

Ainsworth and Marianne Wates 1935-1939 and helping Jewish refugees

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This an account of the facts, as I have been able to ascertain them, relating to my parents' meeting, Marianne coming to England, their courtship, marriage and honeymoon and Ainsworth's travels in Europe and help to Jews during this period. The general outline is known but some of the chronology has been muddled.

I was not sure what names to use for them. I have decided to use Jimmy and Marianne. Most people involved in this narrative would have known Ainsworth as Jimmy and this name was commonly used by other friends and by his nieces and nephews. Although Marianne was known as Babi by Jimmy and by her family and Austrian friends, this name was not used by the English family and friends. As to their parents, I have sometimes referred to them by their relationship and sometimes by name – Leslie and Lucy for Ainsworth's parents and Andor and Magda for Marianne's.

I have enlarged on such oral information as I recollect and have recorded by researching all written information in our possession. Unfortunately this is all Jimmy's. Jimmy kept everything, in particular diaries that he wrote, letters received and photograph albums. Jimmy's mother also kept everything so we have Jimmy's letters home. Marianne kept nothing! There are diaries and photograph albums from her childhood but nothing covering this period. She did keep all Jimmy's letters received during the War but that is a later period.

1935

Jimmy was at Trinity Hall, Cambridge from 1932-35 and obtained a law degree. He was then an articled clerk with J.D.Langton & Passmore and studied for his solicitors law exam. In his last year at Cambridge he had fallen in love with a woman named René (his nickname for her was Newt) who owned a bar. Unfortunately she was married – it seems her husband was a way at the time – so it had to be broken off. Not long before he died he was upset that he seemed to have lost a file in which there were photographs of her and letters. I don't know whether it came to light before he died, but I have it. The significance of this is that she gave him a diary which he kept from Dec 1935 to July 1938 with a very brief 3 line entry per day, initially very much addressed to René and often expressing his feelings.

Marianne did not go to a higher education establishment. Her father wanted her to learn secretarial work. From June 1933 to February 1934 (according to her photo album) she was in Lausanne with the Faes family – business associates of her father in the vine business – where it seems she had secretarial training and worked for a time for a bank. She thought she worked for another company in Vienna for a time, and Franz Steiner informed me that this was Mercur Bank, but otherwise did secretarial work for the Teleki business working with Mr Lendner and Mr Glatzmayer. We know nothing about any boyfriends that she might have had.

After the end of term in summer 1935 Jimmy went on a trip to Germany and Austria from 5th July to 3rd Aug. The focus of this trip seems to have been to meet up with family friends Daisy Longland (a school friend, I think, of Lucy) and her daughter Jessie. Jimmy had been keen on Jessie but by this time that was over. They were staying at Brixlegg in the Inn valley north-east of Innsbruck. From a letter from Jessie's brother, Cedric, in 1934 the family were at Brixlegg then and it seems they had friends living near by. It was probably Cedric's letter than encouraged Jimmy to go. He travelled by train to Munich and then by bus and foot (including one 27 mile walk) via the Tegernsee and Walchensee. After a brief stay at Brixlegg he did walks in the area north of the Inn valley staying in mountain hostels .

While in Germany before arriving at Brixlegg he had befriended a German, Wolfgang Heiler, who was a member of the Hitler Youth Movement and who invited him to come to Berlin. He took this up and arrived in Berlin on 28th July

where he stayed with the Heiler family and was shown round Berlin, although he had some language difficulty as he knew little German. He returned to England via Cologne. He also wrote that he might go to Hanover but no evidence whether he did or not.

1936 - Siegerlandhütte

In 1959 we were on holiday in Italy on the Adriatic coast and Jimmy took me up to the mountains to visit the place where he and Marianne had first met. We drove to Merano (or it may have been only as far as Bolzano) and from there I think we must have travelled by bus across the frontier to Sölden in the Ötztal (river Ötz valley). We then walked up to the hut which is a mountain hostel. It was a long steep walk which took all afternoon and I remember longing for the bowl of soup that would await us when we got there. Jimmy was astonished to find that the glacier with the snow where he had learned to ski had melted. Amazingly one of the female staff there recognised him. We stayed the night and the following day hired a guide to take us up to the ridge which was the Italian frontier. We walked down to the road and caught a bus back to Merano.

The following year we went as a family to Hochsölden on a skiing holiday. This is on the other side of the valley from Siegerland. One of the skiing instructors there also recognised Jimmy.

Before embarking on this research there was virtually nothing to verify the information given by Marianne and Jimmy that that is where they first met or when it was. We knew that nothing started between them then and that that only happened later after Marianne had come to England and presumably made contact. There was a small photo album with the date 1937 which seemed to be Marianne's. Letters filled the gaps and then I discovered that Jimmy had in fact kept a detailed diary of the holiday!

In June 1936 Lucy and Barbara, Jimmy's sister, went for a holiday in Sölden staying at the Hotel Post. There must have been some introduction to the owner Mr Riml. Barbara wanted to take skiing lessons – skiing was possible at the tops of the surrounding mountains. An English girl came down from the Siegerlandhütte and recommended it so Barbara went up and stayed for a few days taking skiing lessons. In a letter she refers to Judith, who might have been the lady that was there on our visit 23 years later and who remembered Jimmy.

