



My Story

Monique Liliane Blake



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These are Monique's words. This is her story.

'My Story' is an initiative of The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR).

www.ajrmystory.org.uk

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Monique was visited by AJR volunteer Elizabeth Judah to share her story.

Portrait photography by Debra Barnes

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My Story

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“I have a memory of one occasion, when I was alone at home and a plane flew very low over the house. I was terrified, opened a window and climbed out. I was sitting on the doorstep when the Bruchet’s came home. To this day the sound of low-flying aeroplanes scares me.”



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Hidden by the Bruchet family

I WAS BORN in France on 12 November 1939 in a place called Melun, about 60 kilometres outside Paris. I only recently learnt from the deportation papers that my parents were living in Paris on Rue Tholozé which is in Montmartre near Sacre Coeur. I have a memory of going up and down stairs in my father's arms which must have been the steep steps from the street level up to Montmartre.

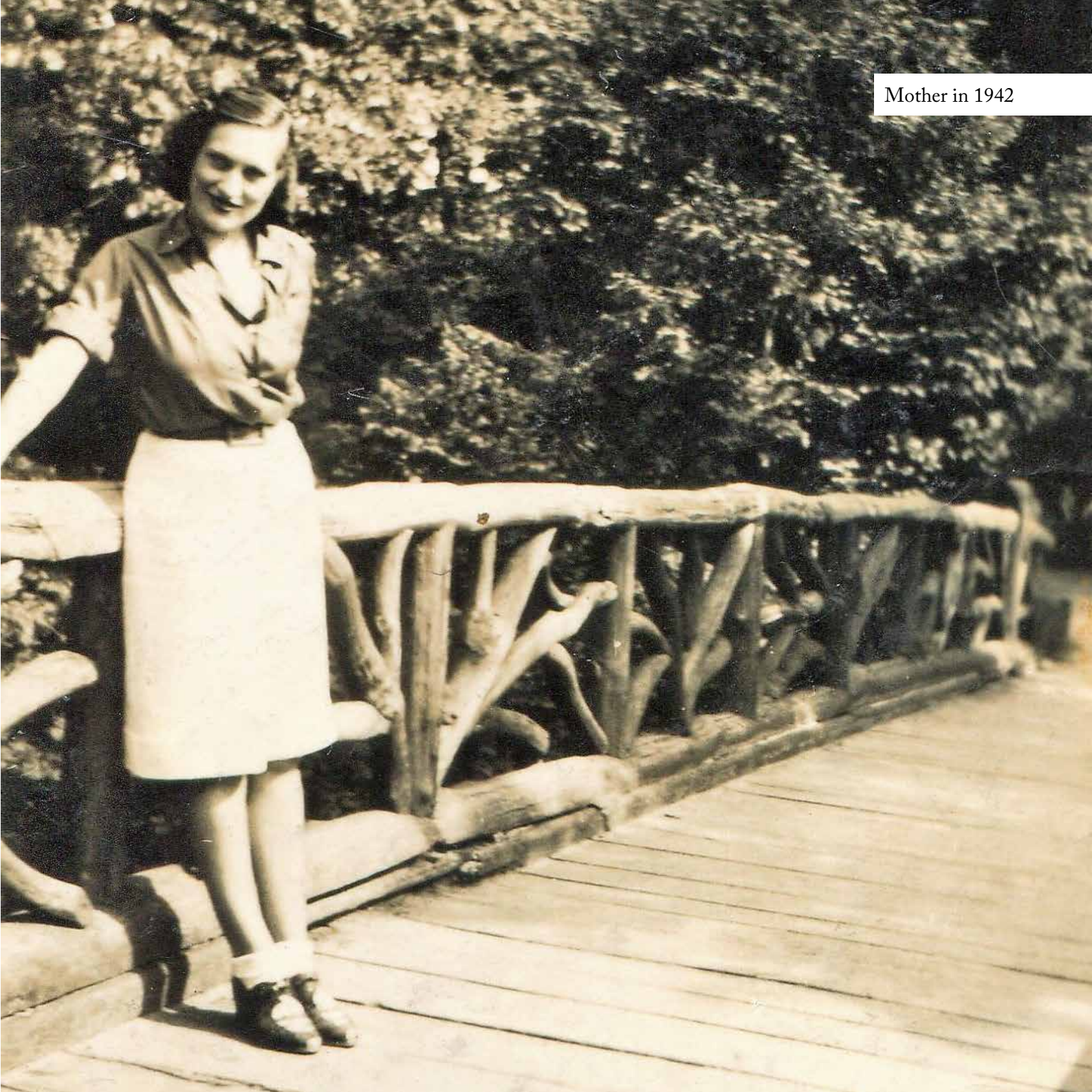
The only thing I know about my father, Leon Franck, is that he was born on 24 June, 1910 in Talence, which is near Bordeaux. I know that much because I have his birth certificate; my friend Rabbi Alan Mann carried out some research and managed to get it for me. I think my father was a salesman (it says so on the deportation papers) but when I asked my adopted brother Fred many years later, he said he thought my father had been a banker or something similar. My greatest regret is that I never asked any of my aunts or uncles about my parents and they never talked about them.

