**Pat Anson – Life Before The War**

I was born on the 9th December 1916 in Kreigshaber which is on the outskirts of Augsburg, (Bavaria, Germany).

We lived in a very spacious villa. We lived on the first floor and Lee (Fischer ) and her parents lived on the ground floor.

My parents were very loving well adjusted people and in our home there was harmony. We did a lot of things together, going walks, going swimming and all sorts of things.

We were not terribly Orthodox but we still had a kosher household. We closed our business on all holidays, we went to the Synagogue on all holidays. We were in a way very observing,and (Jewish) religion was a big part of our every day life.

I was an only child but I never missed the company of other children as I had a lot of cousins who lived all very close. My father had six brothers and they all lived in the same street only about a couple of hundred yards from each other and they all had families so there was always plenty of cousins to play with. And of course with Lee and her parents living in the same house.

Lee had a brother Sigbert who unfortunately died when he came to Great Britain, were my little cousins, were eight years younger than me and I had a lot of fun with them – taking them out in the pram. When they were older we were all very close. That is why I am still very close to my Cousin Lee; after all we have grown up together.

When I was six years old I went to the local school – which lucky for me was just across the road from us and I stayed there for four years. I was quite a good pupil and quite ambitious – I enjoyed my school days.

When I was Ten I went to school into Augsburg and it was a Lyceum – Girls Only and it was where I stayed for Six years and graduated there. My school days were all very enjoyable and there was neither any anti Semitism nor anything, especially in the School in town when we came to the later classes. We were twelve pupils and out of the twelve pupils six of them were Jewish. So, there could not have been much anti Semitism.

After six years we graduated with white caps and buns (wraps) round the shoulders. There was always a big ball for the graduates. The mothers usually came as your chaperon but it was most enjoyable.

After school I went to a sewing class for a year and in Augsburg we also had a Jewish sports club. It was originally only a tennis club which we all joined, but later on as we could not join any other clubs any more. They extended the club and they had all sorts of gymnastic and sports as there was plenty of room there. There was also a club house. All the Jewish people of Augsburg, all the young ones congregated there, and it was a nice friendly atmosphere. We had chats, we played ball we played hand ball, running and tennis and all the things we wanted to do – it was most enjoyable.

After I had been to the sewing school my parents thought it would be a good idea if I was going a bit away from home for my further education. They put an advert in the paper – it was a big Jewish paper in Germany called the Chameleon Blood. Looking for a place where you didn’t earn any money and you didn’t pay – just more or less what you call ( house keeping paid money for food and lodgings ). “House Doctor”.

A couple from Leipzig (North Germany – close to Berlin) answered and I went to them and they were actually very nice people. They had one son and they worked in the fur trade. As they had to come from the East, and we all (our family) had lived in Germany all our life it was quite a different life there all together.

I was desperately home sick – I was so home sick I went to the station to see the trains go away.

I didn’t tell my parents that I was so homesick. But one day my uncle who lived in Lumberg came up to Liptsig on business and visited me and realised how homesick I was. He said straight I should pack my case and come back home.

Why I was so home sick I really did not know but I was literally ILL with being homesick.

When I came back to Augsburg I joined a firm who sold wine and spirits to pubs and to smaller shops, and I got a job there in the office. As a matter of fact I was a proper apprentice, and I saw my three years of apprenticeship – I very much liked it there. Because in my free time I went a lot to the jewish sports club and we went swimming. Some of our friends had a house in the country where we all went. I always had a lot of friends to go out with.

It all went very well until the 9th November came along – (1938 – Kristallnacht Reichs Progrom) There was no anti Semitism and we were really not all that worried about things. When I came to work that day the foreman of the firm said to me that I should go home and not come back. So of course we soon knew then what had happened to all the Jewish businesses they were all being taken over and a lot of people were arrested.

My father was very lucky he was not arrested – I do not know why. Somehow they must have overlooked him. Two of his brothers were arrested, he and the other brothers were not arrested, which was of course a big bonus. Most of the people who were arrested were went to Dachau (Concentration Camp) and stayed there for a quite a while.