What presumably then happened was that Barbara, after her return home, recommended it to Jimmy who went the following month leaving on 6th July. This turned out to be a fateful decision for two reasons as will be seen.

He travelled by train to Ötztal and then bus to Sölden arriving on 7th at the Hotel Post He went up to Siegerland on Friday 10th with a Hungarian who was waiting for some others who followed the next day. It rained and rained so was a miserable 5 hour hike. He was welcomed as Barbara's brother. He became very friendly with the staff and various guests came and went while he was there. On the Saturday he skied for the first time. His initial ski instructor was Serafin and he was replaced by Max. (It may be Max who was one of the instructors at Hochsölden in 1960 and who remembered him)

On Tuesday 14th he records the arrival of an Austrian and his sister and 2 Americans. That day he went on a long skiing expedition getting very sunburnt from which he suffered for several days. On the Friday about 25 English people on a tour passed through staying the one night. The Americans left on the Sunday morning so they were now only four in the skiing class – “the two Hungarians from Vienna, Dr and Fraulein Teleki,” a new lady from Vienna and himself. On Monday a Dutch family arrived – mother, daughter Dora, son Tom and his fiancée Loeki whom he found very attractive. That and the following evening were enjoyed by all and they played Mikado “which Teleki had produced”. On Friday 24th they did the Zuckerhutl, Max, the Telekis and himself on ski and four others on foot including two Dutchmen (the Dutch family may have left). He left on Saturday afternoon with the Telekis and Max, who was to return the following day. They were given a tremendous farewell from everyone in the hut. He had been there just over two weeks and clearly made an impression that was remembered 23 years late

There are no photos in Jimmy's album, but there is an envelope with negatives and prints – some very good views. Syd is clearly in some of the photos but Marianne only identifiable in a couple. There are also some photos supplied by someone else describing Jimmy as Jim and Syd as Teleki. As mentioned above there is a small album of photos with a message at the beginning signed Mary Anne Teleki and Syd Teleki and dated June 1937. I think this may be a present brought with them to England on the occasion of their visit in June 1937. At first I assumed they must have been taken by Syd but it turns out that they are prints from Jimmy's negatives so this is a mystery. Did he send them some prints which they then put in this album and gave back to him?

On Friday 31st he recorded part of the second part of his holiday which was a climbing holiday. On the day after his return from Siegerland he spent time trying to find a companion to go climbing with. Someone was found and he was introduced to her by Serafin – Käthe Lichtenstern from Vienna. They hit it

off immediately, she spoke perfect English, being an English teacher, and they spent about five days together. For part of the time they were accompanied by an Austrian, who did not speak English and whose name they never discovered! I had previously either read somewhere or remember Jimmy telling me that he had met Käthe somewhere on his travels in the Alps but I had no idea it was on the same holiday as Siegerland. This was the meeting that led him ultimately to Vienna and helping the Jews. Käthe clearly fell for him, as many women did, but he makes it clear in diary entries that although he liked her as a companion, it did not go further than that. On the 3rd Aug he recorded "Home at last! How lovely England seems and yet – how lovely those mountains and valleys."

1937

Other than letters from Käthe, as to which see below, there are no letters received after this holiday but there must have been contacts both with the Dutch family and with the Telekis. In March he and Barbara went on a skiing holiday to Hochsölden, staying at the Pension Sonnenblick, owned by the same family as the Hotel Post in Sölden. The Dutch family were in a different hotel. Tom, Loeki and Dora were joined by a friend, Lou. There are 16 pages of photos in his Jimmy's album of this holiday which lasted 3 weeks. He contemplated going to Siegerland for a couple of days at the end while Barbara went to Geneva to stay with the Vernet family there, but in the end did not.

He recorded in the diary after his return "It was a perfectly wonderful holiday" and two days later "I wish I was setting out again. What wonderful friends we meet on holidays. I wish Dora and Lou, Lueki and Tom were here."

From about 10th to 16th June Marianne and Syd were in London and seem to have spent a lot of the time with Jimmy, going to Cambridge on the Saturday and to Rowhill on the Sunday. It would seem that this was planned as there are advance entries in the pocket diary as well as entries in the René diary so there must have been some communication, possibly by telephone. Their parents were not with them. Jimmy only refers to them as the Telekis. Jimmy recorded in the diary "I hope I shall see them again for they are ever so nice."

From Andor's photo album it can be deduced that Marianne was with her parents on a visit to the Paris World Exhibition, which she confirmed. She and Syd must then have come to England while her parents remained in France – there are photos in Normandy and then of the car boarding a ship at Dieppe.

After leaving London Marianne and Syd went to Bournemouth from where Marianne wrote on 4th July, with photos taken at Rowhill and Cambridge, and where their parents were to join them in their car. On their return journey to London they visited Dorchester, Wells, Salisbury and Chichester, On the 15th

Jimmy met Marianne and Magda for dinner, on the 18th they visited Rowhill – “I like Marianne Teleki very much” and on the 19th they all went to the ballet with Jimmy’s father. They returned to Europe by boat from Harwich after visits to Oxford and Cambridge and stopping at Frinton.

