stewart CBE, DL (Accountant), Dr Jim Dagleish, Tony Smith (Solicitor), Dr Jim Jackson, Alex McManus (Factory Manager), Jim Hart (Engineer) - all retired!

My membership of *Round Table* led me to become a member of the *Rotary Club of Gateshead* in 1956. This is a worldwide organisation comprising over one million members, all dedicated to local and international voluntary work, vocational training within the community and charitable activities.

Rotary meets weekly over lunch and a talk is given on diverse subjects excluding promotion of political or religious views. Every member has to speak personally or provide a speaker once or twice each year. So it was that I gained self-confidence in public speaking and delivered my own lectures (probably numbering well over 50) with the exceptions of recruiting my daughter Monica (who spoke about Jewish communities of the Caribbean), my grandson Joel (who spoke about backpacking from Newcastle to Shanghai), and my cousin Herbert (who spoke about Jewish refugee industries).

I was elected President of the Rotary Club of Gateshead in 1968 and was awarded Rotary's *Paul Harris Fellowship* for services to Rotary International in 1992. Eve was a member and became Honorary Treasurer of the *Gateshead Inner Wheel*, an office she held for several years until she became unwell.

Through my involvement in Rotary, I was asked to become the first Chairman of the *John Haswell Housing Trust*, a sheltered housing project in Gladstone Terrace, Gateshead. This led to my becoming Chairman of the *Gateshead Guild of Community Service* (later known as *GVOC Gateshead*

Voluntary Organisations Council), the umbrella organisation for over sixty charities all based in Gateshead. I also became a member of the *Northumberland and Tyneside Council of Social Service*.

In 1962 my brother Ronnie spotted an advert in the Newcastle daily paper, *The Journal*. It was a lineage advert which asked anyone interested in the formation of a *Reform Synagogue* to make contact. This struck a chord as we had never felt comfortable in the Orthodox Synagogue and we arranged a meeting with the advertiser who turned out to be a non Jew interested in conversion. Here we met Saul Caplan and Nonek Jacobson amongst others and we went on to advertise an open meeting to be held at The Royal Turks Head Hotel in Grey Street.

Around 20 people attended and expressed interest, many of whom were also refugees from Nazi Europe. Those present decided to contact the nearest Reform Synagogue, Sinai Synagogue in Leeds, where we received a warm welcome and offers of support from Rabbi Henry Brandt and the members.

This led to a series of further meetings and trial services which took place at the Durant Hall in Ellison Place, Newcastle, aided considerably by Reverend Roger Tarbuck, the Minister of the Unitarian Church which occupied the Durant Hall. Reverend Tarbuck's wife was Bronda Lesser, widow of the Jewish refugee clothing manufacturer, Hans Lesser, mentioned previously.

In 1963, the membership numbered around 30 families. We became affiliated to RSGB (Reform Synagogues of Great Britain which is now known as the Movement for Reform Judaism) and we purchased a vacant Methodist Chapel and adjoining house in Derby Street, near St James's Park. The Methodists and relatives of the late Mr McEwan, a benefactor of that Church, assisted our congregation with a favourable price, on condition that we retained the full pipe organ with the McEwan name affixed to it.

The first floor of the adjoining house was used by our caretaker, Mr Liddle and his wife, with classrooms situated below. A large communal hall was situated above the sanctuary and this was used for functions, one of which was the first communal *Seder* to be held in the North East. The sanctuary itself was tastefully remodelled in a Middle Eastern theme with a central Ark containing a Torah scroll which Sinai Synagogue kindly lent us.

Services were conducted by members of the Synagogue, in particular Nonek Jacobson, a Polish refugee who had lived in Palestine (before it became Israel) and was well versed in Judaism. RSGB and Leo Baeck College (which trains Progressive Rabbis for the UK and Europe) were helpful in supplying Student Rabbis and Rabbis for High Holydays and special occasions.



*Claire Jacobson
née Löbl and I*

A mixed choir was formed under the leadership of Mr Ralph Landau, a retired tailor, assisted by Mrs Claire Jacobson (Nonek's wife born as Claire Löbl whom much later my cousin Herbert discovered to be a third cousin!) and the organ was skilfully played by a retired General Practitioner, Dr Henry Moorbath. He and Mr Landau were quite frequently at loggerheads over the tempo and detail in the performance. The congregation were often amused to overhear disagreements emanating from the choir enclosure.



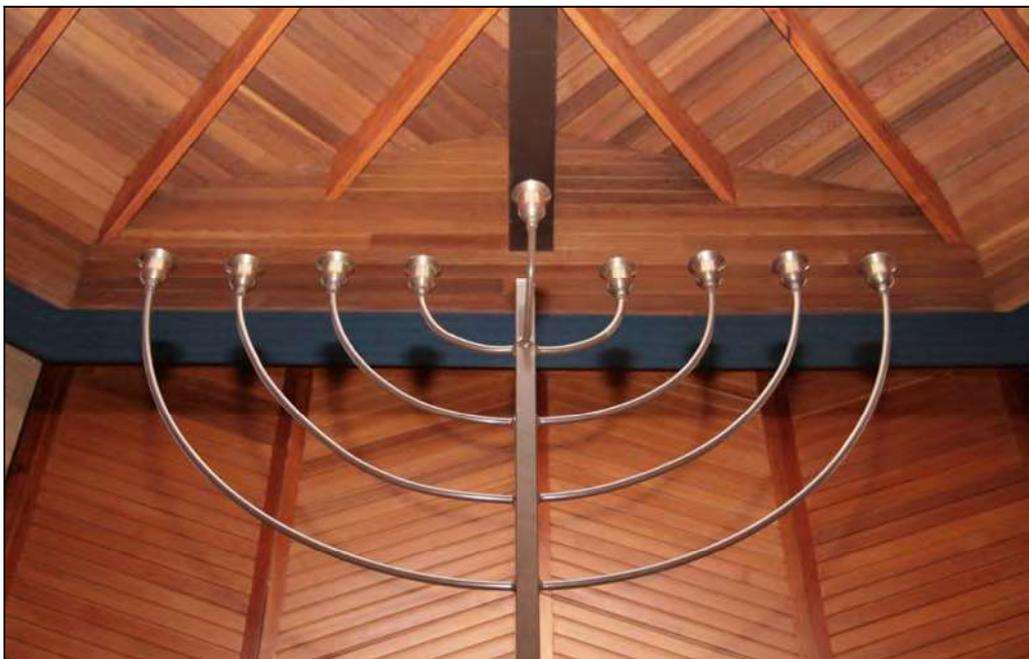
*Left to Right: Me, Eve, Claire and Nonek Jacobson
who became close family friends and we later discovered
were mishpacha (family)*

The formation of a Reform Synagogue was strongly opposed by the established Orthodox communities in Newcastle (Gosforth & Kenton Synagogue, Jesmond Synagogue and Leazes Park Road Synagogue) and this included the Jewish umbrella organisation, *The Representative Council of Newcastle Jewry* (now known as the Representative Council of North East Jewry) who for many years would not allow the Reform Synagogue to be represented. Our children were excluded from Maccabi and other youth events because of fear of inter-marriage. In fact, the Reform community was totally ostracised from the local Jewish community for many years. Over a period of time, it was recognised that Reform Judaism had become established in the North East and in due course, members of Newcastle Reform Synagogue were elected to the leadership of the Representative Council.



*Newcastle Reform
Synagogue building
opened in 1984*

The Derby Street building was compulsorily purchased by Newcastle City Council for housing redevelopment around 1974 and the community spent quite some years using rented accommodation in a Methodist church hall in Jesmond and other temporary venues, before moving to a new purpose-built Synagogue in The Croft, Gosforth in October 1984. My son-in-law, Gerald, handled the final few years of the claim against the City Council and oversaw the design and construction of the new building. The multi-purpose synagogue hall was named "The Ronnie Loble Hall" in memory of my late brother who was so instrumental in the founding of the Reform Synagogue in Newcastle.



The interior of the Newcastle Reform Synagogue and below, The Ronnie Loble Hall



On 30th November 2013 we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of the Newcastle Reform Synagogue with a special Sabbath service attended by several past Chairpersons including my daughter, Monica, and son-in-law, Gerald and a number of Rabbis who had served the community. The Lord Lieutenant, Mr Nigel Sherlock and Mrs Sherlock, civic dignitaries and representatives of other faiths joined us for this landmark occasion.



Left to Right (ignoring the band members) are: Bill Fleming (Chairman), Rabbi Amanda Golby, Sylvia Rowlands, Colin Scott, Tony Wortman, Linda Scott, Brenda Dinsdale (Life President), Rabbi Moshe Yehudai, me (also Life President), Rabbi Robert Ash, Gaby Mandell, Ian Cohen, Pauline Statt, Gabrielle Bernstone and Tony Benson at the 50th Anniversary Dinner Dance celebration

In 1967, I was nominated by a fellow Rotarian, Mr Dennis Davidson, to become a Justice of the Peace (Magistrate) in the Borough of Gateshead. In due course I became a Chairman of the Juvenile Court (now known as Youth Court) and of various committees associated with the Gateshead Magistrates' Court.

The Charity Commissioners were endeavouring to utilise funds available in certain inactive charities and so I became Chairman of the Reed Watson Charity for Poor Children in 1968. The same year I became a governor of several mainstream and some special (for handicapped children) schools in Gateshead.



*Left to Right:
Dennis and Lila
Davidson, Jean and
John Stanton, Eve*

In 1983 I joined the Women's Cancer Detection Society (WCDS) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead and later became a Trustee and eventually, Chairman. This charity introduced cervical testing of women for cancer at a time when the National Health Service (NHS) did not offer routine testing. When this was taken over by the NHS, the charity turned instead to breast cancer detection and the first mammography machine was installed into a department store in Gateshead as no space was available within the NHS. We initially charged patients who were anxious and wished to be tested £12 per screening, but the same service was available free of charge from this charity to those who could not afford to pay.

As the use of this vital facility increased, we purchased a number of temporary buildings and in due course were given land within the grounds of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead. These buildings housed a reception area, changing rooms, screening area and an x-ray processing area. We were very fortunate in attracting an expert in mammography, Dr Nan Stark. This appointment, combined with a higher profile presence within the hospital, helped the charity to grow.

We were instrumental in saving many lives, which I found immensely satisfying. Monies for the charity were initially raised at grass roots level in work places, shops, social clubs and through social events. Some of the patients recognised the importance of early detection and treatment undertaken by the charity and a series of bequests have followed.

In due course, the NHS purchased the breast screening unit from the charity and re-housed it in a more modern building. The service grew to screen 75,000 women on Tyneside on a three yearly basis.

Following the transfer of the breast screening unit, the charity turned its attention towards research of breast cancer carried out at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and also at the Department of Surgery at Newcastle University Medical School. Such work requires very specialised and expensive equipment and I co-ordinated an application to the National Lottery Charities Fund which was successful in attracting a grant of £150,000. Such grants are normally only given via the Medical Research Council and we were advised that it was unusual to receive such funding.

A great deal of the success of this charity was due to the unremitting work of Mrs Brenda Gibson, Finance Secretary since 1965. Together, we managed the charity from our homes with virtually no overheads, undertook all the administration, fund-raising and purchasing of equipment and services ourselves.



Raising money with The Magnificent Seven

To the MAGNIFICENT SEVEN :

Seven ladies and many others
Like " Seven brides and seven brothers "
Clapped and danced the night away
Enjoying themselves and helping to pay
For cancer research, at the Q.E.
A charity they support with glee.

Five thousand pounds is a magnificent sum
To help speed the research to get done
Your efforts are the inspiration to sustain
Our best efforts, until we meet again.

To the Thompsons, our thanks and a special brass star
For the wonderful venue and being the friends you are.

I wrote the above *ditty* to honour seven wonderful fundraisers to whom I fondly referred as The Magnificent Seven!

On 10th October 2007, I was greatly honoured to be appointed a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, during an investiture at Buckingham Palace. It was a most memorable event for all of us. The citation read 'for services to the Women's Cancer Detection Society in Gateshead and the community in Newcastle upon Tyne'. To celebrate this special occasion, we stayed at *The Goring Hotel* near Buckingham Palace and afterwards Gerald invited the whole family to lunch at *The Ritz Hotel* on Piccadilly.



I feel extremely privileged as *'The Boy from Bamberg'* to have had the opportunity to meet three generations of the Royal Family in my lifetime, in addition to attending a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in 2005.



*The Loble Family,
Peter, Eve, me
holding my gong
and Monica at the
entrance to
Buckingham Palace
after the
investiture*

At around the same time that I received my MBE, Hannah Hammelburger, with whose family I left Bamberg, also received an MBE for her contribution to social services. She is now known as Anne Shearer and lives in Birmingham.

When I retired as *Chairman* of the WCDS, a group of seven ladies who were our major fund raisers and whom I referred to as '*The Magnificent Seven*' presented me with a Sterling Silver pendant.

As a 'contemporary witness' of the *Holocaust*, I have been asked over the years by various organisations to talk about my recollections. The first of these was probably when my grandson, Joel, was a pupil at Bootham School in York. I drove to York, accompanied by Nonek Jacobson and Harry Nagelsteijn, a survivor of Majdanek Concentration Camp where he escaped death several times in selection processes, to talk to the staff and pupils at Bootham School.

Although most of my immediate family escaped and survived the *Holocaust*, the years I spent in Germany left a deep impression on me and I am motivated to remind the younger generation about the horrendous events in the hope that they will remember this and work to avoid any future reoccurrence of such persecution.

These talks have been developed and presented not only to schools, but to religious groups, clubs and the University of the Third Age. On a number of occasions I have been interviewed on local radio and television.

