

WALTER WEG

Walter was born in Leipzig, Germany, in November 1928. His family had been German for several generations. His father, together with his two brothers, ran a book publishing business. He and his two younger sisters went to a Jewish kindergarten organised by a circle of Jewish friends.

After Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, an increasing number of restrictions were placed on Jews. Walter remembers things getting worse from 1936: rudeness and insults in the streets, unable to go to the cinema and the ice rink. Lots of shops had "Jews not welcome" notices, and the family found they could no longer go away on holiday.

In early 1935 Walter aged 6 went to the local school and enjoyed his first year there, but in his second year some teachers and a few colleagues made his life a misery. One day on the walk home from school his school friends threw stones at him, and passers-by joined in. After that Walter attended the Jewish school, but it became so crowded that children could only attend for half a day.

The Jewish school was a two-tram ride away from home. Walter remembers the morning after Kristallnacht when he found broken glass scattered over the pavements and the road covered in half-burned school books. He returned to the tram stop a different way and saw damaged and looted Jewish shops. Later that day Walter saw Jewish men being taken away in vans. Three days later the SS came and took away his father. Fortunately Walter's mother managed to go to the Gestapo HQ in Leipzig and get her husband released from Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp; they were all shocked by his broken appearance when he returned home. One of Walter's uncles died in the camp, but another uncle managed to have his own family join him in Holland.

At that stage Walter's mother decided to send the three children away, and an English businessman agreed to take Walter with him when he returned to London. He was fortunate to be sent to a boarding school in Hastings, later evacuated to Devon.

Walter's two sisters came to the UK on the Kindertransport in February 1939, and his mother got out of Germany in July, but his father could not get the right papers till the end of August and then left at once to join Walter on

holiday with the uncle and family in Holland. With World War II imminent, Walter and his father left next morning for England. The Family planned to go on to America, but could not get on any ships, so remained in England throughout the war and became British citizens in 1949.

Walter's father was interned on the Isle of Man. When freed he did demolition work and eventually a job at Foyles bookshop. But he developed TB and was in poor health. The family came together in 1944 and lived in Croydon.

Sadly, when the Nazis invaded Holland the Dutch uncle and his family were put into a Concentration Camp, and then moved to Theresienstadt and finally Auschwitz where Walter's uncle and aunt and their two sons perished. Happily a girl cousin survived, she is now a great-grandmother and living in Israel.

Walter, his two sisters and his cousin revisited Leipzig in 2000. So much had changed, but Walter remains eternally grateful to everyone who helped him and his family come to live in England in 1939.



'...AND THE BUSH BURNED WITH FIRE,
BUT WAS NOT CONSUMED'
NORTHWOOD HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY EVENT

WALTER WEG'S STORY



Further copies of this leaflet can be downloaded from our website
www.northwoodhmd.org.uk

Northwood Holocaust Memorial Day Events T: 08456 448 006
PO Box 288 F: 01923 820357
Northwood E: enquiries@northwoodhmd.org.uk
HA6 9BT www: northwoodhmd.org.uk
Facebook Group: Northwood HMD Pass It On