On the day that they had arrived in London in June Jimmy received a letter from Käthe saying that she was coming to England and they met on 13th July. She was invited to Rowhill on the 17th for the night and was there on the 18th when the Telekis were there. They had been in continual correspondence since their meeting. Käthe obtained her doctorate in October but, as explained in her own account written in the 1990s and in one of her letters, it was difficult as a Jew to get good employment. She gave private lessons and lived with her parents which she found irksome. She wanted to get away and in November wrote asking whether Jimmy or his father could look out for a job for her to enable her to get a year’s permit to come to England. If this was not possible she would come as a tourist in the summer and look out for something. In a later letter she thought she had something but nothing came of it.

In October she decided to stay in England and Leslie arranged for her to attend a commercial secretarial course in English, French and German which he paid for. He was also giving her an allowance of £2 per week. She did a bit of teaching at Morley College. It is not clear from the correspondence when and how she got a permit to stay in England.

From 14th to 22nd August there was a big family gathering at Hintertux in the Tyrol, Austria to celebrate Helen’s 21st birthday and he was then in Geneva from 23rd – 28th where the Vernet and du Pans families were friends of the family.

On the 18th Syd wrote from Vienna to Jimmy at Hintertux sending photos from their England trip and writing that the rest of the family were in Hungary. Andor’s photo album shows that they were in Pécs. In October there was a grand celebration of Andor and Magda’s silver wedding in Vienna..

At the end of July Jimmy had gone for a weekend to visit the Dutch friends in Holland and early in September he saw a lot of Dora who was in England for a week – she was keen on him but he not so sure.

12th March 1938 – Anschluss

This was the date of the merger of Austria with Germany and the commencement of the persecution of the Jews.

Jimmy recorded in the diary “Hitler having forced Schushnigg to resign sends his troops into Austria. Käthe is with us here” and on 13th March “I fear for

Käthe or rather for her people. The Austrian Nazis are in full control assisted by Hitler's armed forces. Poor Käthe . Poor Austria. Poor Europe."

Käthe was due to give a lecture on life in Vienna on 15th. She went ahead with it and Jimmy recorded "a more plucky and noble performance I have never witnessed"

The Teleki family were in Vienna. Andor photographed the scenes in the Schwarzenberg Platz from the flat in Brucknerstasse including marching soldiers

On 26th March Syd wrote to Jimmy from Vienna. He was glad the uncertainty was over and that it had been bloodless. He invited Jimmy and his parents to come to Hungary in the summer. However he was not sure that Mary Ann would be there as she probably leaves after Easter [18th April] for England where she had been invited by a girlfriend to stay in Sussex. She then wants to become an au pair and could he help?

There had presumably been discussions at Rowhill as to what to do about Käthe's family as on 1st April Jimmy records that his father suggests he goes to Vienna at Easter. On the 8th Käthe was at Rowhill and he recorded he did not think he would be any good. He departed on 13th, was in Salzburg "covered in swastikas" on 14th and on the 15th was with Käthe's parents – "a loveable people trembling beneath the Terror".

In the meantime Marianne must have come to England earlier than Syd had anticipated and must have made contact with Jimmy and was aware of his going to Vienna, as on 14th Leslie wrote to Jimmy that there was a card from her in Sussex repeating an invitation for him to go to Budapest and suggesting that he contacts Grete Prutscher in Vienna. The Prutscher s were friends of the Telekis, Grete's brother Pius being a school friend of Syd.

In a postcard home on 17th he writes that he had been to the opera and had met "the lady MaryAnne mentions".(The post at that time was amazing. He must have received the letter from his father written on the 14th to Post Restante, Vienna on either 15th or 16th). His photo album shows that he walked, probably in the Vienna woods, with Edith and Hertha Lichtenstern. Edith was Käthe's sister and Hertha was a cousin. His pocket diary shows that he left Vienna on 19th and arrived in Dover on 20th.

He must have met Marianne's parents in the short time that he was in Vienna as he records later having delivered his "precious burden of the cigarette case made from Austrian gold coinage", but there is no clue to this in his pocket diary or any other source. Syd was no longer in Vienna having left on 12th April. The information for this is contained in a statement made by Mr Lendner in 1988 when Syd was applying for Austrian citizenship. Immediately following

the Anschluss he had received threats from former colleagues at college who were Nazis and whom he knew had him on a black list because of his anti-Nazi views; his father had publicly stated his opposition to the new regime; and he had been summoned by the Gestapo and requested to leave the country being a Hungarian national.

Syd told me that Pius Prutscher was on a black list because of his outspoken anti-Nazi views but fortunately was in hospital having his tonsils out at the time of the Anschluss and could not therefore be found! The Prutscher s were not Jewish. Syd told me nothing about himself at that time.

Syd told me that he went to Switzerland in 1939 but this must have been an incorrect memory as Jimmy visited him in Lausanne in Aug 1938. He told me that Andor had purchased a flat in Lausanne sometime before so that he could claim Swiss residence and have a bank account there. The company had an associated company there dealing with the sale of vines in Switzerland. Syd was not able to get a work permit and registered as a student although in practice he worked for the firm, and presumably lived in the flat, although he did not say this. It is not known whether he went straight to Switzerland or whether he went to Hungary first.