My Illustrious Cousins

Although this book particularly documents my own life, three of my first cousins have also had interesting lives and careers which they have documented in different forms (*see Bibliography*):



Dr Herbert Loebel (originally Löbl), OBE

Born in Bamberg, 1923

Died in Newcastle upon Tyne, 2013

*Herbert receives a
Lifetime Achievement
Award 2010*

Herbert graduated from Newcastle University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering. Shortly after his father died, Herbert co-founded, with Robert Joyce, a company called Joyce, Loebel & Co in a small workshop in Newcastle. This business went on to develop and produce optical microdensitometers which proved useful in the fledgling science of DNA. He went on to pioneer technology transfer.

In 1973 he set up Enterprise North which became the first of many UK Government supported regional development agencies assisting small businesses. Even into his mid-80s he sponsored an Export Academy at Newcastle University, encouraging small companies to export. Herbert was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to exports in 1973.

On 25th November 2010, Herbert was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the business community in North East England and the citation noted that Herbert had helped 200 business start-ups before Government agencies took over the job!

On returning to Bamberg after the war, Herbert was greatly disappointed at the single, rather insignificant memorial to the Holocaust. He made it his life's work to invoke a programme of education, reconciliation and remembrance with the post-war Town Council, Archives and Museum as well as with the local community. He was determined that the lives of several hundred Bamberg citizens murdered by the Nazis, including our own family members, should not be forgotten. He set about writing books, organising exhibitions, arranging for a more suitable memorial, attending remembrance ceremonies and talking to the local community.

In order to communicate with former Jewish Bamberg citizens scattered around the world, he regularly produced his "Letter from Bamberg" for over 20 years. This gave details of his work in Bamberg and included copies of pertinent press cuttings.

He was recognised for his work, which extended well beyond Bamberg, by the City of Bamberg (Citizen's Medal) in 1996, by the Government of Germany (Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany) in 1997 and by the State of Bavaria (Bavarian Order of Merit) in 2001.

Alongside all of this, Herbert carried out many years of personal research into the ancestry and lives of his eight great grandparents, four of whom we share (Siegfried Löbl and his wife Karolina

Lilling, Moritz Schloss and his wife Fanny Bamberger). All of this was carried out before the advent of the internet and involved Herbert corresponding with and visiting archives around Germany and the Czech Republic (Bohemia). The results of his research became eight chapters in a book (not published but may be viewed on Gerald Stern's website). In fact, Gerald used Herbert's data as the foundations for his own extensive research which may be viewed on the same website.

I have very fond and happy memories of Herbert, who had quite different interests and personality to me - but of course we both shared a common bond in our intertwined family histories and interests in Bamberg and Bohemia. Despite the difficulties which had developed between our families, in later years Herbert and I became the closest of friends and I frequently walked to his home to visit him, especially as he became progressively immobile in his later years.

Herbert's desk and several of his artefacts and collections were taken to Bamberg after his death in January 2013 and form part of an exhibit about Jewish life in Bamberg.



First cousins - Left to Right: George Loble, MBE JP and Dr Herbert Loebel, OBE, BSc, MPhil, PhD, hon DSc, CEng



Lili Todes née Loebel (originally Löbl)

Born in Bamberg, 1930

Lili Loebel

Herbert's youngest sister, Lili, was educated at La Sagesse convent school in Newcastle. She won a scholarship to study at King's College, Newcastle and afterwards at the Sorbonne in Paris.

After graduating, she worked as a translator, then as a reporter for Paris Fashion Week and later spent time on a kibbutz in Israel.

She went on to develop a very successful career in journalism. As a member of the foreign department of Newsweek magazine in New York, she documented the sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and reported on world events.

Lili published her book, "Don't Ask Me Where I Come From" which very eloquently chronicles her family's escape from Bamberg to England. It documents her interesting career as a United Nations journalist for Newsweek magazine, which includes coverage of African independence and the Cuban Missile Crisis, interspersed with a number of personal romantic episodes!



*Three Loebel cousins -
Left to Right are
Werner, Herbert and
George*



Werner Loval (originally Löbl)

Born in Bamberg, 1926

Werner Loval

Werner and his sister, Erica (the children of my Uncle Sali Löbl born 4th November 1890 in Bamberg and Friedl Aufhäuser) came to England with the *Kindertransport* in 1939. During the war they endured a traumatic journey across the U-boat infested Atlantic Ocean in a convoy in order to join their parents in Quito, Ecuador.

Werner later served as a diplomat for the fledgling Israeli State in the United States and also in Latin America. He went on to co-found one of the largest estate agents in Israel with 65 branches. He initiated the development of a new neighbourhood in Jerusalem (Nayot) and was a founder of the Har-El Reform Synagogue, the first congregation of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism.

Werner has retained his diplomatic connections and continues to act as Honorary Consul for Guatemala in Jerusalem. He is extremely well connected within local and national government circles in Israel. He was made an Honorary Citizen of the City of Jerusalem in 1999.

He is a governor both of Hebrew University of Jerusalem and of B'nai Brith World Centre. He is a Member of the Jury of the Obermayer German Jewish History Awards which recognises non Jewish German individuals who have made outstanding voluntary contributions toward preserving and recording the Jewish history, heritage, culture or remnants of local German communities.

Werner was also instrumental in assisting the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in acquiring the ceiling of a wooden synagogue of the village of Horb near Bamberg. This had been painted in 1735 by Eliezer Sussmann, the son of a cantor, and had miraculously survived the Holocaust.

In 2010 Werner published a comprehensive and impressive 520 page hardback illustrated book. It is a fascinating record of the Löbl family before the war as well as an account of the establishment of the State of Israel and the Reform Movement in Israel. His mother's Aufhäuser family of Augsburg is still remembered in Germany as they established a well known bank which still exists today. There is also a square named Siegfried Aufhäuser Platz in Berlin to commemorate the founder of the AfA-Bund, a largely white collar trade union of which Siegfried was the leader from 1921 to 1933.

Eve's Heinemann Family

In an earlier chapter, I have already talked briefly about Eve's Heinemann family.



Wedding of Fritz Heinemann and Gertrud née Stern in Dusseldorf, 1927

Back Row Left to Right: Moritz Stern, Erna Stern née Schwarz, Hugo Heinemann, Gustl Heinemann née Löb, Mrs Moritz Stern, Gerson Stern, Gertrud Heinemann née Stern, Fritz Heinemann, Margot Heinemann née Frank, Walter Heinemann, unknown lady, Seated are parents of the Bride and Groom: Minnie Stern née Stern, Imanuel Stern, Henriette Heinemann née Gugenheim and Joseph Heinemann

Eve's parents were married in Dusseldorf in 1927 by Rabbi Dr Eschelbacher. Her mother Gertrude (Trude) née Stern's *cheder* (religion school) teacher in Dusseldorf was Rabbi Leo Baeck, the well-known scholar and leader of Progressive Judaism, who survived Theresienstadt concentration camp. Coincidentally, Joseph Heinemann (Eve's grandfather) retained Rabbi Baeck to tutor his three sons for their Barmitzvahs.

Eve (Eva) was born in Dusseldorf in 1928 and grew up in a comfortable family surrounded by aunts, uncles and cousins.





Zwei Menschen nahmen einst am Rhein
 „Anstoß“ an einem großen Stein ----
 doch gaben sie den Anstoß auf
 und -- setzten beide sich darauf. --
 Die weil zu klein der harte Platz
 umarmt er „Sie“ und nannt sie „Schatz“!
 Die Scene seht Ihr hier gemalt
 wie „Ihm“ ein goldner „Stern“ gestrahlt.

Der „Anstoßstein“ der ward verschoben
 und wird zu Hause - „aufgehoben!“-

This illustration and ode to Fritz and Trude Heinemann (for their wedding) dated 1927 is by a well-known artist, Hanns Herkendell who painted and designed posters and commercial art in Dusseldorf



Left to Right are Hugo, Fritz, Walter and Joseph Heinemann, the two older sons are in their military uniforms

Fritz Heinemann (Eve's father) together with brothers, Walter and Hugo ran a sausage casings business as well as a thriving margarine business (Niederreinisches Margarinewerk) based in Neuss, a suburb of Dusseldorf with branch offices in Cologne and Hamburg. Their father, Joseph, retired from the business in 1929 but kept a watchful eye on it.



A view of the margarine factory



One of vehicles used for transporting liquids



Staff photo circa 1932 with Eve and her father Fritz in the front row



The company's 1st and 2nd football teams, Neuss 1932



This photo shows the size of the Heinemann factory site in Neuss, circa 1932

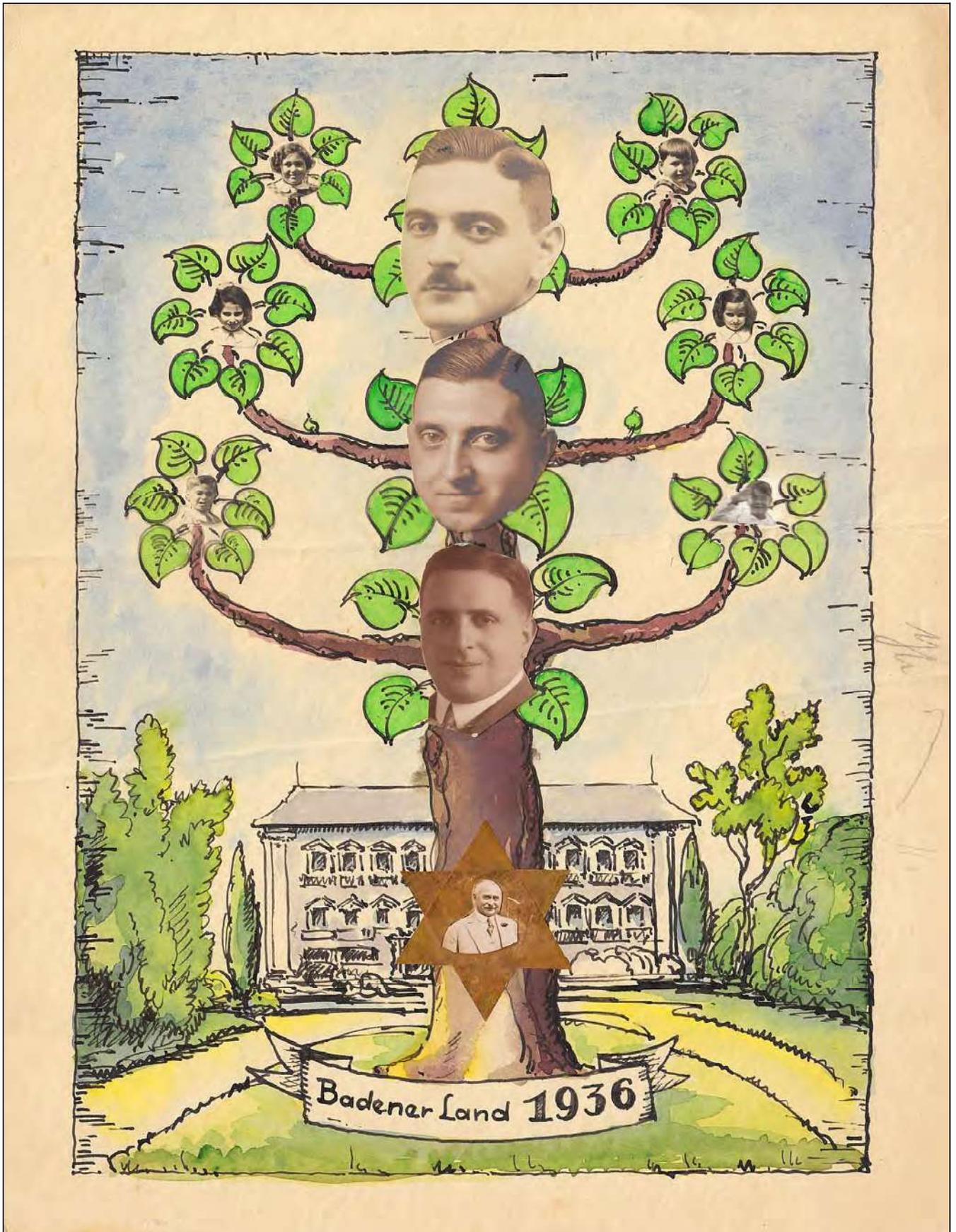
In April 1936, the entire Heinemann family, together with many friends assembled for a special 70th birthday celebration for Joseph, Eve's grandfather who was known as Opa. This took place at the Europäischer Hof Hotel in Baden-Baden, not far from Königheim, where Joseph and his father Marum Heinemann were born. A commemorative Family Tree was painted by hand, depicting Joseph (in a Star of David) with photos of his three sons, Fritz, Hugo and Walter, each with their two children.



Left to Right: Ursel (now Ora Rauff), Fritz, Rolf and Lotti Heinemann outside the Europäischer Hof, Baden-Baden in April 1936



My daughter, Monica, outside the Europäischer Hof, Baden-Baden in May 2014



The commemorative family tree painted by hand depicting Joseph (in a Star of David) with photos of his three sons, Fritz, Hugo and Walter each with their two children

Fritz had joined the 39th Fusilier Regiment in 1913 and sustained a wound to the left hand from a flare pistol during the First World War in 1915 in Champagne, France. He earned an Iron Cross (2nd Class) in the field, conferred on 31st January 1916. He was also awarded the Hungarian Empire 'War Medal with Swords and Helmet'.



