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Identity and Legacy:
Oral Histories of the Kindertransport in Wales

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Summary

Wales is considered by many to be a nation known for its hospitality and welcoming nature. Approximately 10,000 children came to the UK in 1938-39 on the Kindertransports from Nazi Germany and Central Europe to the UK, where hundreds were settled or spent time in Wales. This thesis specifically examines the oral histories of four Kinder who spent time in Wales to determine what, if any, impact Wales had upon them, and if there truly was a Welsh Kinder experience. Did living in Wales and encountering Welsh culture have an impact on these Kinder's sense of identity and belonging? Furthermore, four Second Generation Kinder were also interviewed and this thesis discusses the legacies of these Kinder and what was passed on to their children and families. Through careful examination of their oral histories and archived interviews, this thesis argues that there was a distinct Welsh Kinder experience and Wales did in fact have an impact on the sense of identities of these Kinder. This thesis further explores the legacies these Kinder have shared with their children and how their time in Wales and experiences as Kinder have been passed on to the Second Generation.

Declarations and Statements

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed .... (candidate)

4 April 2024
Date ....

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed .... (candidate)

4 April 2024
Date ....

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To the children who never made a train,

To the parents who said goodbye for the last time,

and to the caretakers who returned - we remember you.

Introduction

Wales is often thought of by its people as a 'welcoming nation', with its working-class legacy, history of helping other nations[1] in need, and its tendency to view itself as a kind, open nation, in opposition to its neighbour England. As Charlotte Williams discusses at length in *A Tolerant Nation?: Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales*, the subject of Wales's 'myth of tolerance' is a highly debated one, as evidence shows that people in Wales are no less opposed to immigration than elsewhere in the UK.[2] In recent years, with Wales declaring itself the first nation of sanctuary in 2019, there is still much debate about how welcoming a nation it truly is.[3] Yet, as Williams states: 'However much it is contested, it nevertheless remains an important "myth" of Welsh nationhood, one that can be evoked with both positive and negative connotation and therefore one that continues to have significance'.[4]

While possibly a myth, this welcoming nature of Wales was nevertheless demonstrated through the arrival of hundreds of refugees who settled in Wales in the 1930s and 1940s. In May 1937 during the Spanish Civil War, Wales welcomed around 230 Basque child refugees escaping from Nationalist forces in four children's colonies.[5] In his study *Fleeing Franco*, historian Hywel Davies argues that 'these refugees were met with countless expressions of generosity, humanitarianism and self-sacrifice'.[6] The numbers of refugees from National Socialism who fled central Europe in the 1930s and 1940s and ultimately settled in Wales may have been as many as 2,000.[7] A particularly warm welcome was extended to the child refugees who came to Wales as part of the Kindertransport, on which this thesis will focus.

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[1] Hywel Francis, 'Welsh Miners and the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5.3 (1970), 177–91< https://doi.org/10.1177/002200947000500311>.
[2] Charlotte Williams, 'Claiming the National: Nation, National Identity, and Ethnic Minorities', in *A Tolerant Nation?: Revisiting Ethnic Diversity in a Devolved Wales*, ed. by Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans and Paul O'Leary, 2nd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), pp. 331-51 (pp. 339-40). ProQuest Ebook.
[3] See 'Nation of Sanctuary - Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan' <https://www.gov.wales/refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan-nation-sanctuary> [accessed 2 April 2024].
[4] Williams, 'Claiming the National', p. 340.
[5] Hywel Davies, *Fleeing Franco: How Wales Gave Shelter to Refugee Children from the Basque Country During the Spanish Civil War* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011).
[6] Davies, *Fleeing Franco*, p. 22.
[7] Andrea Hammel, *Finding Refuge: Stories of the men, women and children who fled to Wales to escape the Nazis* (Aberystwyth: Honno Press, 2022), p. 3.