Andor received a similar request but did not take it seriously and stayed in Vienna, or at least this was his base. His photo album shows that he and Magda were in Abbazia some time in April, in Budapest at the time of a Eucharistic congress in May and travelling in Italy and Switzerland in July and August.

I had always understood from conversations with her that Marianne's reason for coming to England was to get away from her father! A letter written to Jimmy from Pécs, Hungary in August 1939 explains why. "I had to type for father this afternoon. He was in a rather bad mood. He often makes everything so difficult, life for himself and the people round him, when it could be so easy with a little bit of more understanding. Poor Syd got a very unfriendly letter today. I have to write him tomorrow not to be excited about it." However when interviewing her in 2000 she denied that and said that it was because of the political situation and general exodus because of the Nazis. I suspect the earlier story was to avoid having to talk about the Jewish background.

Jimmy records in the diary that he spent the evening with Marianne on 27th April, that is a week after his return, when he handed over the cigarette case – "Marianne is absolutely charming". On the weekend 7th/8th May she stayed at Rowhill when Brian Taylor, Jimmy's friend from Cambridge, was also staying. On 20th May they went to the cinema together. On 28th June "A most

unexpected happening occurred today Mary Ann wanted to be kissed after I had taken her home after going to the ballet She was duly kissed”

Because of exchange control regulations it would have been difficult for Marianne to get money from Austria – hence presumably the cigarette case and Jimmy records in his diary on 20th May the amazing tale of how her mother sent 100 gold schillings baked inside a cake!

Marianne’s address in Sussex was Ruckford House, Hurstpierpoint (from Leslie’s acknowledgement of her card). A Google search reveals a Ruckford Farm House, Malthouse Lane, BN6 9JY. We do not know the name of the friend. She told me that she came to see a friend and stayed for about one month. She then moved to London to join Minka, so this would have been early in May. On another occasion she said that Minka was working as a seamstress for Harold and Sybil Abrahams and managed to get her a job with them as a sort of au pair. Harold Abrahams, a Jew, was the Olympic gold medallist celebrated in the film ‘Chariots of Fire’.

Minka Hartman was a friend from Vienna. Franz Steiner informed me that her father, who was Jewish and a doctor, was interned as an enemy alien with him and his brother Willi Steiner on 6th July 1940 – they happened to be on the same transport. He did not know whether they came from Vienna together. The father lived with Minka after his release until his death. Her two brothers remained in Austria. Their mother was not Jewish which is why the brothers were able to remain. Minka returned to Austria in the early 1970s. My conjecture is that Harold Abrahams and Dr Hartman were in some way acquainted.

On 3rd July Jimmy recorded in the diary that he went to Rickmansworth to see Mary Anne. “She and a friend are staying with the great Abrahams”. On the 7th July after his departure for Europe (see below) he sent a telegram from Holland to Teleki c/o Abrahams, Whiteladies, Batchworth Hill, Rickmansworth. Andor’s photo album contains photos, which he has dated August, sent by Marianne. One is of a group of four women, one of whom I can identify as Minka. Two are of a large detached house – possibly Whiteladies. Mark Ryan’s biography of Harold Abrahams states that he took in a Jewish refugee called ‘Minka’ and that he and his wife, Sybil, were living in Rickmansworth in a house called ‘Whiteladies’. It would seem from the above that Marianne was there from May until at least July or August.

The plan for the Lichtensterns, presumably discussed in April, was for Edith, who was a qualified lawyer, to get training in cooking etc with a view to a job being found in England so that she could get an employment visa; and to try to get a limited visa for the parents to enable them to get out of Austria if

necessary with Leslie giving a guarantee. Käthe made some abortive efforts to find a job for Edith and in the end, Leslie arranged at the beginning of July for her to do domestic work for their friends the Milners at the house Hillside in Hextable.

On 7th July Jimmy embarked on a holiday in Europe with his Riley sports car which was to take him to Vienna to see what he could do to progress the applications for the Lichtensterns. He recorded in the diary that he said goodbye to Mary Anne on the 6th and sent her the telegram on the 7th giving his address as Post Restante Leiden. The diary records that he was in Blankenberg, Belgium on 7th (See Lucy's biography of Leslie for the story about the Blankenberg hotel) and Holland on 8th - "It is nice being among friends and I should like to stay here as long as possible. Vienna seems so far away." He normally stopped entries in the Renée diary when away on holiday but on this occasion he stopped then and never resumed. This was the last entry. In view of their relationship clearly becoming closer before his departure, one would expect correspondence between him and Marianne but nothing has survived. Marianne did not keep any letters until Jimmy departed on service in the War but it is odd that none of her letters, assuming there were some, were kept. We do however have the two-way correspondence between Jimmy and his parents.

He visited the Dutch friends in Holland and also René Martin du Pans who was staying with friends in Holland. On 13th he was involved in a collision with a bus in Cleve, Rhineland, Germany. The bus driver was making a claim against him and presumably insisting he be prosecuted. The police however seemed to be on his side and in effect seem to have assisted him in successfully defending a prosecution the following day in Bonn. He wrote home that in one day without knowing the language he had won a court case! There is a photo of the police in his album. The following day he wrote that having the car made it a most interesting and wonderful type of holiday.