Fritz Heinemann's travel pass from Düsseldorf to Charleville during the First World War



Photo taken on 12th July 1915 when Fritz's parents, Joseph and Henrietta visited him at the Front

Zentralnachweiseamt
für Kriegerverluste und Kriegergräber

Berlin-Spandau, den 5. 7. 1934
Fernsprecher: C 7 (Spandau) 4111

Büro für Kriegsstammpollen
Nr. *H. III - 266. H. 34*

Bei Rückfragen ist diese
Bescheinigung beizufügen

Militär-Dienstzeitbescheinigung*)

über den *Unteroffizier Fritz Heinemann,*
geboren am *5. Februar 1894* in *Dünnsdorf*

1. Dienstverhältnisse:
a) vor dem Kriege: *1. 10. 1913 - 1. 8. 1914 bei ev. —*
5. Komp. Füsilier Reg. 39 —

b) nach Eintritt der Mobilmachung:
2. 8. 1914 z. 5. Komp. Füsi. Reg. 39 bei
28. 2. 1917 " 2. " Land. Inf. Bataillon 11/14.
1. 5. 1917 " 2. " " " " 8/9.
10. 9. 1918 " 1. Ers. Bataillon Landw. Inf. Regts. 47;

Entlassen: *30. November 1918*

2. Gefechts-handlungen bzw. Aufenthalt im Kriegsgebiet: *Prinzipalteilnahme, v. ausserord.*
8. - 14. 8. Belagerung von Laiff.
1914: 31. 3. 15 - 18. 6. 15 Aufenthalt in v. Chauvagne.
1915: —
1916: —
1917: 6. 4. - 1. 5. 1917 Vorgefecht v. v. Champagne.
1918: 1. 5. 1917 - 10. 9. 1918 Rückmarsch im Kriegsgebiet Westen.

3. Beförderungen: *10. 10. 1914 Überg. Oberster, 27. 1. 1915 Unteroffizier,*

4. Orden: *16. 10. 1914 Eis. Kreuz zweiter Kl.*

5. Bemerkungen: *18. 6. 15 v. Luftst. v. v. d. f. aus l. ausserord.*

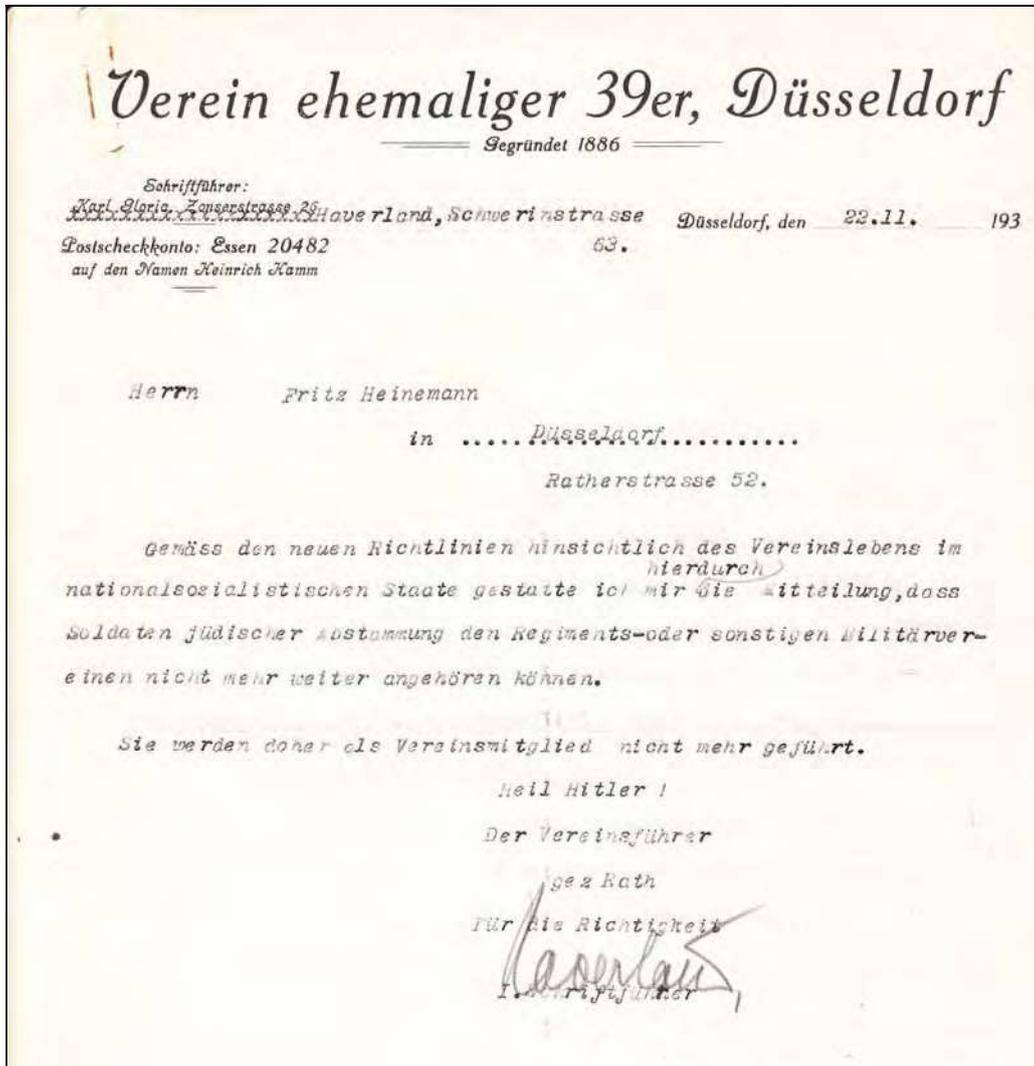
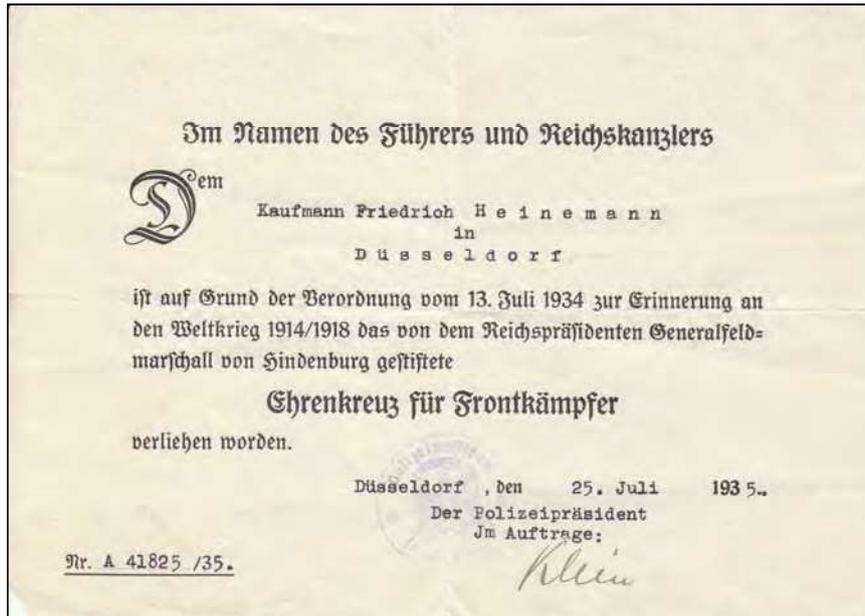
Vorstehende Angaben stimmen mit der Kriegs-~~Stammpolle~~ *Stammpolle* Bd. Nr. *531/196 n. Nr. 4632/1060*
H. III - 266. H. 34 n. H. I - 1973 n. 1704 H. II - 186 H. 34 n. 975/1707 L. 47 überein.

*) Militärpässe werden bestimmungsgemäß nicht mehr ausgestellt.



Fritz Heinemann's Military Record

In 1935 Fritz was stripped of all his medals because he was Jewish.



Fritz received notification in 1935 that he was stripped of his Honour Cross and that the Association of Former 39th Fusiliers had expelled him "due to the new Laws of the National Socialist State" The letter is signed and certified: "Heil Hitler!"

Shortly after his 70th birthday celebrations, Joseph began to feel a sense of danger due to increased victimisation of the Jews by Hitler and his Nazi Party. At the end of 1936, he was sent to recuperate from ill health and spent time in Glion, Switzerland. On his return, Hugo met him in Baden-Baden where they both received news that Hugo had been denounced by a member of staff. He was wanted for questioning by the Gestapo. Joseph was persuaded that he should by-pass Dusseldorf and head directly for The Hague in Holland where Eve's father, Fritz, and family had already moved to in late 1935 due to mounting concerns for their safety in Germany.



George and Eve revisit the house in Walsdorfer Weg, The Hague in which Eve and the Heinemann family lived between 1935 and 1939

Hugo was able to fend off as spurious, the initial claims against him. He returned to Dusseldorf but in March 1937 he was arrested and permanently detained.



The Stapo ID for Hugo Heinemann, Eve's uncle

The situation for Jewish families grew steadily worse and, as previously described, on the night of 9th November 1938, *Kristallnacht*, there were pogroms throughout Germany. Hugo's family home

in Grunerstrasse was completely destroyed and his wife, Gustl, and daughters Lotti and Ursel were fortunate in being able to shelter in Joseph's vacant flat in Herderstrasse which miraculously was spared. The Synagogue was destroyed and Rabbi Eschelbacher beaten, almost to death. Three days later, the Nazis announced a 'Reparations Programme' where rather ironically, the Jews were ordered to pay one billion Reich Marks for the damages caused (at the behest the Nazis)!

In due course it was felt a priority to get Hugo's family out of Germany and Fritz assisted, meeting them at the German border on 18th June 1939. They had obtained a transit visa through Belgium and a visa for France but they decided to head for Antwerp. Hugo's elder daughter, Lotti Wertheim née Heinemann, still resides in Belgium.

By this time, Fritz had further concerns that Holland could also be invaded, so he and his family emigrated again - this time to England. He had spent time in England during his apprenticeship, spoke English and had some contacts. Also, his mother-in-law, Minnie Stern was British born. So he commuted back and forth between Northwood, a pleasant suburb of London and Holland visiting his father and brother, Walter, while attempting to set up a new business in England.



Some of the many headlines during July 1939 - an example:
"HOW THE HEINEMANNS ILLEGALLY TRANSFERRED MONEY
Dummy Overseas Companies Used To Receive Money"

In July 1939, a major 'show trial' was headlined in Dusseldorf. Lasting several days, the defendants, Fritz, Walter and Hugo Heinemann, were accused of massive fraud by illegally transferring millions of Reich Marks out of Germany. The monies were of course assets owned by them and their businesses, but under the new Nazi laws, such transfers of assets were strictly forbidden.

The only defendant present was poor Hugo, who was subjected to intense questioning and weighty accusations.

Witnesses were called, including an injured war veteran who alleged that the Heinemann business had supplied him with inferior goods. The newspaper reports and headlines made

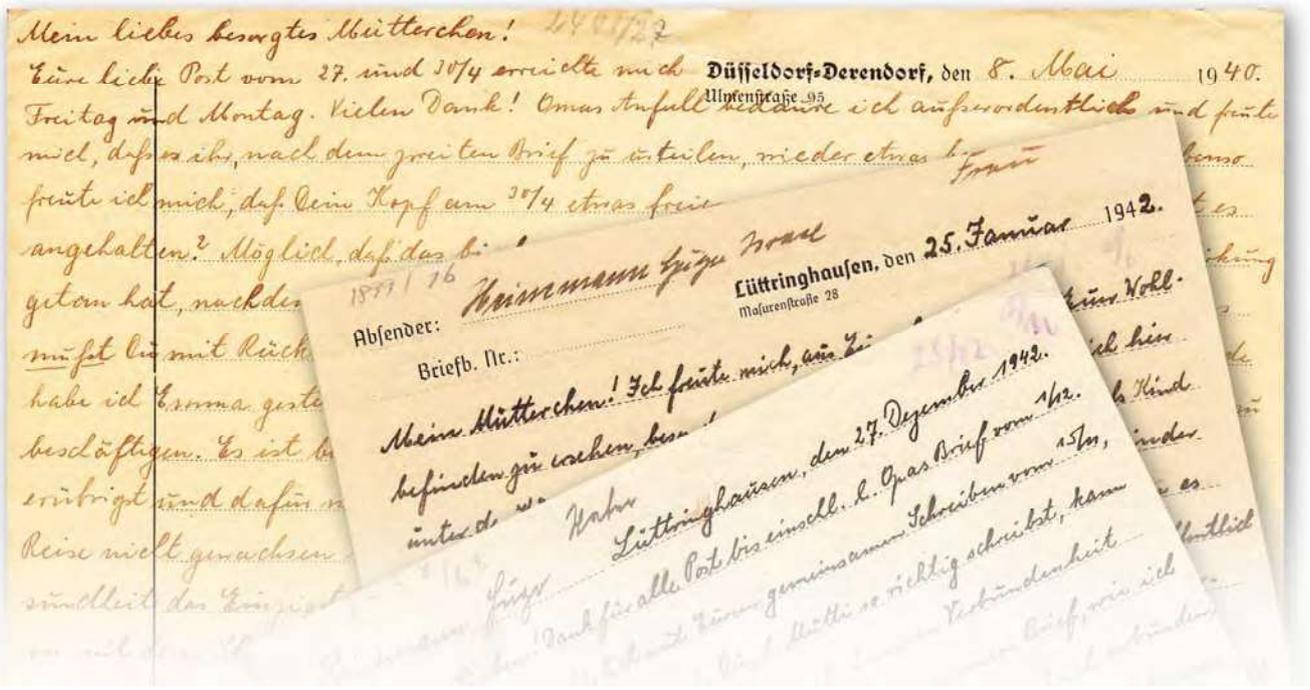
sensational reading. Joseph writes in his memoirs "the proceedings were nothing but the performance of a Jewish spectacle for the benefit of the Nazis. The verdict had been written before the hearing began".

Hugo was of course convicted as were the two other brothers, Fritz and Walter, *in absentia*.

The sentences handed down were as follows:

- Fritz was sentenced to 8 years in prison, fined RM 750,000 and costs of RM 550,000
- Walter was sentenced to 5 years in prison, fined 600,000 and costs of RM 550,000
- Hugo was sentenced to 5 years in prison, fined 600,000 and costs of RM 550,000

These fines and costs amounted to RM 3.6 million (in 1940 this would equate roughly to US\$ 1.4 million). Using a US dollar inflation calculator this same amount would equate very roughly to US\$ 23 million in 2014. An incredible amount of money!