My mother Kajla Gruszka was born in Żuromin, Poland on 15 November, 1911. She was known as Klara. I have no memories of my mother, nothing. It's as if she never existed. I only have one photo of her and there is one at Yad Vashem. My aunt in Rhodesia would say: "Oh, your mother suffered" but I didn't really feel able to ask more about her at the time. I was just a teenager and didn't want to talk about it.

My parents were married on 28 March, 1935. I was born in 1939 and I was an only child. My parents were taken to Auschwitz in September 1942. I have their deportation papers which state they were held in Drancy for 19 days then moved to Pithiviers and from there to Auschwitz on 21 September 1942 on convoy no. 35.

My earliest memories are of living with the Bruchet family, where I was being hidden. I don't know how I got there or at what age I was there, but it was probably in 1942. I have very strong memories of living with them there. I do have one memory of my father coming to visit,

Mother in 1942



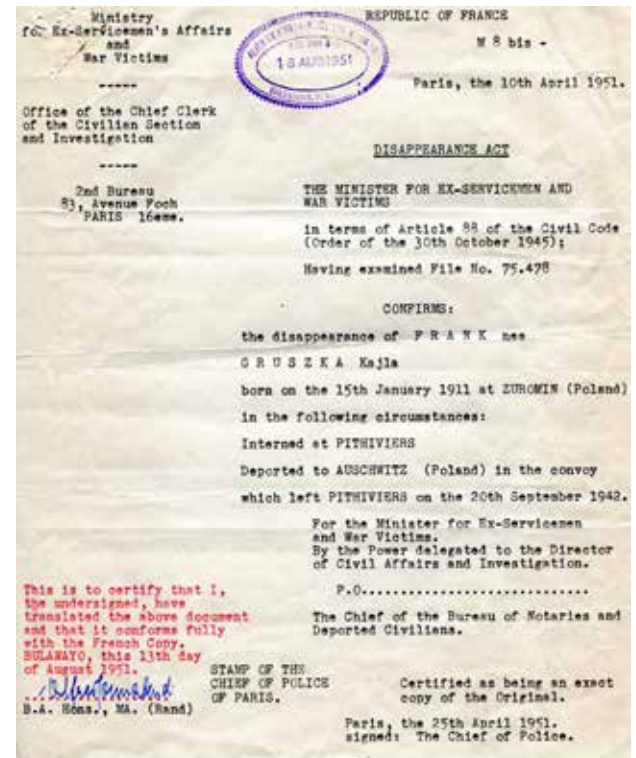
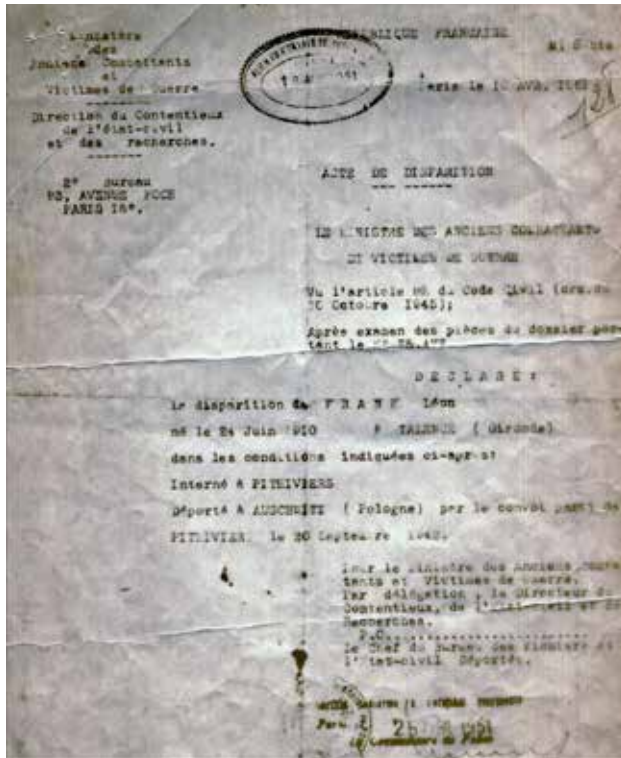
however, I'm not even sure that really happened. I don't know how it was arranged for me to be hidden but I think my father knew someone who knew someone in the village. The Bruchets were a Catholic peasant family living in a tiny house but I do remember that I was very happy and loved being with them. In fact, it was to be the happiest part of my life up until I married.

I was a fair, blonde and blue-eyed two-year old little girl. I think they must have passed me as one of their family. There was the mother and father and two quite grown-up daughters, at least they appeared grown-up to me, and a much younger son called Marcel. Marcel was everything to me. I don't suppose he was much more than seven himself but he looked after me; he was my hero, my god. Funnily enough, when I would return years later to see Marcel, my prince, he was not the handsome Frenchman of my memories!

I have a memory of one occasion, when I was alone at home and a plane flew very low over the house. I was terrified, opened a window and climbed out. I was sitting on the doorstep when the Bruchets came home. To this day, the sound of low-flying aeroplanes scares me.