From 17th July until 12th August he was in Vienna except for some breaks. He stayed with Grete Prutscher at Windmühlgasse 12 in the 6th district. On 20th he went with Grete to Gutenstein. On the 24th he went to the mountains with Edith Lichtenstern, her parents and Hertha.

The 24th was the day that two things occurred in England. Jimmy had passed his Law Society finals and was thus qualified and Käthe got her first full time job, again facilitated by Leslie. She went to Leslie's office to tell him and found great excitement about Jimmy having passed. The job was with the German Jewish Aid Committee at Woburn House.

Maybe the excursion on that day was to celebrate both and a farewell to Edith who arrived in England on 1st August. She was met at Victoria Station by Käthe, the two of them at Swanley by Leslie, dinner at Rowhill and then to the Milners, Käthe returning to London as she was commencing her new job the following day

The weekend 31st July/1st Aug was spent in the Salzkammergut with 'friends' using someone else's car. Photographs show that one of the friends was Pius Prutscher. From the 2nd – 5th Aug he was in Budapest visiting friends of Marianne and her aunt Käthe Brandt. Although he stayed in a hotel, he used her address for correspondence.

There is much correspondence between Jimmy and Leslie while he was in Vienna as to the problems of progressing the Lichtensterns' application, whether it should be for 3 months or more, whether pursued in Vienna, which Jimmy had been trying to do, or in England and whether through Woburn House or direct with the Home Office, what happens at the end of the 3 months if there is nowhere else to go etc. Jimmy explained that one of the problems was that the rules were constantly changing making it more and more difficult to obtain visas as the Home Office tried to stem the flow of refugees. He found that on his return from Hungary British citizens were no longer given ready access to the Consulate and the Consulate was overcrowded. One sometimes had to wait for 6 hours standing and the weakest people got pushed to the back.

On 10th August he wrote that Leslie's letter to Victor Lichtenstern, presumably saying that he could stay at Rowhill once they were able to come to England, had given him hope of ultimate deliverance from this hell. Every day there is a new regulation and every conceivable way out will be blocked. The atmosphere is getting worse and worse. Victor's brother, Richard and his family including Hertha would be leaving soon, for Palestine, and they would be alone. How long could they hold out mentally.

He wrote of his memories in a letter to Käthe in 1997. "I used to help people get visas at the British Consulate. The queue for visas was so long that it ended in the street where the Jewish applicants were liable to be beaten up. I saw one poor old lady being made to get on her hands and knees and made to go through the motions of scrubbing the pavement. So I was well aware of the fear that stalked the streets."

"One evening in the flat we were sitting around the table. Your father was reading, your mother sewing and your sister studying. The street door downstairs opened and closed and heavy footsteps, two persons, came up the first flight of stairs. I can't remember whether the flat was on the 1st or 2nd

floor. I seem to remember two flights of stairs. As the steps came up and up your family froze. I certainly learnt fear that evening. But your poor family probably had it every night until they came to England.”

“I did some money smuggling and was on more than one occasion offered money to marry. I helped Lucie Rie, the famous potter, get her papers. Back in England she gave me a pot.”

Lucie Rie was a friend of Grete and Grete wrote that they were in London on 6th October. There are a couple of diary entries about meeting them after that and correspondence with her concerning helping others. There is mention of other names in his correspondence with Grete.

In the letter of the 10th he wanted to leave “this God forsaken city as soon as possible” but he had to meet Mary Anne’s mother somewhere and that had not been arranged. From the photo album, as noted above, she may have been in Switzerland. There is no evidence that the meeting took place. Indeed in April the following year Magda wrote that she had not seen Marianne since August so she must have been in England but there is no other evidence of that.

He left Vienna on 12th August having done as much as he could. Leslie made a new application for them through Woburn House on 18th August agreeing to give a 5years’ guarantee.

Before leaving Vienna he visited Bratislava on the 10th with Grete. On leaving on the 12th he went with her in his car to Techendorf on the Weissensee in Carinthia where Grete’s sister was¹ and so that Grete could have a holiday which she needed. They drove over the Gross Glockner pass. Although they got to the top the car then broke down and there was quite an adventure getting it down and then repaired. There is a photograph of the car lifted on to a lorry which helped them. This caused a delay and he wrote home that when it was repaired, he would return via Italy, over the St Bernard pass into Switzerland visiting Syd in Lausanne and then on to the Vernets in Geneva. He left on 24th visiting Venice, with which he was enchanted; spent the day with Syd on 26th – “I find him very pleasant and extremely sensible and a pleasure to talk to” – who was going to Hungary for a tour of vineyards. He stayed with the Vernets in Geneva, with some visits to the Martin du Pans family at Bellerive, for a few days and may have visited Paris on his way home in the first days of Sept.

¹ Information later obtained from Katharina Prutscher. Her sister was Elly and she and her husband lived with Grete.

A letter dated 27th August from Zurich addressed to Jimmy at the Vernets shows that he smuggled 3 rings for someone out of Austria, presumably posting them once he was in Switzerland.