Hugo Heinemann wrote at least 41 letters from prison

Hugo was immediately imprisoned. From May 1940, he was incarcerated in Derendorf Prison, Dusseldorf and in December 1940, transferred to Lüttringhausen Prison, Remscheid. Hugo wrote at least 41 letters from prison to Gustl and the girls. The last letter was dated 27 December 1942, some 6 weeks before he was murdered at Auschwitz Concentration Camp on 16th February 1943.



World War II commenced in September 1939 and on 5th May 1940 the Germans demanded safe passage for their army to march through Holland. This was refused and suddenly Germany was at war for a short period with Holland where Joseph and Walter were sheltering. The Dutch army surrendered in the summer of 1940.

Nazi laws were imposed throughout Holland as the grip on Jews tightened further. Joseph and Walter had to wear yellow stars to denote their Jewish status. On 10th September 1941 all Jewish

assets were confiscated. Walter was arrested, later released, then re-arrested and eventually deported to Westerbork, a transit camp in Northern Holland.

On arrival in England in 1939, Eve's parents, Fritz and Trude, settled in Northwood. After the outbreak of war, they evacuated to Boar's Hill, Oxford, to escape the German bombing of London. There, Fritz became a partner in a small market garden business which not only fed the family but brought in a modest income. Soon, however, Fritz and family found themselves in England as German 'Enemy Aliens'. Fritz was arrested and interned on 16th May 1940 and taken to Onchan Internment Camp in Douglas on the Isle of Man, a small island situated between England and Ireland.



Trude wrote an impassioned appeal to the Under Secretary of State at the Home Office the following week but it was to no avail. Owing to the impending danger of invasion, the Government was arranging to transport some of the internees to Canada and Australia. At first there was a possibility of the family being able to leave England for Australia but within a few weeks, Trude and the two children, Eve and Claud, were also interned. They were taken to The Hydro, a well-known hotel in Port Erin, also on the Isle of Man, which had been commandeered as an internment camp. The Isle of Man was considered suitable as it was well away from the East coast of England which was heavily fortified and where plans were afoot to repel any German invaders. Trude wrote frequent letters to Fritz (now Fred) in English and signing affectionately in her pet-name of 'Mucki'.

In his record at Onchan Internment Camp, Fritz gives the following reasons for requesting permission to remain in Britain "I urge to stay in this country because we lived together with our

British mother [Minnie Stern, Trude's mother] and grandmother [Matilda Stern née Berliner]. Her husband [Immanuel Stern] died only 4 month [sic] ago and it would mean a great hardship to her if we were sent overseas. My daughter [Eve] was at Northwood College and a Girl Guide. The boy [Claud] at St Martin's School and my wife and children and I sincerely hope not to be separated. I am a Jewish refugee, from Nazi oppression, registered at Jewish Ref [sic] Committee No 36827/7. Left Germany in 1935 for Holland afraid of an invasion of Holland. Came here in April 1939. I registered for National Service and as a blood donor at Mt Vernon Hospital. My mother [sic] and her relatives, all British, are ready to give any guarantee required. I signed War Loan and War Savings Certificate (£3,500.-.-). If so desired, I would be prepared to open the factory for steril [sic] medical gut and to do useful work."

Meanwhile at Westerbork, Fritz's brother, Walter Heinemann, was given a 2 or 3 day pass to enable him to visit his father, Joseph, in Holland from time to time. This was quite a concession given the strictness of rule. The regime in Westerbork was hard and accommodation was very overcrowded.

Joseph remained in the town of Baarn with Trude Kircheimer who became Walter's second wife. They married during one of his home visits in May or June 1942. Then Joseph was given an order to report to Westerbork transit camp with Trude on 18th January 1943. Sadly, both Walter and Trude suffered a similar fate to Hugo and were murdered at Auschwitz Concentration Camp on 6th and 8th October 1944 respectively.

Eve's grandfather, Joseph Heinemann, was eventually transferred from Westerbork to the infamous Theresienstadt Concentration Camp despite his advanced years. Miraculously he survived, albeit in the camp hospital, until the camp was liberated at the end of the war. It is well documented that the sick and elderly who were unable to work were almost all murdered.

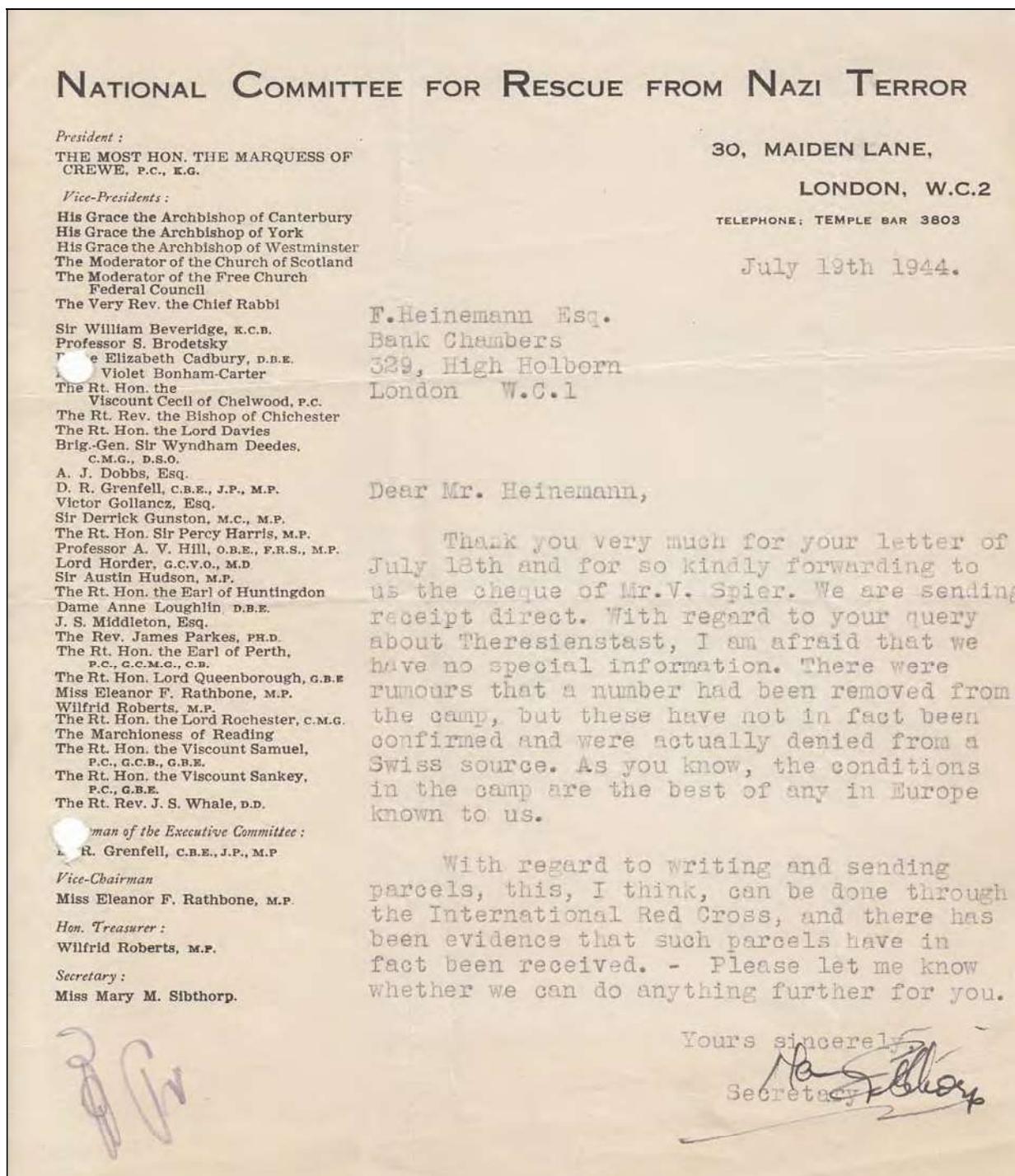
After liberation, Joseph became a Displaced Person until his grand-daughter, Lotti (Hugo's daughter), who worked for a Jewish refugee organisation (American JOINT Committee) saw his name on a list of camp survivors and went to look for him. She found him wondering around outside the hospital in Amsterdam, still dressed in his striped concentration camp pyjamas, clutching two spoons which were his sole possessions in the camp. He was a tall but emaciated man with a shaven head.



Joseph Heinemann's spoons used in Theresienstadt Concentration Camp

Jews who were able to leave Germany initially received little and eventually no news of loved ones whom they had to leave behind. It seems incredible to comprehend that even the British Government, through their own intelligence, the Red Cross and various goodwill organisations never

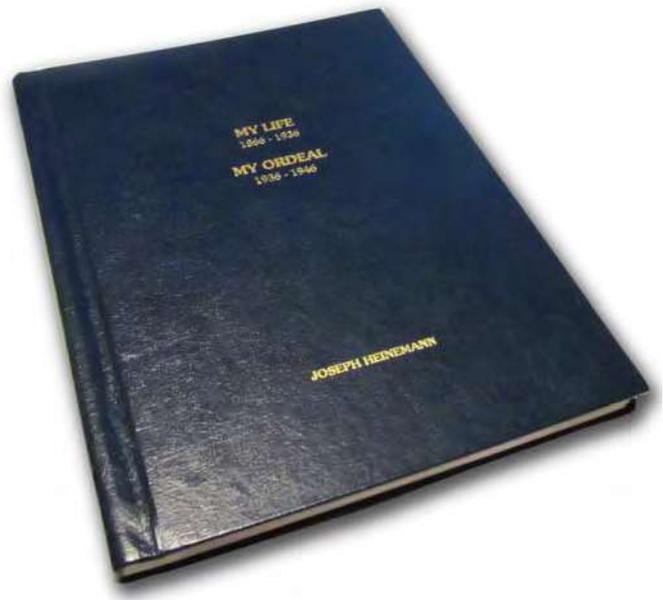
publicly admitted that they were becoming increasingly aware of the atrocities being perpetrated by the Nazi regime in Europe. The following letter was received by Fred Heinemann in July 1944 from the National Committee for Rescue from Nazi Terror and seeks to reassure him that the conditions in Theresienstadt Concentration Camp "are the best of any in Europe known to us"!



Joseph Heinemann was duly reunited with his son, Fritz, in England and ended his days in a retirement home where he completed two books, *Meine Leben 1866 - 1936* (My Life 1866 - 1936) and *Mein Erleben 1936 - 1946* (My Ordeal 1936 - 1946). These were drafted by hand in German and the manuscripts sent to Joseph's former secretary in Dusseldorf for typing. Only five copies were produced, the maximum number possible using carbon paper.



*Joseph Heinemann
1st January 1946 still in
hospital in Amsterdam
looking rather gaunt*



*Joseph Heinemann's book:
My Life 1866 - 1936 and
My Ordeal 1936 - 1946
now translated into English*

After Joseph's death in London in 1951, the five copies were bound into hard leather copies. The books were dedicated to Joseph's beloved wife, Henriette, and their three sons, Fritz, Walter and Hugo.

In 1966, Eve's second cousin, Mark Levy of Santa Monica, California, a grandson of Joseph Heinemann's sister Minna, visited the Heinemanns in London with his family. They were shown a copy of Joseph's books but were unable to read German, as their family had lived in America for three generations.

Mark Levy, together with Henry (originally Heinz) Straus of Chicago, whose mother, Sophie, was the daughter of Joseph's brother, Hermann, had the books professionally translated and reprinted in English. With their kind permission this has now been digitised.

The books, now combined into a single volume, are very readable and detail the family home and Joseph's life in Königheim, information about his parents and ancestors, some basic family trees and of course his life story including his time in Westerbork and Theresienstadt.

Things were not all that straight forward at the end of the war either. Not only did the family deeply mourn the loss of Walter and Hugo Heinemann, but the surviving brother, Fred (formerly Fritz), incredibly found that the German judgments against him and his two brothers remained in force and he was not able to return to his native Germany without being arrested and imprisoned!

He therefore consulted with lawyers to attempt to appeal the case against them. In all, this took 12 years and it was not until January 1958, in Dusseldorf Criminal Court No 1, that Fred was fully acquitted and was able to clear his name, together with those of his murdered brothers. The German court agreed that the State would pay all costs.

Once again, the Dusseldorf newspapers were full of headlines about the Heinemann family - but this time it was all about Fritz's acquittal!

It was only then that Fred was able to begin a major claim for restitution of assets seized under duress by the Nazi regime. Sadly, there was also some dispute resulting from the restitution claim, where the families of the deceased brothers did not trust the surviving brother with regard to sharing the proceeds of the restitution.



Joseph Heinemann was born in Koenigheim in 1866 and married Henriette Gugenheim of Zweibrücken in Dusseldorf in 1891. Joseph's book documents the family home in which he was born and grew up and contains some information about his parents, Marum Heinemann and Rosa née Metzger who came from Berlichingen.



*Joseph Heinemann
1866 - 1951*



*Henriette Heinemann née Gugenheim
1866 - 1933*



*Marum Heinemann
1835 - 1905*



*Rosa Heinemann née Metzger
1836 - 1907*



Postcard from Joseph Heinemann in Königheim (possibly on a visit) dated 1905:
 Dear Fritz, please receive warmest greetings from your father. Remember to keep your promise, be good and take care of your mother. You are the oldest child and you know what your duties are. This is your father's wish.

More About Eve's Family

During the war, Eve attended St Helen's & St Catherine's School for Girls in Abingdon. This was a well reputed private Catholic school and Eve strenuously resisted the attempts to convert her to Catholicism. Eve and I attended the school's 90th anniversary in the mid 1990s. Old girls attended this celebration from all over the world. Several remembered Eve who had been the tallest girl in her class.



*Baby Eve with
her mother
Trude Heinemann
née Stern*

Eve's brother Claud (originally Klaus) was born in 1932 in Dusseldorf. In England, he attended the Dragon Preparatory School and later Merchant Taylor's Public School. He was very tall and played rugby for the school.



