

HERMANN HIRSCHBERGER



Hermann Hirschberger was born in the 3000 strong Jewish community in Karlsruhe, West Germany in 1926, the second of two sons.

After the notorious pogrom Kristallnacht in November 1938 his parents realized that life for Jews was finished in Germany. Finding it impossible to obtain refuge as a family they decided to enroll the boys on the Kindertransport. The brothers left home in 1939 accompanied to Hamburg by their father to embark on the liner SS Manhattan. Both parents were murdered by the Nazis at Auschwitz in 1942.

He celebrated his Barmitzvah in a refugee hostel in Cliftonville run by the B'nai Brith and was later evacuated and billeted with a coalmining family in Staffordshire. At 15, whilst living in another hostel, he began work in a North London factory, which manufactured diesel fuel-injection pumps for submarines. He continued his education at evening classes where he matriculated to become a design draftsman with a machine tool company continuing to attend evening classes for the next seven years. Becoming a

Chartered Engineer, he joined Smiths Industries, then Elliot Automation and in 1968 Kodak where for ten years he was the Chief Designer in the Development Department managing a staff of 90.

In 1962 Hermann married Eva, the daughter of refugees who had settled in Brazil, they have two children and four grandchildren. He retired in 1989 when his communal responsibilities expanded. He was a founder member of Belmont Synagogue, and has been an Employment Resource Center Advisor, a school governor and a Young Enterprise advisor for Harrow. After visiting Karlsruhe in 1988 where he addressed German schoolchildren, he was invited to recount his experiences to the synagogue, JACS and especially at schools where he gives many talks each year, even now.

Hermann was elected Chairman of KT-AJR in 2003. At the dedication of the Kindertransport statue at Liverpool Street Station, Hermann replied on behalf of the Kinder. His most recent highlight was the invitation, together with 100 other members of the Kindertransport Group, to meet Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall at Clarence House as part of the celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War, at which he spoke eloquently for his fellow Kindertransportees, stressing the immense sacrifice made by their parents' selfless act which had saved their lives.



HERMAN HIRSCHBERGER'S STORY



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