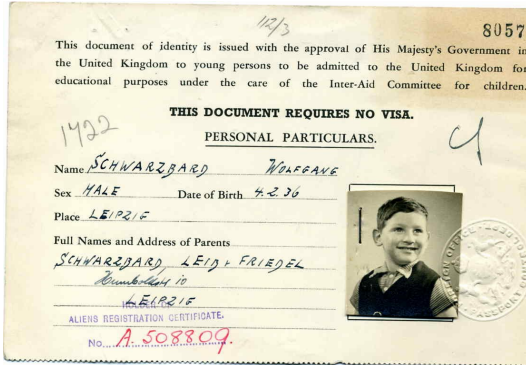


DAISY'S BAT MITZVAH PROJECT 2024

MY UNCLE ZEV'S STORY



For my Bat Mitzvah project, I'm writing about my Uncle Zev. I interviewed my Uncle when he was in London last September.

My Uncle Zev's story began in 1939 when he was 3 years old and left Germany to come to England on Kindertransport. Kindertransport was the informal name of a series of rescue efforts between 1938 and 1940. These rescue efforts brought ten thousand refugee children, mostly Jewish, to Great Britain from Nazi Germany.

My Uncle Zev's entry permit to the UK

His earliest memory is a bittersweet one. His mother had given him a little decorated cushion before he left on the train from Leipzig in Germany to England. As the other children waved handkerchiefs, he waved his little cushion, only to drop it from the train window. After arriving in the UK his first memory was of being transferred from the kind family who had taken care of him when he first arrived to a children's hostel of the Jewish Refugee Committee. Over the next few years, he was in a total of four hostels.



His sister, my Auntie Leni, lived far away and was training to be a nurse. She did not have much money, but when she could, she would use what she had to buy a train ticket to visit my uncle. His other three brothers, Harry, (my Opa or Grandfather) Alfred and Michael, (my great Uncles), came as much as they could, but being younger it was more difficult for them.

Michael. Alfred, Harri, Wolfgang (now Zev) in Leipzig 1939 or earlier

It was when he was in his last hostel in Finsbury Park when he was nine or ten that he learnt that his parents (my great grandparents) had survived. His brothers and sister put money together so they could afford to bring their parents to England. When he first met his parents, it was like meeting strangers. At the start, his sister, Leni, would take him on weekends to see his parents before returning him to the hostel. To begin with he would call them Mother and Father because growing up he had learnt to dislike the German language and didn't want to call them Mutti and Papa. After a certain amount of time, they became a normal family, and he did indeed call them Mutti and Papa.

His brothers were older and Michael and Alfred were called up to join the British army during the Second World War (Harry joined a little later). Once the war was won, Michael, as a German speaker joined a special unit that would become the British military government in Germany. Michael had to change his surname as his German name which was Schwarzbard would not have been well received.



Michael changed his surname to Sherwood. Alfred and my Opa, Harry also changed their surnames to Sherwood soon afterwards. My Uncle Zev didn't join the army as he was still very young. As he grew older it was an inconvenience to have such a difficult to pronounce name like Schwarzbard so he simply shortened it to Bard after he got married.

**Harry, Frieda, Alfred, Zev, Leo and Leni
- Reunited in England, 1945 or later**

Uncle Zev met his wife, my Auntie Janina at university. He was studying civil engineering, and my Auntie Janina was studying Zoology, and they became friends. After University, Uncle Zev became a civil engineer which meant he would design and build infrastructures like roads, docks, harbours, factories and universities.

Sixteen to seventeen years after being married to my Auntie Janina, in 1974 they moved to Israel. They



always knew they would move there one day – but only once their parents were no longer with them as they couldn't imagine leaving them behind. When they moved, my cousins Naomi and Juliet were 7 and 9 years old – the timing was right, and they would not have wanted to move if the girls were any older as they believed it would have been very difficult for them to have settled.

Uncle Zev and Auntie Janina, Israel, 2023

My Uncle had visited Israel before, but he had never lived there. When they moved The Jewish Agency gave them temporary accommodation until they found their feet and helped them to find their first flat. Once they started working, which didn't take long they could manage themselves.

When they first moved my Uncle Zev spoke a little bit of Hebrew while my Auntie Janina knew none. They decided when they moved there that they would give it 3 years and if it didn't work out, they would come back.

With the State of Israel being created in their lifetime, they wanted to ensure that they gave their move to the country every chance of success. After 3 years they were enjoying living in Israel and chose to stay and have been there ever since.

When my Uncle Zev first moved to Israel, it struck him that unlike living in the UK, where he was in a minority, he didn't have to explain to people that he was Jewish because everyone around him was and had similar traditions.

Finding a job wasn't hard, especially as he didn't have to retrain. It wasn't the work he really wanted which was to be a Design Engineer, so instead he moved into Project Management working on Universities, Museums and Government buildings.

My Uncle has always lived in Jerusalem although other family members lived in other parts of Israel. My Uncle Alfred, who moved to Israel before Uncle Zev lived on a Kibbutz and today our family live all-around Israel in places like Tel Aviv, Haifa and Kfar Vradim.

He still misses some aspects of England and loves being English, despite the fact he no longer lives here. England played such an important role in his life – he grew up and got married in England and says that if he ever left Israel, England would be the only place he would come.

I'm hoping to visit my Uncle Zev and my family in Israel in October. I cannot wait!

Shabbat Shalom

Daisy Sherwood-Murphy, March 2024



**Me and my Uncle Zev,
September 2024**



**My cousins, Naomi and Juliet
Israel, 2024**



**Me and my family in Kfar
Vradim, Israel for Pesach, in
2018**



Me and my family in Israel in 2018



Uncle Zev and Auntie Janina when they left the UK