In the simplest sense, the Kindertransport was a visa waiver scheme that allowed unaccompanied children to flee Nazi Germany and Central Europe, and legally come to the UK.[8] From 1938-1939, approximately 10,0000 Jewish children left their families, and settled in the United Kingdom (amongst other countries).[9] The intricacies of this operation, its beginnings and how it affected the lives of these children were complex, and historians have only recently begun to explore the topic in detail.

When Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933, the German government began enacting laws that restricted the movement and autonomy of German citizens with any Jewish heritage. As a result of the assassination of Ernst Vom Rath, a German official in Paris, on November 9, 1938, violence and pogroms erupted all across Germany in what came to be known as Kristallnacht, the 'Night of Broken Glass'.[10] Many synagogues and Jewish businesses were burned, looted and destroyed, while Jewish people were harassed and attacked, and nearly 30,000 Jewish men were arrested.[11] This event served as a wake-up call to the rest of Europe, and the British Jewish Refugee Committee lobbied the British Parliament to help fund a scheme that might bring Jewish children from Germany to the United Kingdom.[12] The German term Kindertransport translates into English simply as 'children's transport', and the children who took part in these transports still refer to themselves collectively as Kinder (children), which demonstrates how this significant experience has become part of their identity itself.

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[8] Hammel, *Finding Refuge*, p. 9.
[9] Amy Williams and Bill Niven, *National and Transnational Memories of the Kindertransport: Exhibitions, Memorials, and Commemorations* (Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2023), p. 1. Ebook.
[10] Jennifer Craig-Norton, *The Kindertransport: Contesting Memory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), p. 5. The preferred term in Germany is now the November 1938 Pogroms, with the term *Kristallnacht* generally avoided in German today as it is a euphemism. See the Jewish Museum Berlin, '9 November 1938 / "Kristallnacht" ', https://www.jmberlin.de/en/topic-9-november-1938 [accessed 2 April 2024].
[11] *Kindertransport Association: 1933-1938 in the Reich*, https://kindertransport.org/history/historical-timeline/1933-1938-in-the-reich/ [accessed 10 January 2024].
[12] Andrea Hammel, *The Kindertransport: What Really Happened* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2024), p. 31.

Within weeks, the first Kindertransport left Berlin, bound for England. Among this first group of Kinder were children whose orphanage had been destroyed during the November 1938 Pogrom.[13] At first, the Kindertransport scheme was utilised mostly for orphans or children who had one parent, or whose parent(s) had been arrested or deported. This group was eventually expanded, and included any child of Jewish heritage. Many families could afford to pay the sponsorship fee or families in the UK were found who might sponsor the child. If money could not be secured, the organization originally known as the Movement for Care of Children in Germany, and later as the Refugee Children's Movement (RCM), took responsibility for sponsoring children whose families could not afford the £50 fee, roughly the equivalent of £2000 today.[14]

The UK ultimately decided to accept children up to the age of 18 on the scheme; in this way, they would not be perceived as coming over to take up British jobs, as some of the British public feared at the time.[15] Many parents and families were attempting to find their own way out of Germany, hoping to follow their children to the UK or anywhere they could secure a visa. With limited options, however, most took advantage of the Kindertransport to secure a spot for their child to safely leave Nazi Germany, Anschluss Austria, and the occupied areas of Czechoslovakia.

Ranging in age from infants to eighteen, the Kinder children usually left from train stations late at night, so as to not attract attention or any negative publicity. Many Kinder recall seeing their parents on the train platform for the last time, waving goodbye or crying.

These trains eventually left from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and they were routed through the Netherlands. Most Kinder have fond memories of entering

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[13] *December 2, 1938: First Kindertransport Arrives in Great Britain* <https://www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/1933-1938/first-kindertransport-arrives> [accessed 10 January 2024].

[14] *Kindertransport,* National Archives Classroom Resources, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/kindertransport/> [accessed 10 January 2024].