The village school was run by nuns; I wasn't registered there but I attended even though I was very young, probably three by this time. I now think that the whole village must have been involved with hiding me. There were various stories to explain my being there, including that

“ I have a memory of one occasion,
when I was alone at home and a plane
flew very low over the house.
I was terrified, opened a window
and climbed out. ”



Father's disappearance act (left) and Mother's disappearance act

My mother





This is the only photo I have of me with my father

Paternal grandmother Selma nee Ascher





Paternal grandfather Hermann



My Story Monique Liliane Blake

Me with the Bruchet family

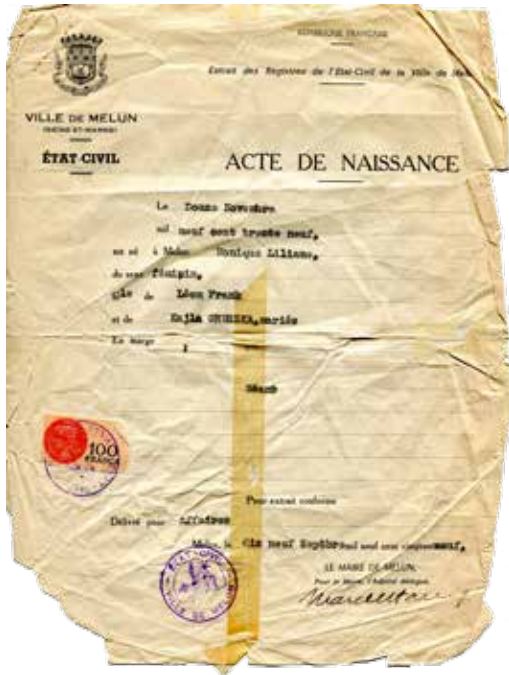




Living happily with the Bruchet family

With the Bruchet family





My birth certificate

I had been thrown from a train, or left on a door step. There was a man who lived across the way. I can still see it now; he would yell and scream at me. I didn't know why. I think maybe he was a bit drunk but when the Germans came the villagers hid him away. I don't know where, but he obviously knew about me and they had to keep him quiet so he wouldn't tell about the little Jewish girl!

I know that the Germans came to look for me twice. Once I remember hearing marching feet coming and being hidden in the coal cellar, although at the time I didn't know why. There were woods behind the house and on the other occasion when the Germans came, Marcel took me there for what seemed to me to be a long time. For many years I didn't understand how the Germans would have known to come there. It was a tiny village called Lamotte-Beuvron in the centre of France. Now there are about 5,000 people living there but at the time it was a much smaller village. A few years ago I found out that there was a sanatorium a couple of miles away and that the Germans had taken it over and were keeping prisoners there. An aunt of mine was sure that my parents had been denounced and that's how the Germans knew about me, because it would have been on my parents' papers that they had a child. Luckily the Germans never found me and I lived out the war with the Bruchet family. ■



While living with the Bruchet family

Taken to Paris

WHEN PEACE CAME I was found by Tante Mania, my mother's sister, who had lived in Paris throughout the war. She was married to Oncle Francis Bott, a non-Jewish German artist. Throughout the war they had both been in the Maquis, the French resistance movement. They found me through the Maquis and the Red Cross. They just took me away. It was on the day that the eldest daughter of the Bruchet family (I'm afraid I don't remember her name) was getting married. I remember very clearly seeing a short dark-haired woman and a tall man. I was up on the table reciting a poem or something and they just came and took me away. It was awful. I would have been about five years old I guess. I remember being completely traumatised by that. The Bruchets were wonderful. I loved that family. I was so devastated to have been taken away that Tante Mania actually sent me back for a couple of weeks but only for a visit and then I was taken away a second time. I never saw them again until many years later.

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If my aunt hadn't come to get me from the Bruchet family, I probably would have stayed there; my only happy memories are with them. They never tried to impose their religion on me. I have no memory of going to church but I was in a convent school. I have always loved churches, and I remember wanting to have a first communion dress. I do have one very clear memory of coming home from school and asking: "Am I Jewish or am I Christian?" so there must have been something taught at the school. I remember it so clearly. They told me: "You're Christian" and I heaved a sigh of relief. There must have been a bible lesson at school - who knows what was said during it to make me so relieved to be told I was not Jewish.

Tante Mania and Oncle Francis lived in Paris. She was my legal guardian. They didn't have any children of their own. He was an unknown painter at the time, and they were completely poverty stricken. There was no financial help from the state and they really couldn't afford to look after me. Things were very bad. We had to eat sauerkraut every day and my uncle used to have to go out to look for coal to try and make a fire. Sometimes we would sit in the metro to keep warm. They were as good to me as they could be. I have vague memories of them having to put me in an orphanage for a while and then taking me out again. ■



Oncle Francis, 1943



Tante Mania



My passport photo from when I left Paris

I am sent to England

WHEN I WAS six I was sent to England to live with my mother's brother Leo and his wife (her name was Judith but there were a lot of relatives called Judith in the family so she was known as Dussie) in Belsize Park, London, where they had lived throughout the war. I spent six years with them. They were not great years. Aunt Dussie didn't want me and she was quite cruel, psychologically and physically. She used to hit me and abuse me. She did some really horrible cruel things to me. It went on and on for six years but strangely enough I just accepted it. That's just how it was.