It was a bitter cold winter and people there had a very rough time I myself was very eager to get out of Germany and wrote to all possible relations abroad to get an affidavit or to get some papers. I forgot to mention I had a boyfriend, Berthold Westheimer who lives now in the States and we were really very close. We were not engaged but it was kind of understanding that we would get married. He was lucky he had papers already to go to America so he left the country already before the 9th November. (Kristallnacht)

I had a cousin (Max) in South Africa – the son of one of my uncle’s who lived in Germany, who had some business connections in Great Britain, in Bradford. And one of his daughter’s friends wanted two maids and they were good enough to give us papers so I and my friend, Irene, got the papers and we could then go to Bradford. We got all our things together – I knew very little about Irene (Mendlick) , because Irene lived in Stuttgart and we lived in Augsburg. I knew her sister better because she used to come in school holidays to my aunt and we would play together – but I knew very little of Irene.

**Pat Anson – Life During The War**

We had the same job in the household. We were in interned (in the Isle of Man) together. After the internment we both worked in the same factory sharing the same room until Irene and I got married we both were continuously together and we really were good friends which helped tremendously to have always somebody to share your life with you.

The people in Bradford were very nice especially the Jewish community. We went on Sunday Rambles with them and they arranged their Rambles to suit our day off which was every Sunday and one day during the week. They took us for nice walks and invited us to their house for tea. We had a really nice time in Bradford. We were invited in the high holidays to come to their houses. People really went out of their way to make us welcome.

Unfortunately Lee and her brother Sigbert arrived by children’s transport and they went to a place near London. My cousin (Max) in South Africa paid for them or paid some money for them. Unfortunately Sigbert got a kidney infection (was not realised until too late the seriousness of the infection) was taken to hospital and died there, which was a tremendous blow, especially for Lee who at that time was only about 14 years old. I from Bradford went down to London to the funeral and I must say it was a really shocking and very devastating experience. Lee afterwards came with me to Manchester, where the people where my other cousins stayed with in Manchester were good enough to keep Lee for a while until she was old enough to go to a household. She could not go to be a maid or anything before you were 16 and Lee at that time was only 14. I really felt terribly sorry for her at that time and we all shocked about Sigbert’s death.

While I was in Bradford working for Dr. Gibson I got to know a very nice young man called Erik Stern and we both got very friendly, and he somehow promised me he would get papers for my parents to come to America because he had a lot of relations there and he himself was almost ready to go. It was very very tempting for me to do something for my parents, and gradually my friendship with Berthold faded away and I was very friendly then with Erik Stern. We were friendly for 6 months when we got interned – not because we were enemy aliens, but we were living in the industrial area. Everybody living in the Industrial area was classed as no B. and got interned.

We were aware that sooner or later we would be interned and we had our cases almost packed when two of the committee ladies arrived to collect us. As a matter of fact Irene said that on the very morning that she was really fed up with something and said “I wish they would intern us”.

Half an hour later two ladies in two cars arrived to take us away.

They were both very nice and specially said that we should not forget to take our bathing stuff with us so we guessed we would be going to the Isle of Man.

We went first to the police station, then to the Isle of Man. Erik he was Number. C because he had not lived all the time in Bradford so he was not interned and he gradually went to America. while we were at the Isle of Man, We went by boat there I think about 3000 women. In the Isle of Man we lived in two places and we stayed in the hotels and boarding houses. We were lucky Irene and I; we stayed in a small boarding house which only had room for about 12 or 14 people. We knew most of the people who were there because they were all from Bradford who we had known before,.and a very nice and pleasant landlady. As a matter of fact every time our landlady went to Douglas the main town in the Isle of Man she brought each of us a present.

We helped with the cooking, the washing of things, preparing the vegetables and spent a lot of time on the beach. Of course living in the South of Germany I had never been to the seaside so I really enjoyed being on the beach and we did a lot of swimming. We could go for walks; we could go quite a long way until we had to turn back. At least thre quarters of an hour’s walk in each direction.

There were classes for knitting, for keep fit, French, shorthand – anything you could possibly think off. I think there were about 5,000 females on the Isle of Man and there was only one policeman – so you could imagine how dangerous we were. We were allowed to go to the pictures and were treated very humane.

When the high holidays came one of the Rabbis from the mainland came and gave us services. I must say they were very impressive, even although we were all females – it sticks out in my memory how impressive all those services were.

We had entertainment there because between all those women there were some kind of artists (Performers) originally from Berlin who really was very very good and they gave evenings and concerts so time was really very pleasant there. And it also was one of those beautiful summers so we had a lot of time to spend on the beach.

While we were at Dr Gibsons’ we were only there we both arrived in May (1939) and in May and in September of course war was declared and there were blackouts and we were very restricted in our movements. But I must say that all the people who came to the surgery or were connected with Dr Gibson were very friendly and nice to us – even although we were actually enemy aliens. In the evening when we went out just to see our friends and in the neighbourhood they were quite a few of other refugees. There was one couple about a quarter of an hour’s walk from us. The husband was in the army and the wife was at home with two children. She was absolutely delighted when we came in for an hour or so in the evening to keep her company.