[15] Hammel, *The Kindertransport: What Really Happened,* p. 8.

the Netherlands and being greeted by kind volunteers who gave them food and drinks. Bea Green, who is one of the participants in this study, recalled:

> I think you can ask any Kindertransport child almost any age, even if they were very small, they will remember very little. I would say nearly all of them will remember these fabulous Dutch women... they came onto our train with orange juice and white bread and butter. I can taste it to this day.[16]

The children were generally allowed one piece of luggage, and many remember the placard they were given to wear across their chest, stating their name. The children then boarded ships at the Hook of Holland, where they arrived at Harwich, England and took a train to Liverpool Street Station in London. There the children were met by their new foster families or representatives who took them to their eventual destination across the UK. These transports continued until Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939 and Great Britain officially declared war on Germany.

Many Kinder were taken in by individual families, some of Jewish heritage, and others not. Others, particularly older Kinder, were housed in hostels and given vocational training. As historian Jennifer Craig-Norton explains:

> Refugee status overrode every other factor for these children, especially at the outset of the Kindertransport...for the most part Jewish refugee children came from middle-class backgrounds, but once thousands of children needing education and training arrived on British shores, little consideration was given to their former lives, their prior educations, or their vocational ambitions.[17]

Throughout the UK, Zionist youth organizations also set up kibbutz-like locations that housed many Kinder. One such location, Gwrych Castle in Abergele in north Wales,

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[16] Wiener Holocaust Library (WHL), ajr123, Refugee Voices: The AJR Audio-Visual Testimony Archive: Interview with Bea Green, Tape 2.
[17] Craig-Norton, p. 50.

was home to over 200 Kinder from 1939 to 1941.[18] A Czechoslovakian school set up in the small town of Llanwrtyd Wells in mid Wales, was home to over 100 children from 1943 to 1945. Vera Gissing described their welcome there:

> I shall never forget our arrival in the village of Llanwrtyd Wells, a small community which lies at the very heart of central Wales [...] Needless to say the arrival of so many Czech youngsters (there were about 130 of us by then) caused quite a stir in the village and at first we were viewed with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion. Then one of our teachers had a brainwave: we organized a concert, to which all the people of Llanwrtyd Wells were invited and most of them came! The audience loved our national songs and dances, and when at the end all the pupils of the school stood up and sang the Welsh national anthem in Welsh there was not a dry eye in the house. Our new Welsh friends, for friends they became there and then, opened their homes and their hearts to us all.[19]

The vast majority of Kinder settled in England, although around 800 were settled in Scotland[20] and a few hundred in Northern Ireland.[21] Aside from the numbers at Gwrych Castle and the school in Llanwrtyd Wells, the exact numbers of Kinder who spent time in Wales is unknown. Due to the frequent bombings in London during the war, many Kinder who settled in England were also evacuated to Wales with their schools alongside their English classmates or settled with Welsh families.

The Kindertransport and stories of individual Kinder are well-documented through memoirs, exhibitions, documentaries, articles, interviews, plays, films and memorials.[22] In most of these instances, however, the narrative that is told is of the

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[18] *Refugees from National Socialism in Wales: Kindertransportees* <https://wp-research.aber.ac.uk/nsrefugeeswales/history/kindertransportees/> [accessed 19 April 2022] (para. 5 of 15).
[19] Vera Gissing, *Pearls of Childhood* (London: Pavilion Books, 1994), pp. 86-98.
[20] Frances Williams, 'Migration after the Kindertransport: The Scottish Legacy?', *in The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39*, ed. by Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz, (Amsterdam: Rodoni, 2012), 59-80 (pp.59-60) <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401208864_006> [accessed 19 April 2022].
[21] Marilyn Taylor, 'Millisle, County Down - Haven from Nazi Terror', *History Ireland*, (2001), <https://www.historyireland.com/millisle-county-down-haven-from-nazi-terror/> [accessed 19 April 2022].
[22] Tony Kushner, *Remembering Refugees: Then and Now* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 141.

Kindertransport experience in England. This study sets out to explore the experience of those Kinder who spent time in Wales, utilising oral history interviews to understand the extent to which coming to Wales had an impact on these children. To what extent did these impacts have lasting legacies not only for the Kinder themselves, but for their families?