September 1938 – April 1939

Marianne

Following Jimmy's return to England there are frequent notes in his pocket diary in September of dates to meet Marianne. These taper off during the following months but no doubt by that time he was not putting them all in the diary. There are a similar number for meeting Käthe .

At some stage Marianne got a room in a boarding house in Swiss Cottage at 12 Crossfield Road. She said that when her father had reconciled himself to her not coming home he arranged a secretarial job for her with Brookes & Bohm Ltd in 90 Victoria Street, London, a company that he did business with in the wine trade. As she had come to England with a tourist visa she says this was illegal. May be this coincided with the move to Swiss Cottage.

In September Andor put money into the company, arranged credit facilities and took a controlling interest, with Marianne and Syd appointed directors of the company.

It would seem that until then she did not have a job. In a letter dated 21st Sept from Grete Prutscher to Jimmy she says that she will be replying to letters from Marianne. She cannot offer advice on what she should do but vegetating for 6 months is time that cannot be brought back. Was she seeking advice as to whether to take up the Brookes & Bohm work?

She did and worked there until shortly before my birth in January 1943.

There is mention of the Telekis on the 14th and 19th October but no other evidence that they were in England then. Indeed, as already mentioned, Magda, in April of the following year, wrote that she had not seen Marianne since August. It might have been a Brookes & Bohm business meeting.

In November application was made for a visa to enable her to stay officially – whether this was a consequence of the immigration authorities catching up with her is not known. This was refused in February.

Lichtensterns and Jewish refugees

On 27th October Dr. Lichtenstern received a letter from Woburn House that permission had been granted and he would take it to the Passport Control Office in Vienna. On the 15th November he reported that he had the visa and hoped to depart at the end of the month. On 19th December Leslie wrote to

Miss Hoffman at Woburn House that they were now at Rowhill. They stayed there until March when they rented a room in London and by April they had moved into a flat at 27 Highbury New Park, N5 which became the home of the family including Edith, with the daughters providing for their parents.

In a letter to Jimmy of 13th December concerning helping other Jews Käthe wrote:-“When I consider the fate of other Jews it seems an injustice that just I should have met you in Tyrol”.

On 2nd January in a letter from Palestine her cousin Hertha informed Jimmy that her brother, Franzl, had obtained a British visa (from an earlier letter it seems this was a transit visa) and would possibly also get a Palestine one but they (the Austrian authorities) would not let him go. He was being held in Buchenwald concentration camp. She is ashamed to be in Palestine whereas many friends were not so lucky.

In May 1939 Käthe wrote that Franzl was safe. Käthe 's mother's brother lived in Paris and perished at Auschwitz.

Between his return from Vienna in September and April 1939 Jimmy engaged in voluminous correspondence in attempts to help refugees to find employment in England so as to obtain visas. There were people requiring help from his time in Vienna, from Käthe and Lucie Rei and others sources and he had and sort out information on people with available positions including farming in Hereford. The file of papers is about 1 inch thick and he kept a note book containing details of over 40 contacts. This must have been time consuming and ultimately his professional work prevented him from carrying on. It is not clear to what extent, if at all, he was successful.

Marianne

Marianne spent Christmas at Rowhill as shown by photos taken by Jimmy and evidenced by a letter from Magda to Jimmy written on 12th Feb with belated birthday wishes. It was a cold Christmas and the photos show them skiing on the Little Mount. Andor also inserted newspaper photos of snow in England in his photo album. This also shows that her parents travelled through Austria and Germany, presumably from Vienna, to Paris in December. They then toured through France and on to the Riviera. In Magda's letter, which was written from Budapest staying with Katie ,she says that they were alone for Christmas and Syd had returned to Switzerland, presumably having met up with them; they spent a week in San Remo and returned to Vienna on 12th Jan staying 10 days; they were about to go to Vienna and would stay two or three weeks

The visa request having been rejected in February Marianne was requested by the Home Office to leave by the end of March. There is a draft of a letter prepared by Jimmy to be sent by Mr Bohm to accompany a request for a 6 months temporary extension from which I have derived the information about the company. It seems that a one month's extension was obtained and Jimmy noted in his diary for 30th April "second ultimatum to leave".

In the meantime, they had got engaged. We know that this occurred when Marianne went with the Wates family on holiday to the Two Bridges Hotel in Dartmoor over Easter. Easter Day that year was 9th April. The photo album shows photos from the holiday although it does not mention the engagement. I have a recollection, but I can't be certain it is accurate, of Jimmy informing me on an excursion to Two Bridges of the precise place. Leaving the hotel in a westerly direction there is a footpath on the right which goes up parallel to a stream and then crosses it. I think it was at the bridge. June Roots (nee Blomfield) recollected this when writing to me in 2013. She and Marigold, Helen and Bernard were on the holiday but she thinks the announcement of the engagement was after the return home.

Whether the timing of this had anything to do with the visa application I don't know, but Jimmy was then able to write to the Home Office on the 20th April, followed by a personal visit on 26th April, informing them of the engagement and requesting a permit until the autumn to give them time to prepare for the details that need to be arranged in connection with their future home. It seems however to have been Harold Abrahams' intervention that obtained the extension. It is contained in a letter addressed to him at his chambers 4 Elm Court, Temple dated 1st May granting a six months' extension. I had been told that he worked at the Home Office which is why he was able to help. His biography shows that this was incorrect. He was a barrister, as confirmed by the letter being addressed to the Temple, so how he was able to influence the matter is a mystery. As he was well-known in government circles may be he had some influence in the Home Office.