Apparently the plan was always that I would go and live with another aunt and uncle in Bulawayo, Rhodesia however there was a problem. The Rhodesian government would only let me stay if I was adopted, and the French government wouldn't let me go because the law was if you had children, even adult children, you couldn't adopt others.

It was unfortunate that my Uncle Leo and Aunt Dussie in England had to put up with me for six years instead of putting up with me for six months, which I'm sure didn't endear me to my aunt. They had one daughter, Monica. That was a bit confusing, having Monica and Monique living in the same flat together. We were both named after the same grandparent. Her name is actually Lydia Monica and my name is Monique Liliane. She's two and a half years younger than me and now lives in Johannesburg. We're quite close but I don't talk to her about her mother having been so cruel to me. When we were growing up we were not that close because Monica was very much favoured by her parents.

There were spinster aunts, Judith and Cassie (my mother's cousins) who lived on the ground floor of the block of flats with another lady called Olive, who adored Monica. Across the road lived a gentleman called Mr Rudolph Lowe who loved children. He would take me, and sometimes Monica would come with, to Kew Gardens, to the cinema and on picnics. He would give me pocket money too. He was just a kind man. Sometimes I would get home from school to find nobody at home.

Uncle Leo, Monica, Aunt
Dussie and me in Margate



N° 1167 du Registre d'Ordre

CERTIFICAT DE NATIONALITE

Le Juge de Paix du Tribunal d'instance
du 14 arrondissement de Paris


CERTIFIE sur le vu des pièces suivantes :

livret de famille de ses parents

Que M. *Monique Liliane Frank*
demeurant à *appart. 21 avenue de l'Opéra*
chez *Madame Bolt 21 avenue de l'Opéra*
Né à *Orléans Seine et Loire*
le *12 novembre 1939*
DE : *Monsieur Lion Frank*
Né à *Cahors Gironde*
le *24 juin 1910*

EST FRANÇAISE en vertu de l'article 23 parag 1
du Code de la nationalité Française
comme étant né en France d'un père qui y est lui-même né.

Paris, le 6 octobre 1989
Le Juge directeur



My certificate of nationality

My aunt and Olive would have taken Monica out so Mr Lowe or two sisters who lived across the road would take me in and look after me. It seemed to me that, during that part of my life, I was looked after by neighbours and friends rather than family.

I went to school in Hampstead, to the Holy Trinity Church School. I thought I was the only Jewish child there but it turns out that there were several others. I loved that school. I did everything I could not to go home. There was a church on Fitzjohn's Avenue where I would go and sit after school. Nobody, as far as I'm aware, cared that I would arrive home very late from school.

I came to England speaking not a word of English but I soon picked it up and spoke perfect English and I hardly ever spoke French again. I had no one to speak French with except for the daughter of a family friend who would speak it with me. ■

“It seemed to me that, during that part of my life, I was looked after by neighbours and friends rather than family.”

To my sixth home ... this time in Rhodesia

UNCLE LEO WAS a furrier but he wasn't doing so well, the business had been ruined by the war, so he and his family were going to move to Rhodesia too. Uncle Leo had actually gone out a year ahead of the rest of us to establish himself. This left me at the mercy of my aunt, which wasn't great for me.

Eventually I went to Rhodesia to what would be my sixth home. I was not quite 12 when I arrived there. Auntie Selma and her husband Uncle Bernard Sonnabend adopted me; my name was taken away from me. Nobody asked, that's just how it was, so I changed from Monique Franck to Monique Sonnabend.

Auntie Selma didn't know how to say 'yes'. My friend used to come and beg my aunt to allow me to go to a party. She would never say 'yes'. She would say: 'ask your uncle.' While she would never say 'yes', he could never say 'no'.

During my teenage years I never felt loved. I was the duty, the charity case. Although I had been adopted my aunt never took me shopping or on outings, never bought me anything for the sake of it, plus I was scared of her because she looked so forbidding. She had a stern demeanour and was very intimidating. Maybe if I'd shmoozed her a bit things might have been better. She was old enough to be my grandmother but that was no reason for her to make me feel unloved.

I arrived in Rhodesia in October 1951 and Mireille, my adopted sister, got married the following March. Mireille was the light of my aunt's life. She also adored her son, Alfred (Fred), but she didn't particularly get on with her daughter-in-law Gracia. Every year my aunt and uncle would go on a holiday to Muizenberg in Cape Town but I was never included. I would stay with Fred and Gracia instead. Fred was 20 years older than me. He was the one who arranged for me to come to Rhodesia – he stopped the Governor General in his car to get my papers sorted.

Monica, Dussie and me on
our way to Rhodesia



Mireille was very beautiful, but apparently as a teenager she was so uncontrollable that her parents put her in boarding school for a short period just one mile down the road! My aunt was very straight-laced and my uncle had a heart condition. I joined Habonim, the Jewish youth movement, where I had friends but I had to be home by 6pm. I think that my aunt was so strict with me because Mireille had been so difficult growing up that she didn't want a repeat performance!