**Pat Anson – Immigration**

I went to Bradford first to secure the job. Irene’s papers weren’t quite ready so she came 6 weeks afterwards. I still remember, I had never crossed the Channel of course. I went with the train to Holland and then with the boat over to Dover, then to London. In London some of those committee ladies expected you (assembly of Jewish Refugees) and they would put you on the other train – well I was going to Bradford.

She put me on the train to Bradford. I remember very vividly the man who usually waves the green flag came into my compartment and looked after me and brought me a cup of tea. Because I really was worried if my seventeen shillings which I had at that time (out of Germany – Nazis Bank Regulations) – that was all you could take with you – would pay for a cup of tea. But he really was very nice and he spent a lot of time. My English was not really all that good but I had some private lessons in Germany. I could understand but I couldn’t speak very well.

Eventually I arrived in Bradford. The people who I went to was a Doctors house with four children. They all were very nice. The children were well behaved and we were treated very nicely, They always had two maids. So they got rid of their English maids and Irene and I moved in.

When Irene arrived and we hardly knew it each other, we hit it off straight away and we have been friends ever since. I think Irene I would say is the closest friend I ever had. We never had any arguments and also we both stayed together for almost 7 years day and night.

One of my cousin’s (Hilde) went to Manchester and she was there in a household.

Occasionally we would go over to Manchester and visit her, it was a nice day out. And we kept contact with all our other cousins – in Israel, South Africa, because those were the only people we had.

The mail from Germany was difficult. It was all very well until war broke out and then of course we could not write any more. We wrote to somebody in Holland and the person in Holland forwarded the letters to Germany and also Augsburg and vice versa so were at least in touch with each other, and also we could send some Red Cross messages (maximum) 25 words.

I think it was about a year that Irene and Hans were courting when they got married and Irene and I went down to London for the wedding because Hans had an aunt in London who arranged the wedding. We had a very nice time. Unfortunately after the wedding Hans was straight away posted to India, which was good for me because I didn’t lose the company of Irene and she was glad still to have my company. So very little changed in our life even although Irene was married.

I think I got married two years later (1946) , but we were still together. We had to change our job and we did some covers outside the town where we had to do some travelling but we coped with those things very well.

And there were some other people very near us because Mrs Gibson had a habit sometimes to say at 9.00pm would you like to go out for a couple of hours and of course we never refused. First of all we were two of us and one gets used to walking in the dark with our torches. Of course the news from Germany got more and more difficult once Holland had fallen (1940.) So we couldn’t get any letters anymore. All what we had then was Red Cross messages which was really very little. We all kept in touch with each other so if one got a message we notified all the other ones that our parents were alright until in 1943 we all got a message saying that they were moving to Poland and they were moving away with great confidence in God. It was a very sad message and that was the last that we heard from them.

By that time with all the atrocities and things one was almost numb with messages and it’s hard to explain how it really affected us. It was also very good that while we were working we were it took us all our energy and we were very busy doing our jobs and looking after ourselves. We had very little time to think about things. When you came home at night you were exhausted and some of the things did not register as much as they would have now if you lived a normal life.

I only heard after the war from a lady that came back from Auschwitz ( Concentration Camp) who was in the same transport and she was a very efficient shorthand typist. When she arrived in Auschwitz they took her aside and she got into the office and this saved her and she gave us the report about all our parents, because it was my parents and all my fathers brothers and their wives, all went to Auschwitz. Only the children of every family was saved. And that’s why we have always been all very very close because we were the remainder of the family, except for the people in South Africa where the whole family managed to get out to South Africa.

**Pat Anson – Settling In**

The food on the Isle of Man was very British which our landlady cooked – we were all dying for potato salad. Whenever we had to peel the potatoes we kind of pinched one or two potatoes and put them inside the gramophone and when our landlady went for the day to Douglas we took them all out boiled them and made some lovely potato salads. And of course some of us got (food) parcels, and there was one girl who got a lot of sausage sent which was absolutely delicious with our potato salad. For our tea we really had most of the time lettuce and something – we were all a bit tired of the lettuce and the girls in the house next door, they got for their tea always soups so in the end we decided that we would pass on our lettuces to them and they would pass on their soup to us so we all had good changes.