Marianne's parents were still in Vienna and the photo album shows photos taken in the streets on the occasion of the celebration of Hitler's 50th birthday on 20th April. They then came to England at the end of April. Jimmy's pocket diary notes on 28th April 'Teleki Boulogne' and on 2nd May, being Marianne's birthday, there is a menu from the Hungarian restaurant, Regent St signed by both parents, Syd and Bernard and Mary Anne. Andor's photo album shows photos at Rowhill and his and Magda's subsequent trip to Scotland and return via Dover and Calais. There is then a photo of Magda with the caption 'bei Syd in Morges' – at Syd's in Morges, Lausanne.

Mr Lendner's statement, previously referred to in support of Syd's citizenship application, states that, not having complied with the original request and being again requested to leave the country by the Gestapo with some understanding that there were life threats if they did not comply, Andor decided to emigrate to Switzerland in May. It is not however clear, as will be seen, that this actually occurred in May. Syd informed me that Andor bribed the authorities not to take any action if he left the country so that he was able to move the furniture to the flat in Lausanne

Wedding

Syd told me that Andor wanted the marriage to be in Hungary but Syd persuaded him that in view of the international situation it would be better to have it in Switzerland. From a letter in April, Magda had been assuming that it would be in England and that they might not be able to be present. At some stage it was fixed for the 19th August.

Marianne wanted to go to Hungary to prepare but she needed to be certain that she would be able to get back into England afterwards. She therefore needed an English passport before leaving, hence the decision to get married in a registry office in England before her departure. This took place at the Hampstead registry office on 20th July. The witnesses were Harold and Sybil Abrahams, Brian Taylor and Jimmy's parents. When asked in 1994 the reason for the Abrahams being witnesses neither could remember. They had always kept in touch and there is a note in Jimmy's pocket diary of a party in November 1938; and Harold was clearly involved in getting the visa extension.

The passport application had already been made so they went straight to the Passport Office with the marriage certificate to collect it. The story is that they then went on to Victoria Station for Marianne to catch the train to the continent. However she was not sure whether it was the same day and a note in Jimmy's diary on the 22nd states 'Babi leaves'

She went first to Vienna arriving on the 23rd. Her mother was there, despite having apparently left in May according to Mr Lendner's statement, and presumably one travelled via Vienna to get to Budapest anyway. She was met at the station by her mother, Grete Prutscher and Franzi Steiner's parents. She was there for 3 days dining twice with Grete and once with the Steiners and seeing everyone else. Included in everyone else was Magda's cousin Lotte. Her daughter Marina, aged 4, recalls with awe being presented to these two elegantly dressed ladies. Marianne wrote that Vienna was terribly depressing – the whole town dead and unpleasant – not the Vienna she remembered.

She and her mother arrived in Pécs on 26th July. The next three weeks were spent in preparations for the wedding and honeymoon with two long stays in

Budapest. There was constant communication with Jimmy in England and presumably Syd in Lausanne who was dealing with all the preparations there. The letters include information about wedding presents received from different people.

There was some uncertainty as to whether Katie would be able to attend the wedding as Marianne's grandmother had a heart attack on 1st August, the day after she and her mother arrived in Budapest. In the event she had recovered sufficiently and was able to see Marianne in her wedding dress before they departed. Magda travelled to Lausanne by train with the luggage. Andor and Marianne travelled by car from Pécs to Budapest and left with Katie on 13th August. They crossed into Austria and drove via Graz to Villach where they stayed the night. On the 14th they crossed into Italy, stopped at Milan and stayed at Lugano. Having driven through Austria Marianne wrote "marvellous feeling to be in a free country again". On the 15th they probably stopped at Zug, just south of Zurich and would have arrived in Lausanne on 16th.

Honeymoon

My information here comes partly from notes of a conversation in 1989 and partly from Jimmy's letters home.

The plan was to go to Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia and the necessary visas had been obtained. Marianne did not recollect why they chose Dubrovnik – it was just a place they had heard about. However, in view of the imminence of war this was considered dangerous and Andor suggested that they went to Stresa in the Italian Lakes instead. They duly went to Stresa but the weather was bad and it was boring so they took the plunge and continued to Dubrovnik – train to Venice, gondola to the boat and 3 days on the boat, stopping off at Susak and Split and arriving on 24th or 25th. Jimmy wrote home glowingly of the journey. Marianne's parents were not told of the change until they had arrived.