When I came to Rhodesia people at school would ask me: "Where are your parents?" I'd reply: "They died in the war." Then they would ask me where I was during the war and I would say: "Oh, I was evacuated." That was all I would say.

I left school at 17 and got a job with a company called Modern Furniture Works in their office. I loved it there but left when I was 18 to go back to Paris for a year to live with Tante Mania and Oncle Francis where I had to attend the Alliance Française to relearn French (grown-up French, not the childish French I had spoken before). By that time Oncle Francis had become a renowned artist. Before the other members of the family had been rather disdainful of him because he was 'just a painter' but after he became well-regarded they all wanted his paintings! Tante Mania was having bad problems with her limbs, probably because of malnutrition suffered during the war. I don't know how she survived.

One day Tante Mania and I were looking through an address book when I said: "Who's this family?" She told me: "That's where you were during the war whilst you were in hiding." I wrote to them the next day, and they wrote back inviting me to visit them. I went and stayed with them for a week. I cycled all around the village with the son of the couple who had been married the day I was taken away by my aunt. As we rode around people came out of their homes to see me and it was then that I realised the whole village had hidden me. ■



Aunt Selma in Rhodesia



Uncle Bernard in Rhodesia



In the middle of two friends at Habonim camp in Bulawayo

With a friend at Habonim camp
in East London, South Africa, 1953





Age 19 in my uncle's atelier in Montparnasse



Visit to Chartres in 1959 during my year in Paris

Meeting David

FROM PARIS, TANTE Mania sent me back to Rhodesia because she wanted me to learn shorthand typing. She sent me money from France to pursue secretarial studies which I did in the evenings, while during the day I worked in the office of my uncle's dress factory.

The idea was that I would go back to Paris and live with Tante Mania and Oncle Francis, but then I met David. A friend called Jock rang me up and asked me if I would teach him to cha-cha, seeing as I had just returned from France, and could he bring his friend David who was on leave from his National Service? So that's how I met David, in January 1960 when I had just turned 20. Later he came to my uncle and aunt's house and invited me to go and see The Abominable Snowman. In April we were engaged, although unofficially due to me having quite a major operation. I was in hospital for one month and it was my future mother-in-law who came to visit me daily, not my own family. In August 1960 we became officially engaged. This was after David had completed his five-month national service. He had studied in Durban, South Africa and become a pharmacist.

When I was a teenager in Rhodesia my friends were close to their mothers, and I felt very much left out of all that. Then I met David and he became my life. I got on very well with his parents and his sister Jenny. They became my family. David's mother, Ruth, and I went shopping for my trousseau and we saw this material for my wedding dress which I fell in love with. I went home and told Aunt Selma. She said: "You can put it on my account and pay me back at the end of the month." In Rhodesia girls who were getting married used to give up work a month early to get their trousseau together and everything ready. I was working for my uncle in the factory office and I had to work an extra month to pay for that material. I had a trousseau but I bought it myself.

We had to wait a year to get married and all because of David's car! He had bought one of the first Minis and we had to wait one year and one day to bring it over to the UK to avoid paying taxes. We eventually married in April 1961, when I was 21 and had a six or seven-week



David and I dressed as Lady and the Tramp at a fancy dress party on the ship during our honeymoon

honeymoon. We had a week travelling down the garden route to Cape Town, and then a week in Cape Town itself. Then we had two weeks on the ship with David's Mini to come over to England, although the car had to stay on the ship for one extra day because it was one day short of the requirement to avoid the taxes! While the car stayed on the ship we stayed at the Overseas Visitors Club in London. Then we drove to Spain and France. In France we visited Lamotte-Beuvron, where I had been hidden - we came upon it purely by chance. Mr and Mrs Bruchet were still living in the same house and we went to visit them. After that we went back to Paris to spend time with Tante Mania and Oncle Francis. We married in April and I think we got back to England in June or July.

Uncle Leo in London died of a heart attack whilst I was on honeymoon. None of my family wrote to tell me – that's how detached they were from me. It was my friend's mother who wrote to tell me the news. He must have been in his 50s. Tante Mania in Paris died that same year as well. ■

“Uncle Leo in London died of a heart attack whilst I was on honeymoon. None of my family wrote to tell me – that's how detached they were from me.”



At Land's End when David's family came over a year after we married.
l-r David, me, Ruth, Jenny, Nat

Married life in England

ONCE BACK IN England we stayed with David's great-aunt, Cissie Amsych for six weeks whilst we flat hunted. We found a flat in Golders Green where we lived for a year and a half until we bought a house in Stanmore, where we became founder members of Bessborough Road Reform Synagogue. Later we would be asked by a close friend if we would get involved in starting a new congregation which would later become Stanmore Liberal Jewish Congregation (now The Liberal Synagogue Elstree), which we did and we actually got very involved. The first service was held in our home. I wanted to join so that we could 'put down roots'. This was something very important to me, to feel part of a community, where everyone knew everyone. Becoming a Liberal Jew really appealed to me; David wasn't particularly interested although he did become a staunch supporter of Liberal Judaism. Now I'm a vice president of Liberal Judaism and currently president of my synagogue, The Liberal Synagogue Elstree.