The Hydro at Port Erin, Isle of Man

In May 2008, Eve and I flew to the Isle of Man to research and to revisit the places of internment. We were able to see the internment camp record cards for Eve, Claud and Trude Heinemann but unfortunately the records from the male camp, Onchan Internment Camp, had been destroyed in error. We were also made aware and shown evidence of the friction which existed between the Jewish internees and the captured Nazis who were initially housed together, since the Government did not distinguish between them!

We visited the hotels in Onchen and Port Erin where the family had stayed and although this was 68 years later, the buildings still existed but had been converted to apartments.



*Claud Heinemann
who passed away
6th May 2010
in Northwood*

After the war, the family moved back to Northwood and, even while dealing with his appeal against the German sentence, Fred re-launched the original sausage casings business. This was based on natural animal products such as sheep and pig gut. Tennis racket and musical instrument strings as well as medical sutures were all made from animal gut. Today, all these items including sausage casings are made principally from plastics, edible or not!

The original fledgling business in Germany had involved Fred and his brothers visiting the slaughter houses of Düsseldorf in the early hours of the morning with a hand barrow to purchase and collect the raw gut, which they subsequently cleaned and packed into wooden barrels of brine to preserve them.

In London quite some years later, the business was based at Smithfield Market and Fred bought and sold barrels of various types and sizes of gut without personally handling the materials. The business however grew to be a small global business, F. Heinemann & Son Limited, which Eve's brother Claud ran on his own after Fred's death in 1993.

Sadly, as machine produced plastic casings took over, this business diminished although Claud later added specialist butchers knives and ancillary products to the range until his retirement.

Eve's mother, Gertrud(e) known as Trude (née Stern) was born in Dusseldorf in 1906. Her parents, Imanuel Stern and Minnie Stern née Stern, were first cousins, something which was quite acceptable at that time.



*Minnie and Imanuel Stern
on their wedding day
in 1904*

Eve's grandfather, Imanuel Stern was born in 1873 in Holzminden, the son of Joel Stern and Johanna née Klestadt (whose family were from Ossendorf and Büren).



*Joel Stern
1834 - 1888*



*Johanna Stern née Kle(e)stadt
1840 - 1917*

Eve's grandmother, Minnie Stern was born in 1885 in London, the daughter of Bendix Stern (born in Holzminden) and Matilda née Berliner (born in London).

Joel and Bendix Stern were brothers. Joel eventually moved to Elberfeld, a suburb of Düsseldorf where he was a merchant and a respected member of the Jewish community. Records show that he and Johanna are buried in Elberfeld, although Johanna's gravestone is no longer evident.



Grave of Joel Stern
1834 - 1888
in Elberfeld

Joel's 100th birthday would have been on in 1934 and his children, Immanuel, Gerson, Aurelie Weyl and Moritz (Moses) gathered to remember him and composed the following (here translated):

**In remembrance of our loving father
Joel Stern
1834 - 20th March - 1934**

*A century, a drop of time!
This day commemorates you, father!
Towering mortals are praised with an obituary,
Commemorating the day on every page (of the obituary).
But your greatness was in your nobility of spirit
A person so good, of integrity, spotless
So respectful, so uncompromising in his inner values
That we think of him today with great respect, he who bestowed upon us honour
By being our father and an unerring role model.
And as he lies by God, dear father and soul,
So we know, bound to you in silent love,
That you have surely found mercy at the hands of God.
We thank and think of you and wish to strive
To live our lives according to your intention and spirit.
So that all is well, be a role model and a counsellor
And bless us from high above, dear father!*

Your grateful children

Bendix Stern was originally a watchmaker and jewellery dealer in Hamburg. He moved to London and founded B. Stern & Co, a textile import company. He lived at 22 Lordship Terrace, Stoke Newington.

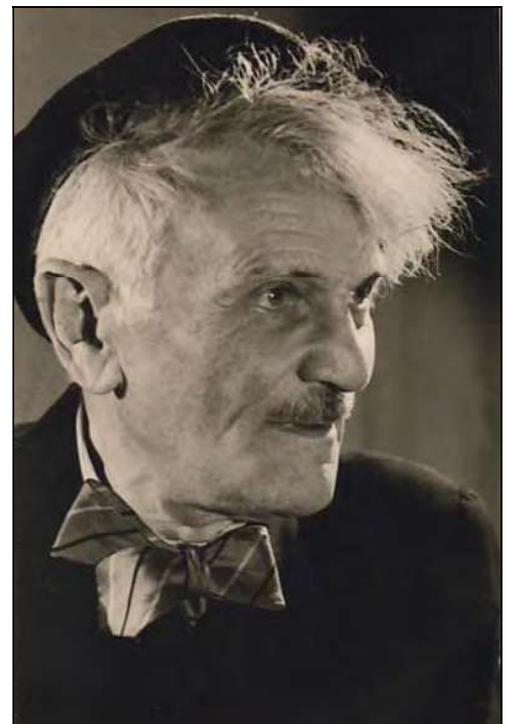
Another family member, Gerson Stern (Junior), was a brother of Imanuel Stern. He lived in Kiedrich, Germany and later moved to Jerusalem with his son, also named Joel Stern and his wife, Erna née Schwarz. Gerson was a prolific poet and writer of some note (see Bibliography). The Leo Baeck Institute in New York holds an original of *Chronik der Familie Stern aus Holzminden*, (Stern Family Chronicle) written by Gerson Stern.

This chronicle was written in 1933 as a description of family life in Kiedrich. It contains copies of photos and of a letter by Gerson Stern to his son on the occasion of his Barmitzvah. The Stern family history describes how the two brothers, Itzig and Abraham, were the first Jews to be granted permission to settle in Holzminden, Lower Saxony in 1722. Gerson's legacy is preserved in the Jewish National University Library in Jerusalem.

Gerson's son, Joel, was only 25 years old when he was killed in the Israeli War of Independence in Jerusalem in 1948. Following his father, Joel was also a writer and poet but so far as we are aware he was not published. Our family though, has a copy of a hand typed collection put together by his father following his son's death. Gerson's brother-in-law, born Walter Schwarz, became the famous Israeli botanist, Professor Michael Evenari (1904 – 1989). He was born in Metz, France and made a major contribution to irrigation technology and was awarded the Israel Prize in 1986 in recognition of his research work.



*Kiedrich, home of Gerson Stern and his
Wife Erna née Schwarz*



*Gerson Stern
1874 - 1956*



*Family photo dated 1910 (believed to be) Left to Right:
 Johanna Stern née Klestadt, Bendix Stern, Gerson Stern Senior (seated - the Uncle of Gerson Junior),
 Minnie Stern née Stern, Matila Stern née Berliner, Imanuel Stern, Aurelie Weyl née Stern (sister of Imanuel)*

Trude's grandmother, Matilda Stern née Berliner, born 1847 in London was the daughter of Hermann (later Henry) Berliner of Herford, Germany who came to London in the 1840s, settled in Worship Street and later became President of the German Synagogue (later known as the Spital Square Synagogue), a position he held for 26 years. His obituary in the Jewish Chronicle in January 1902 also states that "he gave the impetus to the establishment of the Federation of Synagogues".



Hermann (Henry) Berliner and his wife Caroline née Rosenbaum are buried at Plashet Jewish Cemetery in the East End of London,

Mr. HENRY BERLINER.

An unobtrusively pious Jew passed away on the 26th ult. by the somewhat sudden death of Mr. Henry Berliner, of Worship Street, Finsbury. Although he had been in failing health for some time, there was no apprehension on the part of his family that death was so imminent. Mr. Berliner was seventy-eight years of age, and was a native of Herford in Westphalia. He lived in London sixty years, nearly fifty of which were spent in the same house in Worship Street, where he was engaged in business. His geniality, modesty and kindness of heart won him the esteem of the Jewish German colony in London, which was identified with the old German Synagogue in New Broad Street, now located in Spital Square, during the many years that Mr. Berliner was connected with its management. To that synagogue Mr. Berliner was devoted heart and soul, and its honorary officers and members gladly welcomed the opportunity offered by his golden wedding, which occurred on February 21st, 1897, to present him with a tangible recognition of their value of his disinterested services. The testimonial took the form of a gold Kiddush Cup and an illuminated address, of which the following are the opening passages:—



Mr. HENRY BERLINER.

~~The many good services you have rendered to our synagogue and congregation; your upright and kind manner and zealous efforts to promote its welfare during the last twenty-five years, have won for you the high esteem of the whole Jewish community. As a friend, a good citizen, a true Jew, and an excellent President, you have gained golden opinions and that fair fame that crowns the worker of good deeds.~~

Mr. Berliner gave the impetus to the establishment of the Federation of Synagogues, and though not officially connected with any institution other than the German Synagogue, he was a contributor to most of the Jewish charities, and was equally generous in his private benevolence. Fully two hundred persons were present in Worship Street on Sunday, when the body was removed for interment in the Plashet Cemetery. Mr. Berliner leaves a widow and several children to mourn the loss of an exemplary husband and father.

A wonderful obituary (reproduced courtesy of The Jewish Chronicle Archives)

Disturbances at a Synagogue.

RIVAL BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT.

"INDECENT SQUABBLES."

Before Mr. Justice Romer, in the Chancery Division, on Tuesday, Mr. H. S. Preston, K.C., appearing for Jacob Berliner and others, claiming to be the Board of Management of the German Synagogue, Spital Square, moved for an injunction to restrain defendants, Aaron Gold and Isaac Becker, from interfering with plaintiffs' possession of the synagogue or from excluding them from the premises.

Mr. Preston said that the plaintiffs wanted possession of the synagogue. He said an attempt was made of the plaintiffs from which it

Henry Berliner's son, Jacob, took over the role of President of the German Synagogue some time following the death of his father. In his official capacity, he was embroiled in a quarrel which reached its climax before Mr Justice Romer in the Chancery Division in August 1923, when the court granted an injunction restraining certain members of the Board of Management from interfering with synagogue activities. Quoting from the Jewish Chronicle of 9th August 1923, *"it appeared that there had been a dispute about the future management of the synagogue, which culminated in the fixing of a notice to the door of the synagogue on Sunday July 15th, 1923, stating that there would be no meeting that day and that the synagogue was closed so as to avoid a breach of the peace."* and *"It was alleged that the defendants in the evening of this day broke the front gate open, forced the doors and took possession of the synagogue."* It seems that at the same time the defendants removed the Register of Marriages but they later gave the court an undertaking to permit two marriages which had already been arranged. The Judge said *"I cannot have these squabbles going on. It would be most indecent that every Sabbath there should be a fracas at the doors."*



My darling wife, Eve

A Move, Our Travels and the Final Chapter of Loblite

In 1991, our children had long since left home and Eve and I decided that our home in Gosforth with four bedrooms was too large for our needs. After some searching, we found a flat some 500 metres from our old home. Our new living accommodation is all on one level. The property is situated within walking distance of shops making life much easier for us. First though, we had to downsize which involved quite a lot of consolidation and trips to the charity shop in order to fit our possessions into a smaller space!

Then, in 1994 I was approached by a gentleman who came to see me on the pretext of selling me his consultancy services. However, during the course of our conversation he enquired as to my future intentions for the company.

I told him that I was waiting for someone to make me an offer that I could not refuse!

Three months later, he returned with his partner, an investor, saying that they were interested in purchasing Loblite Limited. I was sixty eight years old and had not really thought about retiring as I still enjoyed running my own business.

After negotiation, they seemed keen to buy the business and I then consulted with other family shareholders. The purchasers offered a price which our company accountants deemed fair, they carried out extensive *due diligence* enquiries and the business was sold.



At first, I acted as a consultant for a few days per week but my six month contract was terminated after three months as the purchasers claimed to know how to run the business.

To my great surprise, after running the business for forty two years, I was very happy to stand down and have additional time for family, travelling and voluntary work - and to no longer have the pressures of running a business. During my years at the helm of Loblite I took minimal holiday - usually only two weeks twice a year.

Now Eve and I were free to travel when and where we pleased. One of the first priorities was to visit my brother Bill. After the war, in the summer of 1946, Bill returned to Germany as a Lieutenant in the *US Army Counter Intelligence Corps* where he met and fell in love with an intelligent and attractive lady named Baroness Alix de Marees. Her family had escaped the post war division of Germany into East Germany and her father, a forester, had to abandon his land as it was absorbed by the Communist regime. They married on 1st March 1949 and settled in Kansas City, USA where Bill left the Army having attained the rank of Captain and worked for the *US Steel Corporation* selling small diesel engines.

Their son Mark Loebel was born in 1953. He became an industrial chemist but was sadly killed in a road accident in New Jersey in 1980.

Bill's marriage with Alix was dissolved in 1958 and he married Helen McCarton in 1959. Bill worked for various major companies as sales and export manager, moving to New Jersey and eventually settling in Chanhassen near Minneapolis where he worked for Cargill, the largest privately owned international company in the world.



*Helen née McCarton
with my brother
Bill Loebel circa 1960*

Bill contracted thyroid cancer and predeceased his wife in 2004. He was buried in Minneapolis with full military honours.



*The Colour Guard
at Bill's funeral*

Eve and I regularly visited the United States of America and always endeavoured to spend a few days with Helen and Bill. We also visited family members around the US and elsewhere.



*Our visit with Helen and Bill in
Chanhassen, Minneapolis,
USA in 1979*

Over the years, we were able to spend holidays in every Western European country including Turkey, Greece and the small principalities of Andorra, Lichtenstein and Campione. After the Iron Curtain was lifted in 1990, we also explored Hungary, the Czech Republic and Russia.

Although flying and cruising was not well developed during our younger years when we also did not have much money, we visited a number of relatives in the USA. Stefan and Margot Fried in Kansas City and Dayton, Lygia Fried, cousin Rainer's widow in Omaha, Tom and Ruth Zimmer as well as Erika and Ralph Steinberger in New York, Mark and Peachy Levy, Morelle and Norman Levine and my friend Harry Schiller in Los Angeles, Marshall and Mary Lasky in Washington, DC, Rolf Heinemann and Moses Lasky in San Francisco.