It was difficult to obtain information about the international situation but they found an Englishman who owned a hotel (this from a letter – the verbal information was that he was a solicitor from Woolwich) and was in constant touch through wireless. On 23rd the German-Russian pact was signed and on 25th the Poland-British Common Defence Pact. Jimmy wrote on 28th: "Isn't it annoying of Hitler and Co to do all this when we are having such a magnificent holiday". If Italy remains neutral, they would return through Italy – if not they would go to Athens.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty about Italy's position, when their contact told them the day before that the last boat to Venice was leaving on 1st Sept, they decided to take it. The solicitor was a Jew and decided to head for Alexandria. They packed in such a way that, if necessary, they could just carry essentials. On the ship were lots of Germans at one end and French at the other. Germany invaded Poland when they were at Split. The Italians, however, would not allow Yugoslav ships to Italy so it only went as far as the frontier. It is not clear where this was. They said Susak but that is an island. They had just missed the bus to Trieste so got a taxi. At Trieste they just missed the Orient Express and got a train to Milan, which was blacked out and with soldiers in the streets. With further trains and buses they finally crossed the frontier into Switzerland at Brigue in the early hours of 3rd Sept. War was declared that day! (In the event Italy did not enter the war until the following year).

Marianne's parents were still in Lausanne at Hotel Mont Fleuri where they joined them. The French frontier was closed and in order to get back to England it was necessary to get French visas but there was no communication across France. They were thus stuck in Lausanne for the time being. There are photos of them on a balcony, presumably of the hotel, and bathing at Pully on the outskirts of Lausanne. There are also photos at Pully visiting an experimental vine station with Monsieur Faes.

Eventually a special train was laid on – 'Le train special britannique – Geneve – Angleterre' as shown in Jimmy's passport. Unfortunately, the notes I made in 1989 are missing from here but I recollect them telling of the slow journey and French people helping with supply of food. But fortunately, I discovered a little notebook in which Jimmy recorded the journey as it happened. He recorded the time of every start and stop except during the night – about three pages of the notebook – naming initially the stations where they stopped. The first was at 5.03 pm on the 13th Sept. They arrived at Dieppe at 8.30 pm on the 14th and the boat left at 2.00 am on the 15th for Newhaven.

On the 19th Syd wrote to Leslie mentioning the receipt of a telegram on the 15th from Jimmy confirming their arrival in England. The letter was mainly about the wedding films that Syd was arranging to have processed, but he also wrote that his mother had returned to Pécs and his father was staying on at the hotel being involved in the export of agricultural products from Hungary.

Addendum about the Lichtensterns

Following the outbreak of war there was a danger of them being interned as enemy aliens. In October 1939 Leslie wrote letters for all the family recommending that they be allowed to stay as friendly aliens. In June 1940 Dr Lichtenstern wrote to Leslie about arrangements in the event of his being interned but in the event he wasn't. They were initially not allowed wirelesses so the wireless that Leslie had given to Mrs Lichtenstern as a birthday present was returned to Rowhill until January 1941 when Marianne heard that they were permitted again. Their movements were restricted and they were not able to visit Rowhill for the duration of the war.

In 1941 Edith took a secretarial course and thereafter worked as a legal secretary. There is no information as to her subsequent life.

Käthe had changed her name to Katie. Her work at the Central Office for Refugees came to an end in July 1941 with the demand having reduced. Thereafter she had a number of jobs including working for a film production company. In September 1942 she married Gerhard Finkenstein. He had come to England as a refugee in about 1933². There is no information as to where he came from but he must have had some medical qualification. Leslie arranged and paid for a wedding lunch for them near Curzon Street, at which Marianne was present, and was a witness of the marriage at Islington Registry Office.

In October 1942 Gerhard obtained a job as assistant to a doctor in Chislehurst in the absence of doctors who were in military service, with Leslie vetting the agreement. In 1944 Käthe's parents joined them in Chislehurst when the doctor let a house to them. However, on the return of the other doctors in May 1945 they lost both the job and the house. In the meantime, a daughter Evelyne had been born in May 1944.

Gerhard must have obtained a job in Leicester as they were there in July 1947 when a second daughter, Marian, had been born, and where Katie's parents were living with them. Generous gifts of money were given by Leslie for both girls. He also helped with Gerhard's citizenship application which was submitted in 1944 and finally granted in September 1947. This enabled him to register as a doctor and in 1948 he was able to purchase the practice of the doctor he had been working for, with Leslie advising and also making a loan,

² Subsequently ascertained from his daughters that he went to Italy, where he obtained his medical qualifications, in 1933 from Germany and came to England in Feb 1939

probably a bridging loan pending permanent financing. By then they had changed their name to Fielding.

On 11th February 1957 Katie wrote to Leslie sending a cheque for £120 in repayment of her debt to him being the allowance he had made to her, the cost of the secretarial course and other payments of which she had kept a note. By that time with inflation it was worth much less but Lucy wrote in her biography of Leslie that “this little gesture helped to cheer the way of his passing and his faith in human nature”. Katie was unaware that he was seriously ill and he died in January of the following year.

The letter came from Nottingham where they were then living and where she had a small salary from part time teaching in a local grammar school. This enabled her to make the payment. Her father died in about 1960. Her mother was still alive in 1978 but there is no mention of her or Gerhard in a letter of 1985 when she informed Jimmy of a change of address in Nottingham. She invites him and Marianne to visit. I don't know whether they ever met again after the move to Leicester. He had the intention of doing a grand tour in the last year of his life to visit old friends but did not achieve it.³

Brian A.Wates

31/10/2019

amended 22/11/2019

³ I subsequently ascertained from her children that Katie died on 1st Jan 2009, just short of her 99th birthday.