David was a pharmacist and I first went to work at a garage in Golders Green but I only stayed there one month because I was being sexually harassed. After that I went to work at an optician and then I saw an advert in the paper that said: 'If you can keep your head whilst all others are losing theirs, come and work for us' – so I did. It was an amazing company, Samuelson Film Company. The office wasn't much bigger than my living room. They contracted out equipment, people, whatever was needed for the film industry. I worked there in the office while I was pregnant with our first child although I was sick morning till night for almost the entire nine months. They were wonderful people and they never made an issue of the time I had to take off. Laurence was born in 1963 and that was the end of my career with them. Kevin was born in 1966 and I didn't work again until Kevin went to school.

We had our own pharmacy in St Albans and then in North Watford. I went and helped David there but as he didn't pay me, after a few years and in a 'fit of pique!', I went to work for another pharmacy in Liverpool Street. Following that my friend Rosita Rosenberg, who worked for the Liberal Judaism movement, asked me to be her secretary. I wasn't sure because

Laurence and Kevin with David and me



we were friends and our husbands were also friends, but it worked out very well. In the end I worked there for 23 years and that's how I became involved in the movement.

One of my projects was the administration for the conversion course. The candidates used to come and sit in the hall. Previously it was like being in a dentist's waiting room - they would be very nervous. So I set up a different regime where we would sit in a circle and I would chat with the candidates and any supporters who also came, before their interview ... I was like the warm up act. When I left, my job was cut in four but nobody took on that role so Danny Rich, the senior rabbi, asked me if I would go back just to look after the conversion candidates. So once a month I do that, which is lovely. I meet interesting, amazing people and I don't have to worry if they've done their essays.

Sadly David died in April 2018 leaving a big aching void in my life but I have a wonderful family: Laurence and Kevin - my sons, Laurence's wife Tracy and Kevin's fiancée Sharon. Then, of course, my grandchildren - Joshua and Kezia, Laurence's children, and Antony and Charlie, Kevin's children. They light up my life. ■

“Previously it was like being in a dentist's waiting room - they would be very nervous. So I set up a different regime where we would sit in a circle and I would chat with the candidates and any supporters who also came, before their interview ... I was like the warm up act.”

Our families

DAVID'S FATHER, DUDLEY Blake, died from typhoid in 1942 in Tunisia when David was only six years old. Dudley's younger brother, Nat, who was divorced and living in Rhodesia, came over to Europe and met up with Ruth after Dudley had died. Ruth and Nat went back to Rhodesia together and married there. As far as David was concerned, Nat was his father. They were very close. The Blake side of the family were not affected by the Holocaust; I think his great-grandfather came from Poland and on his mother's side, his grandfather Charles converted to marry his grandmother in England. Charles was a doctor, very loved by his patients, and the story goes that when Ruth married Dudley, people lined the streets to see her drive past in the wedding car on the way to the synagogue in Chester. Ruth used to tell me these family stories when she visited me in hospital in Rhodesia. Every day I would ask her to tell me some more.

Both David and I had limited memories of our fathers but the differences in our upbringings were very apparent. Dudley was the sports editor of the Yorkshire Cricket Press and David remembered going to sports games with him. The Star cartoonist, Harry Heap, drew a caricature of Dudley in 1931. David's sister Jen was also a journalist, like their father. After Dudley died David had a very good relationship with his step-father Nat. Only after Nat died did our sons Laurence and Kevin ever find out that he was actually their great-uncle and not their grand-father. ■



Dudley Blake by Harry Heap, 1931



Having a great time on a steam train during a family trip to the Isle of Wight, 2006



David's 80th birthday when our grandchildren took us out for tea. L-R Joshua, Kezia, Antony, me, David, Charlie



David and me with our family at David's 80th birthday celebration



Unanswered questions

WHEN I WAS growing up, I didn't ask questions. I was just moved from here to there and that was my reality. It wasn't a good reality but that's what it was. No one volunteered information and I never asked. It was only much later, after my children were born and the camps were being talked about, when I started delving into my past.

I was always looking for information about my father but I never asked the right people when I should have done. The only information available is his birth certificate then the trail goes cold. It seems that the rest of my father's family lived in Bordeaux. It is thought that there may have been a sister but there is no real information.

For many years I didn't do any research mainly because I didn't know where to start, although I do know quite a bit about my mother's family, the Gruzchkas. My maternal grandfather was a horse dealer in Poland and I believe my grandparents died of natural causes in their homeland. My mother was the youngest of quite a large family. She had three older sisters: Mania, Selma and Judith. She also had a brother, Leo and there may have been another brother. As the youngest, my mother had a niece who was older than herself. Judith was the eldest; she was sent to Auschwitz and perished there. I don't know about her husband, Morris. Their son Motek survived Auschwitz. He was much older than me. I do remember he came to visit my aunt and uncle in England but they couldn't cope with him. He came to London after I married to make sure I was alright. I remember going out to a nightclub with him, he'd obviously done very well for himself. He went back to Venezuela but sadly died shortly after. He would have been in his 90s now. He had a sister who survived as well; she went to live in Israel, unfortunately I have never met her.