We visited Israel a number of times between 1966 and 2011. It was wonderful to meet members of both Eve's and my family and to join in some of their celebrations. The progress made in that small country is astonishing to say the least, particularly as it is under constant verbal and physical attack from so many quarters.



*On holiday with Pamela
and Werner Loyal*

My first cousin Werner Loyal (originally Löbl) who had settled in Israel and married an English lady named Pamela Sabel, was on the Board of FIABCI (Fédération Internationale des Administrateurs de Biens Conseils et Agents Immobiliers). He and Pamela invited us to join them on some of the FIABCI conferences around the world, which offered local sightseeing and social functions alongside the business meetings. Later, Pamela, a high-level Scrabble player, also invited us to join her tournaments in various parts of the world.

We always found Pamela and Werner to be wonderful travelling companions, whether in Norway, Croatia, Morocco or Ireland - to name only a few of our destinations. Sometimes they visited us in Newcastle or we joined them either in London or in Israel for special family occasions. Werner and I participated in similar voluntary activities. We were both Rotarians, had been Presidents of our respective Rotary Clubs, had been awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship for services to Rotary and were founders and presidents of Reform Synagogues in Jerusalem and Newcastle.

We also did some island hopping by visiting or spending holidays on Crete and Cyprus, some smaller Greek islands as well as Caribbean islands at various times.

Long-haul holidays included a trip to Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok to celebrate our 30th Wedding Anniversary and a trip to South Africa and its fantastic game reserves. Our longest time away from home was a wonderful five week tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1997.

Of all the trips we made to Europe, our favourite destination was Switzerland where we enjoyed walking the mountain trails in summer time and skiing in the winter. Nothing was more pleasurable than skiing with our grandchildren, Joel, Jenna, Harry and Max. On one of our holidays in Wengen, we met a Swiss couple in our hotel and our friendship endured over twenty further skiing holidays in different Swiss resorts.

Wherever possible we combined our travels with visits to relatives scattered around the world, in countries which had saved their lives, by granting them entry visas when they fled Germany during the Nazi era.

After the sale of Loblite and my retirement, I was frequently called upon by various organisations to talk about the *Team Valley Trading Estate* and engineering apprenticeships. As previously mentioned, I greatly valued my own apprenticeship at *Sigmund Pumps*. I had always enjoyed training and teaching young engineering apprentices at Loblite and so I was pleased to be able to contribute to the revival of an initiative to increase opportunities for apprenticeships. This came about when the Government eventually recognised that not every young person was suited to undertake an academic degree at university.

One day in 2006, when driving with a friend through Team Valley Trading Estate, I was deeply upset to see my old factory buildings standing empty and brandishing large 'For Sale' signs. I subsequently discovered that Loblite Limited had gone into liquidation.

We have always been keen to keep in touch with family and close friends and to celebrate special milestones. In January 2008, we celebrated Eve's 80th birthday with a splendid afternoon tea in London. Over 40 people attended including friends from before Eve and I had met!

In February 2011, I received an invitation to attend the opening of a £6 million brand new Skill Centre on Team Valley Trading Estate and was truly surprised and delighted when I was asked by the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear to unveil the opening plaque and to see my name on the plaque as the official opener.



*At the opening of the Gateshead College Skill Centre
with a group of former Sigmund apprentices*

Later that year on a beautiful sunny September Sunday, we celebrated my 85th birthday with lunch for over fifty family members and friends in Newcastle. We were delighted that quite a number of attendees travelled from London and Eve's cousin Lotti even came from Brussels.



My 85th Birthday celebrated at Jesmond Dene House Hotel in 2011

Our diamond wedding anniversary (60 years) was celebrated in February 2013 with a small lunch party in London followed a few weeks later with a Friday evening meal at Monica and Gerald's home and a special *Kiddush* at the Newcastle Reform Synagogue on *Shabbat* morning.



A message from a very special old friend!

Despite the hurdles encountered during our lives, we can reflect on some very happy times, quite a number of significant achievements and, we hope, some fitting legacies for following generations.



Eve and I celebrating our Diamond Wedding Anniversary and Eve's 85th birthday in 2013



Eve and I keeping fit at the local gym - we even made the local newspapers

Sadly, another Loebel family reunion arose in February 2014 for the sad purpose of the stone setting of my cousin, Dr Herbert Loebel OBE.



Herbert (Gamliel ben Refael ha'Levi) was buried at Heaton Cemetery, Newcastle upon Tyne, near to his parents, Robert and Marie Loebel



Left to Right are: Sam Baker, Anna Baker, Eve Loble, Gideon Todes, me, Joseph Grabiner, Daniel Grabiner, Sarah Grabiner, Stephen Grabiner, Miriam Grabiner née Loebel, Naomi Baker née Loebel, (behind Naomi) Andrew Rankin, Kate Baker, Eva Schapira (Ronnie's widow), Professor Robert (Toby) Bud, Dr Kurt Schapira, David Baker, Monica Stern née Loble, Gerald Stern

Researching our Ancestors

Originally, it was my first cousin, Dr Herbert Loebel OBE, who fastidiously carried out research into our shared paternal great grandparents Löbl, Lilling, Schloss and Bamberger long before the invention of the internet. More recently my son-in-law, Gerald Stern, has spent countless hours, not only building on Herbert's work but also broadening our knowledge to include my maternal great grandparents Fried, Bachmann, Tuchmann and Reitzenberger. Gerald has also done extensive research into Eve's family.

Even with the assistance of the internet, this is a huge, complex and virtually never ending task. Hardly a month goes by without Gerald discovering a new third, fourth or fifth cousin. This research has been supplemented and greatly enhanced by exchanging information with newly discovered *mishpacha* (family) and field trips to the areas where our ancestors lived, including visits to the old Jewish cemeteries. Sadly many of the gravestones are, through the passage of time, now badly eroded and difficult to read but I wanted to share with you some of the amazing graves of my family which we have been able to locate and photograph. Through visiting these graves and the towns and villages where these ancestors lived, I have derived a sense of connection with these individuals, most of whom I never knew personally.



Grave in Bamberg of my grandfather, Hugo Löbl (ha'Levi) 1857 - 1929 and memorial to my grandmother Karolina Löbl Née Schloss, who perished in Treblinka. Pictured with my son Peter and grandsons Harry and Max Loble



*William Fried 1852 - 1916
my grandfather and memorial
to my grandmother*



*David Bachmann 1792 - 1859, my
great great grandfather*



*Seligmann Bamberger 1803 - 1881, my
great great grandfather*



*Hedwig Bachmann née Reitzenberger
1843 - 1920, my great grandmother*



*Heinemann Reitzenberger 1800 -1881,
my great great grandfather*



*Jette Reitzenberger née Tuchmann
1813 - 1886, my great great
grandmother*



*Fanny Schloss née Bamberger 1834 -
1911, my great grandmother*



*Moritz Schloss (ha'Levi) 1831 - 1900
my great grandfather*



*Isaak ben Matsiyahu ha'Levi (Schloss)
1747 - 1832, my great great great
grandfather*



*Simon Fried 1808 - 1881,
my great grandfather*

*Hanna Fried née Neuburger 1814 - 1892,
my great grandmother*



*Marx Tuchmann (ha'Levi) 1774 - 1850,
my great great great grandfather*

*Marianne Tuchmann née Engelmann 1780 - 1858,
my great great great grandmother*



*Moses Fried 1771 - 1845, my great great grandfather
Left to Right: Max, me, Peter and Harry Loble*

Boys and Toys

My brothers and I developed a great interest in motorised transport at an early age when we were living in Bamberg. It was probably due to our father's chauffeur, Arthur Schlichtig, who permitted us to drive the three-wheeled, two-stroke *Goliath* around the factory yard. This was a small vehicle with a cab and open platform at the back, used to carry materials from one part of the works to another.

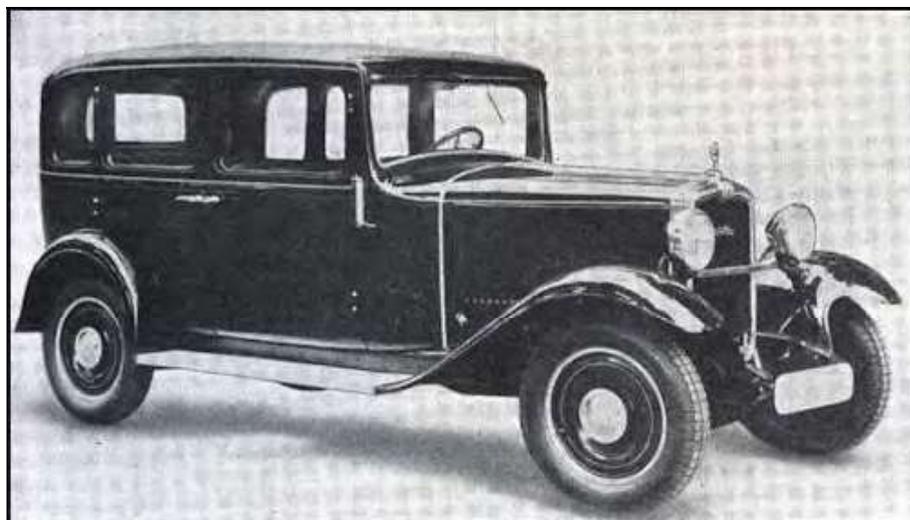


A Goliath truck similar to the one described

My brother, Willi, who used to cycle to the factory where he was an apprentice, was given a 125cc *Triumph* moped. He was permitted to ride it on the public roads, but Ronnie and I were too young. We therefore practiced in our garden, riding around the circular rose bed!

Neither our father nor uncles were able to drive, so they had chauffeurs. As Arthur usually had Sundays off, all five of us went out on our bicycles. In the summer this was usually for a ride or picnic in the *Hauptsmoor Wald*, a large forest to the North of the town.

The first family car I can remember was a large brown *Brennabor*, which was followed by a maroon *Fiat*. This car had no door posts for easy access. The front and rear doors were secured near the floor and roof and the back had 'dickie seats' (drop down) like in a London *Black Cab*.



A Brennabor

Arthur became the senior Nazi employee for the company and occasionally just told my father that he was taking the car away "on manoeuvres". We could not tell whether this was true or whether he just used the car for his own pleasure, but one did not argue with an important Nazi official. Arthur was the typical Nazi functionary, being not too bright but full of self-importance through his affiliation with the Nazi Party. After the war, he ran a book shop in the *Theater Platz*.

The two members of the family who did drive were our Aunts Marie (Uncle Robert's wife) and Friedl (Uncle Sali's wife). They were very modern ladies! Aunt Friedl drove a DKW (derived from *Dampf-Kraft-Wagen* - literally a steam driven car), but popularly known as Deutscher Kinder Wagen or German baby carriage. It was a convertible cabriolet style vehicle and had a plywood body covered with *Rexene*, an artificial leather cloth fabric.



A DKW convertible of the 1930s

Aunt Marie had a small Mercedes-Benz for only a few months, before it was confiscated by the Nazis; because she was Jewish and not because of her erratic driving! She once put her foot on the accelerator instead of the brake in her garage and drove right through the wall. On another occasion, she saw her sister, Antonie Grausmann née Rosenfelder, walking along the *Hainstrasse*, waved to her and inadvertently crashed into one of the ancient horse-chestnut trees. This removed a large section of bark and was visible for a long time after the accident for all to see! Aunt Marie's driving continued to cause comment until she stopped driving at almost ninety years of age!

I do not know how my father got to know the British Vice-Consul in Munich. He was, as was usual at the time, collecting intelligence at the consulate and was trying to visit a number of strategic places around the German border. As he would have been conspicuous with his CD (Corps Diplomatique) plated car, my father lent him our own car with a local number plate. In return for this service, the Vice-Consul wrote the letter of support for our application to enter the United Kingdom which was mentioned earlier.

We did not have any cars in Gateshead until after the war. Firstly we could not afford one and secondly, as Germans, we were not permitted to have one. Thirdly of course, none of us had a driving licence!

Ronnie was able to buy a second-hand Triumph 250cc motorbike on which he travelled to work at the Bren Manufacturing Company Limited. He had goggles and a leather jacket, but no helmet of any kind, as these were not yet required by law or even considered desirable.

The first car which Ronnie and I bought together was a second-hand Vauxhall 12/6 which had leather upholstery and was in near perfect condition. We bought it from an elderly gentleman living in Jesmond, a suburb of Newcastle. He stored it, raised on blocks, throughout the war and he was by then too old to drive. The reference 12/6 meant that the engine developed 12 horsepower from 6 cylinders. Most cars of that size had 4 cylinder engines, but 6 cylinders gave a smoother, more balanced performance.

We later exchanged this for a Hillman Minx with a sun roof. This was very elegant for the time! Of course, the roof was wound back and forth by a handle and not by any kind of electric motor.

One summer, around 1949, Ronnie and I returned to Bamberg to attend to some business with Lindner GmbH. Whilst we were there, we bought a 1.7 litre Mercedes-Benz. This was the same as the pre-war model. It came in any colour, so long as it was black, and we drove it all the way home to Newcastle by road and re-registered it with a local number plate. Ronnie used this left-hand drive vehicle most of the time as I was working in London.

During the years 1952 and 1953, when Ronnie was running Loblite Limited and I was his understudy, the company had no car, so we used our own and when one of us was away travelling on business, the other took the mail to the post office on foot at the end of each day.

The first car the Company bought was a Hillman Husky. This was a very small and relatively inexpensive three-door vehicle, ideal for the business. The company only had one car for many years, which we and our families all shared at weekends.

When we felt that we could just about afford a new car, we discovered that the delivery lead-time was two years! We ordered a *Ford Consul* from R. H. Patterson, a well known local dealer. After two years our *Ford Consul*, also in the obligatory colour of black, was delivered and we had our first post-war car, which I recall had the registration PVK 292. This had the latest *steering column mounted gear shift* and as a result, was fitted with a front bench seat with space for the driver and two passengers.