It was a very pleasant atmosphere on the Isle of Man and the people were very considerate to each other. Eventually they (authorities) arranged a kind of Tribunal where every body had to appear and people were going to get released. The Tribunal was alphabetical, so with my name being Einstein before Irene Mendlick – so I came before and I came back to Bradford.

We were very lucky that Mrs Gibson took us back possibly because she never had such good maids before, and she got rid of her other two English maids and took us back. We stayed there for another year when we really felt we had had enough domestic work and we joined the War Work.

We managed to get a job in a tarpoline factory sewing tarpoline covers – it was really hard work. Because those covers were very very heavy and the material was very rough. But we had the advantage that you only worked from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm and the evening was our own and we could do what we liked.

So we managed to get a room with some other refugees in town and Irene and I shared that room and there were another two or three refugees who were in the house there. The landlady came from Berlin and she was extremely nice and did some cooking for us. If she made something special we would always get some share of it. We were very happy there and we could bring plenty of friends for afternoon tea. Some of our friends had joined the ATS and when they were on leave they had no where to go so they used to come to us, sleep in some of the neighbouring houses and come for the meals to us and. we always had company and Hilda and Lee from Manchester came over to see us so we had quite a nice time there.

One day we went to one of the clubs there and we met a lady who had an awful lot of things to carry. We offered her we would help her.so we never went to this club because they were mostly Austrian’s, and we used to go the Jewish club there. And when we got to the club there was a whole crowd of Soldiers from the Pioneer Corps that they had invited. So we mixed with the soldiers and that’s were Irene met Hans (Ward). They made a date for seeing each other, as long as Hans was near Bradford. That’s how the friendship started.

Erik Stern managed to go to America and he joined the American army there and he came with the American Army back to Great Britain.

Somehow when he came back our friendship was not the same anymore. He had lived in America – we had lived in Great Britain, and somehow we found it quite difficult to be very close so the friendship in a way petered out.

He did one thing – I had a big Lift – van (Container) which went from Germany to America because I intended to go to America to marry Berthold. And I had some money smuggled out and he looked after the lift van and paid for it all the time, but of course the money was actually mine – but stii he administered and this was a tremendous help to me.

Martin and I had always been close friends in Germany because Martin had joined our sports club (in Augsburg) and we used to go out in a four some, Martin and my cousin andme and Berthold. So we went out together quite a lot and we knew each other very well.Somehow after we immigrated we wrote letters to each other telling just each other about our lives and how things were going. for us and. I just mentioned that the thing with Erik Stern had kind of petered out, or tI didn’tt feel the same about him as I did before, wnen Martin thought that it would be nice if we met again after all that time.

Martin came to Bradford to visit me and my friends. and then we arranged that we would meet again in Carlisle where we had a weekend together and where we decided then to get married. But first of all I had never met Matin’s parents but Martin had met my parents quite often because all the young people used to come to my house where we had a meal together or an evening together, because most of our social life of course in the last couple of years was in private houses. So I came up on Witsun to Glasgow to introduce myself to Martin’s parents and I think I had a feeling they quite liked me, after all I came from the same background as he did. We decided to get married in July (1946).

Of course you have got Martin’s life story what happened after July – so I do not need to repeat it.

Irene and Mr Bruce came up to the wedding which was really nice and I also had no difficulty in fitting in with Martin’s friends which were the Besters and Benches. We are still friendly with them and also with their children as a matter of fact we are very friendly with Susan the daughter of the Besters who are in Australia.

You don’t replace those old friendships as you have too many things in common with those people who have come out of Germany and have got the same experiences.

**Pat Anson – Reflection On Life**

All in all I must say I have been extremely lucky. People have been enormously friendly, even when we worked and more work and things were rationed people would invite us to share their meals in their houses when food and everything was very, very short. There was never any word of being the enemy and people were extremely thoughtful and very pleasant.

Perhaps it was also that Irene and I were not particularly demanding things of people – we took people as they were and how we found them and made the best of it. But we did reap the rewards. People were nice, helpful and we always had friends around it.

Even nowadays if I think all the friends we made years and years ago – are still our friends and what is so very pleasant that some of our children and their children are also friends which makes life so much more enjoyable.

I hope this gives you Howard a rough idea about my life – it has been not as eventful as dad’s. I’ve been very lucky all the years. A nice place to go to in Bradford, the internment with always company. It was a tremendous help that Irene and got on so well together so we always had somebody to talk to. When we were miserable we cheered the other one up, and when we had nice things to celebrate we enjoyed it. And also with Hans and Martin the 4 of us always got on very well together which helped a tremendous amount in our life.