My sons have always known about my background although possibly not all the details. Kevin wrote three poems about the Holocaust for the Liberal Judaism children's annual poetry competition and came first in his category.

As an adult I had nightmares when I would call out for my father. I considered having hypnosis to help me remember more, but I was refused as there were concerns about what might be unearthed. I only have a few vague memories of my father and none at all of my mother.

When I lived with my aunts and uncles I know that I was a duty to them and not loved, with the exception of Tante Mania in Paris who passed away soon after I married. I suppose the age gaps between my cousins and me didn't help; one cousin was over 20 years older than me. The family never spoke to me about my parents. I feel very sad that I didn't ask questions, I know nothing about my father's side of the family. It's a big regret for me.

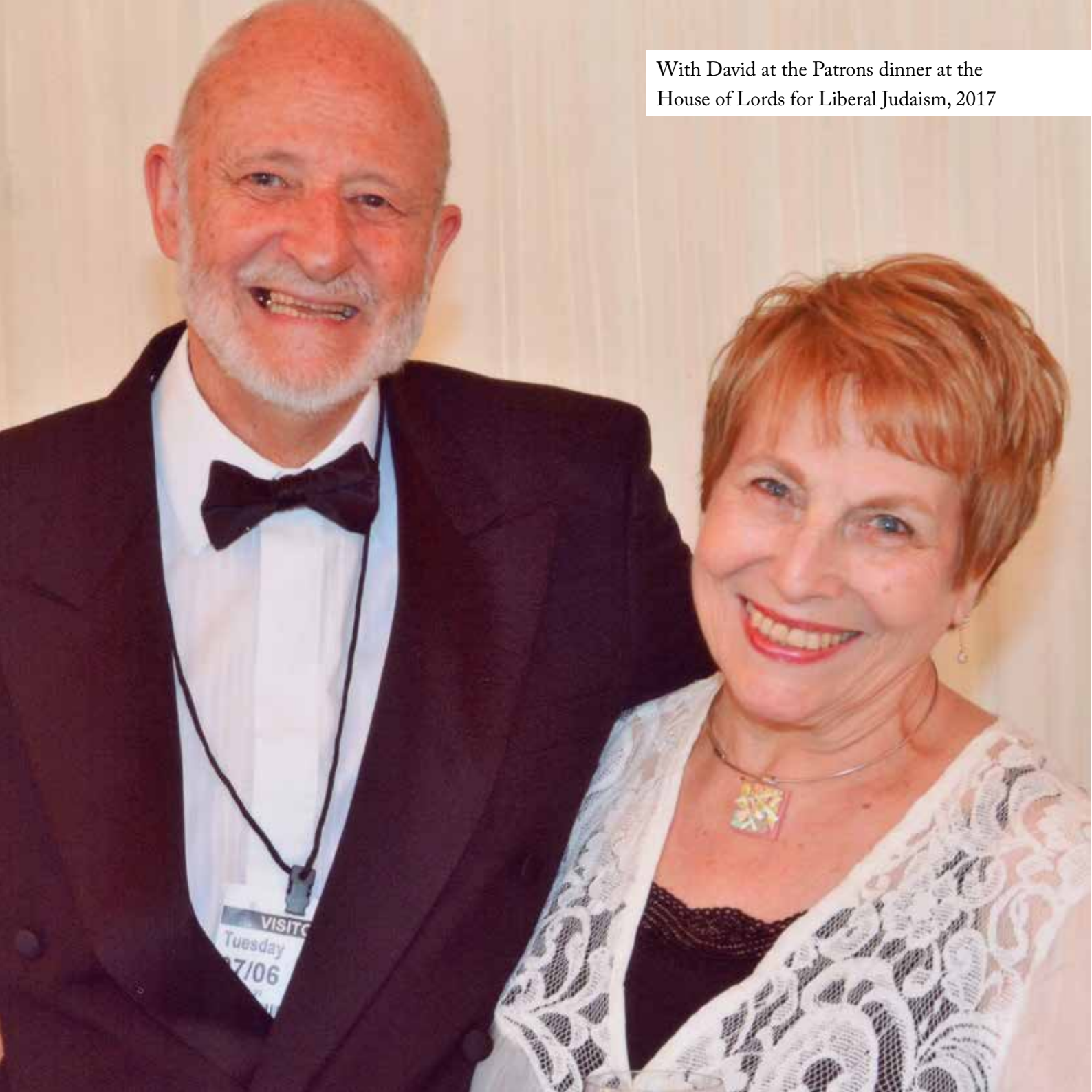
About 15 years ago when David and I were in northern France we decided to make a day trip to Lamotte Beuvron. To my amazement I found that this small village that had hidden me is now a sizable town. That took some getting used to.

Nevertheless we made our way to the town hall where I was able to do a little research into the Bruchet family to see if any family members were still there. Only one person was - the son-in-law whose wedding it was the day that my aunt and uncle found me. Sadly he was now widowed and terminally ill himself but we did manage to visit him. He couldn't really answer any of my questions regarding my past but was able to give me some photographs of me with the Bruchets.