Some years later, we each required and could by then afford our own car. When Ronnie's Multiple Sclerosis deteriorated so that he could no longer drive (around 1960), his wife, Eva, took driving lessons. Over the years, the company cars included a *Morris Cowley* saloon, a *Humber Hawk*, a *Mark II Jaguar* and a *Daimler Sovereign*, a 3-litre *Fiat*, two *Volvo* saloons in succession and a 3-litre 6-cylinder *Peugeot 603*. Most of the cars I drove had to have a large boot (trunk), as I used to go on sales trips with a large assortment of sample electrical products or exhibition display boards mounted with our paint brush ferrules.

Loblite usually employed commission agents to sell our electrical products to wholesalers all over the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. However, there were a few years when we employed salesmen and we provided them with company cars. These were usually *Ford Anglia* or similar small estate cars (station wagons), in which they could carry a range of sample products.

We used the cars for business and paid for our private mileage, strictly in line with Inland Revenue rules. We even took the cars on holiday to mainland Europe. Later on we could afford to fly and rent a car as it was easier and safer to use a *left-hand drive* vehicle in Europe.

As there were no driving tests during the war, all new drivers used a 'provisional licence'. After the war, all people who had driven for more than five years without accident or conviction were entitled to full driving licenses. I was actually taught to drive by my brother Ronnie.

After I retired, I had time and felt that I should take an Advanced Driving Test, partly owing to younger people often decrying the ability of the older generation! It turned out that my instructor, Gordon Hunter, was married to one of my father's former secretaries, Eleanor Leiper. At the end of the course, I was tested by a police driving instructor and passed. However, this did not give me the cost advantages in insurance premiums or car rentals which I had hoped for. I did find the instruction in the latest methods of driving very useful and it cured me of a few bad habits acquired over many years, although I am ashamed to say that I received an endorsement for speeding in May 2002!

Recording a few interesting driving experiences over the years, I recall that in 1945 when my brother Bill was stationed in Europe with the United States Army, the three of us, Bill, Ronnie and I drove North to Scotland. Petrol (gas) was still rationed at that time and we did not have many petrol coupons. We arrived to spend the night at the Colquohoun Arms, a public house in a place called Luss on the West side of Loch Lomond. Mrs Colquohoun, the owner, saw us counting our coupons and offered us some petrol from the hotel's own pump. This was a generous gesture. When we were near Luss again in 2004, we stayed at the new 'Lodge on the Loch' and discovered that the owner was Mrs Colquohoun's grandson!

Just after the war, our family were driving to the Lake District for a short holiday in our Vauxhall 12/6. Suddenly steam started pouring out from under the bonnet (hood) as the engine had overheated. We stopped and found that the fan-belt had snapped. Being practical engineers, we relieved my mother of a pair of her nylon stockings which acted as a temporary fan-belt and enabled us to drive to the nearest garage, where in those days one could purchase spare parts including fan-belts.

Once, we were driving on a mountain pass between Italy and Switzerland when our *Mark II Jaguar* engine started to splutter. Not much fun on a steep pass with lots of S-bends. It was a very hot day and I remembered a conversation with another driver who had warned me about this problem. This was that due to the petrol evaporating in the tube from the tank to the carburettor because of heat build-up. The cure was to stop, wet a cloth with cold water from a nearby stream and wrap it around the petrol feed pipe. This made the petrol condense again and the engine ran smoothly after that.

Before motorways, the main A1 road from Newcastle to London ran through the centre of quite a number of towns. Peterborough was particularly difficult to negotiate on a horse race event day and the journey often took eight hours.

Then and Now

This chapter has been included to give an insight into the many changes which one could not have envisaged and which occurred during my lifetime.

Calculations

Centuries ago there was the counting frame or abacus, a wood frame with 10 rows of beads. Then came logarithmic (log) tables and the slide rule, all requiring some mental skill. Now we have calculators, spreadsheets and computers, so that we no longer need to use our brains for basic calculations!



Slide rule

Cars

Engines and gears were maintained either by motor mechanics or by the owner, using a printed maintenance manual supplied with the car. There were fewer cars on our roads. There were no motorways, no multi-storey car parks and grid locks were almost unheard of. One could always park a car immediately outside the shops on any High Street.

Communications

Gone are many of the iconic red telephone boxes on street corners. Some, but by no means all, private homes had a telephone which was at the end of a coiled wire, plugged into a socket. These have been replaced by a variety of mobile phones and other electronic devices, seemingly glued to the hand or permanently plugged into the ears of the younger generation. Time was, when one had to book in advance a telephone call abroad, which was rather expensive. Telephone numbers were short and prefixed by your location - for example *Gosforth 547*. People wrote letters rather than sending emails and they were posted in a red letter box bearing the crest of the monarch of the time. It was also customary to send picture postcards from holiday. Daily use of reference books (to look up facts) has been replaced by search engines on the internet.

Credit Cards

Many working people could not get credit anywhere, so they used 'ticket men' who called at their homes every week to sell a 'ticket' which was really a credit note. This could be spent in specific shops and was repaid by instalments which included the interest. This was instead of saving up to buy anything and was called 'buying on tick' or 'buying on the never never' because the payments were never ending!

Design

Cartoon films were made by filming thousands of laboriously drawn individual images showing every minute movement of the characters. This is now replaced by computer generated graphics. Architects, draughtsmen and designers worked on large pieces of paper or linen attached by drawing pins to wooden drawing boards. T-squares were used to form right angles and parallel lines. Plans and designs would be rolled up for transportation. The design of everything from advertisements to products and whole buildings are now created using computers and are sent around the world electronically in an instant.

Domestic Service

This has all but disappeared. There was a definite line between 'above stairs' and 'below stairs' staff. Even below stairs, there was a clearly defined hierarchy. A live-in maid used to be paid about £5 per year, whereas the official minimum wage now is more than that per hour. Some middle-class homes had daily cleaners known as 'char ladies' which is derived from the word 'chore'. This is different from 'a cup of char' meaning 'a cup of tea'. By the late 1930s there was a general shortage of domestic staff in the UK. This presented a golden opportunity for many Jewish immigrants fleeing from Nazi Germany. Many professionals and academics saved their lives by taking menial jobs as domestic staff in British homes.

Education

Most schools are now co-educational instead of strictly single sex. Instead of leaving school at the age of 14 as I did, today's students stay at school until 17 or 18 and often go on to some form of higher education. Polytechnics and technical colleges have been upgraded to universities and are accessible to all, though tuition fees are high. I am pleased that apprenticeships are returning as we seem to have too many highly qualified people in certain disciplines but not enough with practical skills.

Equality

In the old days there was no such thing as racial, social or sexual equality. These are now all enshrined in law. A completely new industry of lawyers, consultants and tribunals has grown up around these. At the time there was limited concept of human rights.

Europe

Europe used to be the name of a continent with each country having its own laws, language, customs and currency. Nowadays European Directives are applicable to those countries belonging to the European Union and dictate just about everything - even the size and shape of bananas!

Finance

There is little point in commenting on remuneration and pensions. By the standards prevalent in my youth, these are now dealt with in telephone numbers. Social benefits, which could have helped my parents on their arrival here, did not exist, but now abound for British and European Union citizens, as well as asylum seekers.

Food

The production of food has gone from manure spreading to genetically modified and organically grown produce. Pesticides and economically larger fields have altered the countryside. Frozen, pre-cooked and over-packaged food is convenient and results in a whole industry of recycling. We used to eat locally grown food which was available according to the season. Previously unheard of sell-by dates govern suppliers, shopkeepers and consumers. A 'take-away' used to be a mathematical problem, a Big Mac was what one wore when it rained. Nobody had heard of 'boil in the bag', 'oven chips', kebab, pizza, Pot Noodles, instant mash, Salmonella, E. coli, Botulism, and so on. Olive oil was

kept in the medical cabinet, garlic was used to ward off vampires, Curry was a surname, coke (a type of coal) was something you put on the fire. The list is endless.

Globalisation

Globalisation is a relatively new concept. It has come about as the world has become a smaller place and travel and transportation around the globe have become faster and more economic. Goods used to be manufactured locally using local materials and labour but today global competitive pressures dictate that goods are manufactured where the cost of production is cheapest. Sadly this is often to the detriment of employees in emerging economies who are employed in dangerous conditions working long hours. Tweeds, which used to be manufactured in Scotland are now simulated in the Far East. Jaguar and Land Rover which were once respected British companies are now foreign owned and many British brands are now produced abroad. Sadly, manufacturing skills and local expertise have gone to other countries. In the past, companies may have had a few branches around Britain but it was almost unheard of that the same stores and businesses existed in London, Shanghai, Cape Town and Sydney.

Homes

A huge improvement has occurred in our standards of living. Before World War II heating was provided usually by a single coal, gas or electric fire in some rooms. There was no such thing as central heating or reverse cycle air conditioning. In cold weather, hot water bottles were used to warm a bed as often there was no heating in bedrooms. Bathrooms were a rarity inside many early twentieth century homes and toilets were situated in an outhouse, known in the North East of England as 'the netty'. In poorer homes there may have been a single cold water tap in the 'scullery' (utility room). One had to boil water to bathe in a tin bath, usually in front of an open fire in the living room. When not in use, the tin bath would be hung up in the scullery or back yard. Every town had Public Baths where people could go once each week to bathe, just washing at home in the sink, the rest of the time.

Human Rights

This is a wholly new concept of basic rights to which a person is inherently entitled, simply because she or he is a human being. In the past, one had to live one's life according to the laws laid down by the upper classes. If you had nowhere to live, you had to go to the Workhouse where living conditions were appalling. The Human Rights Act of 1998 makes it unlawful for any public body to act in a way which is incompatible with the *Human Rights Convention*. Unfortunately in the application of this Act, good old fashioned common sense does not always prevail!

Laundry

Our mothers and grandmothers had to heat water in a coal or wood-fired boiler cemented into the kitchen or scullery wall and do the washing by hand with a washing stool, a poss stick and a wash board. The first two pieces of wooden equipment were used to agitate the hot water with detergent known as 'washing blue'. The wash board, a corrugated sheet of galvanised steel in a timber frame, was used to rub dirt out of the clothes. Drying was done by first passing the wet washing between the two wood rollers of a mangle to squeeze out excess water. The laundry was then dried by hanging on an out-of-doors washing line, held in position by wooden wash pegs. An iron and starch were used to press the laundry. The iron was heated and re-heated on the kitchen hearth. It often took days to complete the weekly wash. All of this was very hard physical work, especially when compared to today's fully automatic washing and drying machines.

Manners and Mores

All professionals wore suits with waistcoats, collars and ties to work - never 'smart-casual' as today. In the past you were not considered to be taking your job seriously if you were not dressed

appropriately. Ladies and gentlemen would wear hats when out and about. Gentlemen wore either a bowler hat or a trilby. Ladies wore gloves and rarely wore trousers. No decent human being would ever eat, chew or drink in the street. A gentleman would treat a lady like a lady - holding the door open to let her through first and walking on the outside of the pavement so that she would not be splashed by passing traffic. Good table manners such as not talking with your mouth full and not putting elbows on the table were the norm. Meals were always taken at a table and not on one's lap in front of a television. The upper classes had breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. The working classes had breakfast, dinner, tea and supper.

Marriage

Formerly, sex before marriage was frowned upon. Couples hardly ever lived together before marriage or as an unmarried couple. Most marriages took place under religious auspices, although marriage was possible in a Registry Office. Illegitimate children were openly known as 'bastards' and carried this stigma throughout their lives. If an un-married girl became pregnant, she would probably be sent away to have her baby, which would then be put up for adoption to avoid shame falling on the family. Abortions were illegal but available as 'back-street abortions', often carried out in unsanitary conditions and often with the worst outcomes. The contraceptive pill only became widely available in the 1960s.

Medicine

Advances in medicine have been immense. Penicillin was only discovered in 1928 and the National Health Service (NHS) came into being in 1948. Before that, one had to pay for a doctor and if you could not afford one, you just had to suffer. Maternity services were almost non-existent. There were community midwives who would call out a doctor or ambulance if complications arose. Many of these midwives were simply neighbours who had given birth many times themselves. Both infant and maternal mortality rates were quite high. Chloroform and laughing gas were the only form of anaesthetic available. In most instances cancer, dementia and mental illness were not diagnosed and patients either died or were sent to a lunatic asylum. Local general practitioners were available for call-out almost 24/7. They did not always write prescriptions for tablets to be dispensed by a pharmacy, but mixed up various ingredients themselves to make up a 'bottle' (of medicine).

Men

When I was young, men liked to be seen as tough, reliable, manly and protective of their women and children. They were usually the bread-winner while the wife stayed home to care for the children and keep the household. Men were too embarrassed to be seen in a ladies' hairdresser or the lingerie department of a department store. This no longer applies and 'real men' have tattoos, shaved heads, wear jewellery, use all sorts of lotions and potions - and are no longer afraid to be seen doing so!

Migration

Throughout history, whole communities have migrated for different reasons - persecution, economic reasons and climate change. Jews fled from persecution in Spain and Portugal after 1492 and again after the many pogroms in Russia, Eastern Europe and in the 1930s from Germany. Refugees from the Nazis needed a visa or a guarantor to be able to enter most countries. These documents were difficult to obtain. Exceptions were not generally available for asylum-seekers, political refugees or other persecuted minorities. One of the great exceptions was the wonderful *Kindertransport* which saved the lives of 10,000 Jewish children in 1938 and 1939.

Money

One pound had twenty shillings or two hundred and forty pennies. There were ten shilling notes and one pound notes. A five pound note was a large piece of white parchment-like paper. The coins were a farthing ($\frac{1}{4}$ of a penny), a half-penny, a penny, a real silver three-penny piece which eventually was

minted as an octagonal brass coin, a six pence, a shilling (twelve pennies), a florin (two shillings) and a half a crown (two shillings and six pence). Some items or fees were priced in guineas (one pound and one shilling). When metric coinage was introduced on 15th February 1971 there were conversion tables and calculators, but these did not prevent considerable hidden price increases.



Credit cards did not exist. There was no electronic banking or cash dispensers. Money was drawn out in person from a 'bank teller' (the person behind the counter) during banking hours, usually 9:00am to 3:00pm Monday to Friday and many establishments had half-days on Wednesdays and were closed for lunch. People were personally known by their local Bank Manager who had discretion to lend money. Post-war, when Britain was in debt and short of foreign exchange, travellers were only allowed to take a maximum of £50 per year out of this country and the exact amount was officially entered into one's passport.

News and Entertainment

Many homes had a radio after the 1930s. Televisions were a new invention and were still rare in the early 1950s. The Queen's Coronation in 1953 was watched by the whole of a street in the few homes which possessed a television set. The mains radio has been overtaken by transistor radios, ghetto blasters, iPods and the like. The news, instead of being printed in tomorrow's newspapers or seen in Movietone or Pathé News in the cinema, is now instantly available on the internet via Smartphones. Satellites, television stations and e-mailed text ensure that there is no delay in communication. Music is now downloaded, replacing records which were large black vinyl discs with a hole in the middle. They were played on record players with a turntable or on radiograms (stylish pieces of furniture housing a record player as well as a radio). The quality and wide availability of reproduced sound have improved beyond belief. As there were no computers or computer games, children amused themselves simply by reading books and comics or by playing. Games and toys were by no means as sophisticated as they are today but left room for imaginative and creative play. In those days it seemed much safer for children to play outside and in playgrounds, often unsupervised, without fear of abduction or molestation.

Political Correctness

References to race, religion and sexual orientation, which were tolerated in everyday use in society are now wholly unacceptable. This has affected television and theatre performances, advertising and children's literature.

Religion

Great Britain was essentially a Christian country. The Jewish community was almost exclusively orthodox. Now there are large ultra-orthodox and progressive communities offering a choice and many choose not to marry within the Jewish faith. Numerous long-established small provincial communities no longer exist. Sadly the numbers attending organised religious services of most denominations are diminishing. A church or synagogue used to be the religious, as well as social centre of the community. Although one could marry in a Registry Office, most couples chose to marry under religious auspices in a church or synagogue. People were generally buried by ministers of religion. No one ever considered that a woman could become a priest or a rabbi. Now that we live in a multi-faith society there are also mosques and temples in almost every town. Every minority can worship freely and without fear from the British establishment.

Satellites

These were unheard of for most of my early life. Various types circle around the world in outer space, exploring and surveying everything from military movements to weather, checking on farmers who may have ploughed a 'laid-aside' field and aiding car navigation, to mention but a few. Magically, satnavs (satellite navigation systems) have replaced the route-maps one used to obtain by post from the motoring organisations before going on a trip.

Sex

No list would be complete without this topic! In the past, this subject was rarely discussed in public and would have been considered indelicate. Now there is an explosion of explicit literature, websites, films, sex shops, massage parlours and houses of ill repute where activities formerly thought deviant, are publicised and practised. Books like the Kama Sutra, written in Sanskrit about 2000 years ago and Lady Chatterley's Lover, written by D H Lawrence in 1928 were the only well-known books on sex until after the Second World War. They would be hand-covered in brown paper sleeves and read furtively. Sex education used to be left to parents but is now taught in schools. However, this does not seem to have reduced pregnancy in school girls, many under the age of consent. Sexually transmitted infections, formerly called venereal disease, can now be treated with medication and are no longer life-threatening. Unfortunately this does not yet completely apply to AIDS/HIV although huge strides have been made in treatment. Soon after the discovery of AIDS, it was predicted that millions would die around the world. Thankfully this threat has been averted in most countries.

Shopping

Shopping used to be out of necessity but has now become a firmly established hobby for men as well as women. Time was that many foods such as butter, cheese, biscuits and dried goods (flour, sugar, tea and raisins) would be taken by the grocer from a bulk container and weighed out in a brown paper bag according to each customer's requirement. Sausage and other cooked meats were sliced onto grease-proof paper using a circular cutter and each customer could request their preferred thickness. Every suburb had a local *High Street* with grocer, butcher, dairy, greengrocer, chemist, shoe repairer, hardware store, toy shop, newsagent and clothes store. Nothing was pre-packed - there were no ready meals. Some shops had delivery boys on bicycles. Milk was delivered to the door step early each morning on battery-operated milk floats which were almost soundless so as not to wake the residents.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Much is written and talked about concerning these life-threatening addictions which ruin individual and family lives and cost the National Health Service millions of pounds annually. None of these are new but the extent to which they mar society and generate crime certainly are. Until relatively recently, we all sat in smoke-filled buses, trains, planes, offices, bars, restaurants and even cinemas and theatres. Many people have suffered and died from lung-cancer contracted through passive smoking, without having ever had a cigarette. Drinking alcohol has evolved from a social activity and many young people now go out with the intention of getting drunk, putting their health and other people's lives at risk. Drug and alcohol addiction fuels much crime.

Social Skills

Good manners and behaviour used to be taught in the home and were expected at school and in the work place. Parents took pride in their well-behaved and hard-working children.

Society

This has become much more egalitarian although there are said to be remnants of class distinction in certain circles. Gone are the days when petrol was served by a pump attendant at every filling station for which the giving of a gratuity was customary for good service. Tips (To Insure Prompt Service) used

to be at the discretion of the customer and to reward good service. Now, some restaurants suggest or add 10 to 15% to the bill and in the United States even more. Although there are too many people living on the streets and sleeping in shop doorways in the larger cities, abject poverty is not nearly as widespread as it was in the days of the Workhouse.

Television

This has become all pervading. The BBC radio and television channels whose motto always was and continues to be “inform, educate and entertain” now have competition from hundreds of commercial radio and television channels. Many families no longer have their meals together around a table but rather eat while watching TV. Homes used to have a single black and white TV in the living room and the whole family gathered to watch together. Children's TV programmes were only screened between 5:00 and 6:00pm and all programmes finished around midnight with the playing of the National Anthem.

Terminology

This changes or is added to in all living languages. Problems have become issues. People are now called Human Resources. Gay no longer means light hearted but homosexual. The word “bloody” used to be a rarely used expletive, whereas the 'f.. word' is now used liberally as an adjective in some circles. Any person or organisation making a mistake or worse, no longer apologises or resigns but say that “lessons have been learned”. Goods transport, previously known as haulage, is now called logistics. Managing directors of companies are now known as CEOs. Finance directors are CFOs.

Travel

In the 19th century, steam and rail travel transformed both personal travel and goods transport. In 1898, Eve's grandfather, Joseph Heinemann, took three weeks to travel from Dusseldorf to New York. In the 20th century, airplanes had a similar effect, but to a much greater extent. Small wood and canvas airplanes with propeller-driven internal combustion engines have grown into supersonic turbine-propelled, atmosphere polluting, aluminium giants, carrying hundreds of people and tons of cargo. Luxury liners, carrying several thousand pleasure-seeking holiday makers encircle the globe. Many families now own more than one car. The engine space in these is now so packed with computer controls that the ordinary mortal is no longer able to maintain his vehicle. Components are no longer repaired but replaced (principally because of labour costs) by a culture of obsolescence.

Unemployment

One of my former employees told me that before the Second World War he used to leave home and returned at normal working times, although he was unemployed. He did so, as he was ashamed of this and did not want his neighbours to think that he was not working. Today, many of the unemployed are graduates and experienced people, some even have doctorates. Many manage so well on benefits and undeclared income that it is not worth their while to work.

Wars

These are ongoing, despite terrible past experiences which have seen the use of atomic bombs and biological weapons. Despite the advances in so many aspects during my lifetime, man's inhumanity towards his fellow man has continued. Sadly the lessons of recent wars, and in particular the *Holocaust*, have not been learned. Terrible corruption, manslaughter, riots, ethnic cleansing, poverty and starvation still exist in many parts of the world. Wars used to be nation against nation and many thousands or even millions died on the battlefield fighting for their country. In recent years there have been many instances where major world powers have interfered in foreign countries in the name of world peace.

Women

They used to be fragile individuals to be protected so they were not 'taken advantage of' by men. Women are striving for equality in most areas and are now much more confident with their rights enshrined in laws of equality in many, but by no means all countries. Nowadays, a growing number of women are the main breadwinner and 'house-husbands' look after the homes and children.

My Sincere Thanks to . . .

My dear parents were always loving, caring and cheerful regardless of adversity. They provided a stable, warm home atmosphere and always gave wise guidance. Although at the time she was over sixty years of age, my dear mother was outstandingly supportive during the illness and untimely death of my brother Ronnie and Eve's years of serious illness.

My two brothers, Bill and Ronnie, always took good care of me in Bamberg, where I was quite a sickly child, and later in adulthood.

My darling wife Eve who is still beautiful to this day. She continues to be courageous and determined in spite of the fact that she has been unable to fully converse since 1963. She has created a warm and loving home, has nurtured our children, has been a wonderful cook and is extremely caring and generous in every possible way.

Mr Lawrence Lassman, the neurosurgeon who saved Eve's life through pioneering brain surgery.

My teachers who encouraged and helped me in every possible way.

The Platt family who in 1939, offered me refuge in their small crowded home in London.

Mr Miroslav Sigmund, my first employer, who accepted me on his very unique engineering apprentice training scheme. The education received under his tutelage enabled me to have work and earn a living throughout my life.

My employees, probably numbering several hundred over the years, were always dedicated and hard working. Many of them served the company loyally for 30 or more years.

The members of the Gateshead Round Table and Rotary Club who helped a shy and socially inexperienced young man to stand up in front of an audience, run committee meetings and engage in voluntary work. Mr Dennis Davidson, Mr Edward (Ted) Wilkinson and Major A J Lamb were personal mentors and role models.

The Women's Cancer Detection Society, it's committee, volunteers and staff and especially Mrs Brenda Gibson, Dr Brian Shenton and Dr Ian Broderick who ensured the success of this organisation over my thirty years as member, Trustee and Chairman.

The Gateshead Magistrates' Court where I experienced nothing but courtesy and support from staff and fellow magistrates during my 29 years on the Bench.

Claire and Nonek Jacobson, the Reform Movement and Leo Baeck College in London as well as Rabbi Dr Henry Brandt and members of Sinai Synagogue, Leeds, all of whom were helpful and supportive to me as a founding member of Newcastle Reform Synagogue.

Last but certainly not least, the many personal and business friends and members of our growing family, especially those who are so kind and supportive to us in our later years.

This book could only have been written because my son-in-law, Gerald Stern, who having retired early, had the time and commitment to document details of our families' *Holocaust* experiences and to research the history of those families. He encouraged me to persist in this sometimes daunting task for which I am very grateful.

My daughter, Monica Stern née Loble also encouraged me and greatly assisted in editing the text.

George Frederick Loble

Curriculum Vitae

Education	Shacklewell Lane School, Clapton, London St Paul's Parochial School, Swiss Cottage, London Abbots Langley Village School, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire (as evacuee) Kells Lane School, Low Fell, Gateshead Gateshead Technical College, Gateshead Rutherford College of Technology, Newcastle upon Tyne Regent Street Polytechnic, Quentin Hogg School, London
Professional Institutions	Chartered Engineer - Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers since 1954 Member of the Chartered Quality Institute Fellow of the Energy Institute Fellow of the Institute of Directors Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Commerce and Manufacture
Career	
1941 - 1948	Apprentice fitter, turner and press tool maker, Sigmund Pumps Limited, Gateshead
1948 - 1950	Sales and estimating engineer, Sigmund Pumps Ltd, Grosvenor Gardens, London
1905 - 1952	Mechanical equipment engineer at Foster Wheeler Limited, Ixworth Place, London
1952 - 1994	Manager, Managing Director, Chairman at Loblite Limited, Gateshead
Professional Activities	Member of British Standards Institution technical committees Member of British Brush Manufacturers Association technical committees Member of the Electrical Installation Equipment Manufacturers Association Member of the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) Member of Tyne and Wear Chamber of Commerce Student, various computer, finance and human resource courses
Voluntary Activities	
1951 - 1959	Gateshead Round Table
1956 -	Rotary Club of Gateshead, President 1968 - 1969, Paul Harris Fellowship 1992
1960 - 1968	Chairman, John Haswell Housing Trust (sheltered housing)
1963 -	Founder, Chairman, Honorary Life President of Newcastle Reform Synagogue
1963 - 1965	Chairman, Community Service Committee for Rotary District 1030
1964 - 1974	Chairman, Gateshead Guild of Community Service
1965 - ?	Member, Northumberland and Tyneside Council of Social Service
1967 - 1996	Justice of the Peace in Gateshead, Chairman of the Youth Court and committees
1968 - 1975	Chairman, Reed Watson Charity for Poor Children
1968 - 1998	Governor of several main stream and special schools in Gateshead area
1974 - 1977	Chairman, Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council
1978 -	Chairman, 50th Anniversary Charitable Trust, Rotary Club of Gateshead
1983 -	Member, Trustee, Chairman (1992) Women's Cancer Detection Society, Gateshead
1990 -	Member of various inter-faith organisations including Council of Christians & Jews
Specialist Voluntary Activities	
1980 -	Secretary for Marriages, Newcastle Reform Synagogue
1980 - 1984	Member, Representative Council of North East Jewry
1993 - 1995	Member, Newcastle University Detect (technology transfer steering committee)
1994 -	Lecturer on Judaism and the Holocaust to universities, schools, clubs, societies
1996 - 1999	Lead organiser, National Lottery Charities Board grant for breast cancer research at Newcastle University

Bibliography

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There are many more excellent books about this dark period in European history, but the above should give a reasonable impression and serve as a reminder of the Nazi period. These books become more important as time passes and fewer contemporary witnesses remain alive.