We went to the graves of my 'Bruchet parents', laid flowers on their graves and I said my final goodbyes to Lamotte Beuvron that will always remain a treasured memory for me. A person's upbringing has a huge influence on their future. I have always felt that I don't quite belong, that I am on the outside looking in. Who are you, Monique? I'm French, but I'm not French and I'm not English! I'm reminded 100 times a year that I have a Rhodesian accent. My passport is British but my birth certificate is French.

I sometimes feel like I haven't done much with my life, although David always disagreed with me. He would always reassure me and bolster me up. Despite my early years David and I managed to have a long happy marriage and a wonderful family and that is an amazing achievement. ■

With David at the Patrons dinner at the
House of Lords for Liberal Judaism, 2017



LOST

She was taken away at the age of four,
Said goodbye, by the servants' door,
Taken away from a Jewish life,
Taken away by a non-Jewish wife.
Driven to a house out in the wild,
Separated by forty miles.

They came back to look for her about twice,
But she hid in a coal-shed which she didn't
find nice.
Though she wasn't alone in the dark,
They had a son, his name was Marc.
She wasn't registered in the village school,
And all pretended they never knew
Of a Jewish child that had gone away,
Escaped the Nazi net on that gruesome day.

The little girl's name was Monique,
But I'm sure this case is not unique.
At the servants' door she didn't know why,
As she went to her parents to say goodbye.

Her parents were 'EXTERMINATED' as the
Germans said,
She's now an orphan, what lies ahead?

Don't worry yourselves, these are my
only thoughts,
But I know she wished she too had
been caught.
Instead each year, as the tragic day arrives,
She has to wonder how she ever survived.
Just spare a thought for the six million dead,
Who were 'EXTERMINATED' as
Hitler said.

This lady will, one day, become old,
She will have nothing of her parents to which
she can hold.

Her parents lives, in war, did cease,
But hopefully hers will end in peace.
But when she dies this issue won't be done,
Because I live on, and I'm her son!

TWO YEARS OF SURVIVAL

Four One Three Six
Four One Three Seven
Four One Nine Five
Will I be next?
Will I take a shower?
Will I be deloused?

Looking through the fence
I see the trees and flowers
I hear the birds high above, singing
Will I ever join them again?
Here, I have time to think, dream, wander.
I used to know nature,
But do I still?

Roll call, two more missing
How much longer can I hold out?
Will I too go the way of others?
Die of hunger, die of exhaustion or gas?
What disease will I catch?
Will I live to be free?

Two years now I've been here,
Two years my soul has kept me alive
Driving me so that I might survive
So that I might live to tell my tale.
Two years of torture,
Two years of hatred,
Two years of death.

I thought farm smells were bad,
But they were nothing to this stench.
I thought I had seen death,
But that was really life.

How much longer do I have to witness this
Before I'm allowed to go?
How much longer must I stay in here
Before I can say "I'm free"
Four Six Eight Nine
It doesn't matter now, THAT'S me.
Goodbye!

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THE YELLOW FIERY NIGHT

The flames leapt high
As the synagogue burned,
Turning the night sky into a torch.
The people with yellow stars
Rushing around the streets,
Trying to salvage what they can.

The Nazis fire a salvo,
Four people stop and fall.
Most are too shocked to do anything.
It happens so quickly.
The men, rounded up, are thrown into the
yellow nightmare,
The women just stand and watch.

The Germans laugh as they see people crying,
As they watch the men become charred.
Those who resist are tortured,
Those who do nothing are taken away,
Those who co-operate are spat at.

The sky was black; but not from night,
From the smoking building.
The pavement was grey; but not from the
worn-out tar,
From the mens' hot ashes.
'Shema Yisrael Adonai Elohanu, Adonai
Echad' is the chant that remained in
everyones' head,
Who saw the yellow, fiery night.

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About the AJR

Founded in 1941 by Jewish refugees from Central Europe, The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) is the national charity representing and supporting Holocaust refugees and survivors living in Great Britain. Primarily delivering social, welfare and care services, the AJR has a nationwide network of regional groups offering members a unique opportunity to socialise in their local area. Members receive support from volunteers and can obtain advice and assistance on welfare rights as well as on Holocaust reparations.

The AJR is committed to the education of future generations about the Holocaust and is now the UK's largest benefactor of education and memorialisation programmes and projects which promote teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

About 70,000 refugees, including approximately 10,000 children on the *Kindertransport*, arrived in Great Britain from Nazi-occupied Europe in the 1930s. The AJR extends membership to anyone who fled a Nazi-occupied country as a Jewish refugee or who arrived in Great Britain as a Holocaust survivor. We also welcome the descendants and spouses of the refugees as members.



“I have a memory of one occasion, when I was alone at home and a plane flew very low over the house. I was terrified, opened a window and climbed out. I was sitting on the doorstep when the Bruchet’s came home. To this day the sound of low-flying aeroplanes scares me.”

 **AJR** The Association
of Jewish Refugees

www.ajr.org.uk