As Wales is often conflated with England in news, history and policy, it is important to understand that Welsh erasure certainly occurred throughout the larger story of the Kindertransport and still occurs today even among prominent museums and archives. One of the interviewees consulted for this study, Ellen Davis, left Germany as a nine-year-old girl and arrived in Swansea, Wales in 1939. This photo of Ellen's family was donated by her cousin to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and can be found in their online collection:

Figure 5: Portrait of the Wertheim Family, circa 1937.

The caption listed on the website:

> Portrait of the Wertheim family: Pictured are Julius and Hanna (Kaiser) Wertheim (the uncle and aunt of Sonja Kaiser) with their six children, Joseph, Julius, Ruth, Solly, Heinz, Rolf and Kerry. The

> oldest daughter, Kerry, was sent on a Kindertransport to England and survived. The rest of the family perished.[23]

While it is true that Ellen (originally Kerry) disembarked in England, she then went immediately to Wales and still currently lives in Wales. To leave Wales out of this caption, while understandable as her distant cousin submitted the photo, still removes the Welsh aspect of Ellen's story, especially as this is the only link to Ellen on the museum's site. As Kathryn Jones writes: 'The notion of "invisibility" has often been ascribed to the Welsh context, which stems partly from the tendency of most European languages to use the term for England in order to describe Wales'.[24] While many people from other countries might not have known Wales to be a separate place from its larger neighbour, small oversights like this add up to the larger issue of the erasure of the Welsh experience of the Kindertransport. This study seeks to combat that erasure, uncover examples of the Welsh experience of the Kindertransport, share the stories of some of the children who came to Wales, and analyse the extent to which Kinder living in Wales had a measurably different experience from those who were hosted elsewhere. Was there a Welsh Kinder experience, and how did it affect the Kinder?

The subsequent chapters will discuss the experiences of the Kinder who spent time in Wales and their ideas about their own identity and legacy, as well as the thoughts of their children, who often refer to themselves as 'Second Generation' Kinder. The Second Generation Network, a UK-based organisation, chooses this label because 'the issue that links us is being "Second" or "Third" Generation; having had, or still having, the direct experience of being from a family where either a parent or grandparent was themself affected by Nazi persecution'.[25]

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[23] *Portrait of the Wertheim Family.* Correction to note: Julius Wertheim also survived and escaped to the UK from Germany, eventually sailing on the HMT Dunera to Australia where he died in the 1970s.

[24] Kathryn N. Jones, 'Locating *Pays de Galles* in the twenty-first century: dynamic model or forgotten world?' *Studies in Travel Writing*, 18.2 (2014), 187–198 (pp. 188-89), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2014.908504>.

[25] *Second Generation Network: About Us* <https://secondgeneration.org.uk/about-us/> [accessed 02 April 2024] (para. 3 of 4).

The Kinder's arrival in Wales brought on certain challenges like language adjustment and name changes, all while Kinder were trying to assimilate into Welsh culture, and fit into their foster families, many of whom were immigrants themselves, although some grew up in Wales. Class and social structure were all at play as these Kinder arrived in Wales, and both affected their experience. The Kinder's relationships with their birth families, their new foster families, their birth countries, and their new adopted country will all be explored in this thesis.

As Jennifer Craig-Norton observes: 'In testimony and memoir, Kinder tell of the difficulties of acculturating to Britain and facing challenges to religious and national identity, both during and after the war, though this aspect of Kinder experience has garnered relatively little attention'.[26] This thesis argues that Wales did indeed have an impact on the Kinder who came there (while perhaps not in expected ways), that it affected their sense of identity, and in many ways these impacts have been passed onto their children.

This thesis will explore the themes of identity and legacy, through the oral histories of Kinder who came to Wales, and their children. The following chapters will examine the experiences Kinder had upon arrival in Wales and the UK, from language adjustments to name changes and managing the relationships with their foster families. The thesis will further explore the relationships these Kinder had, during wartime in Wales, and also through correspondence with their birth families, and how those relationships changed post-war. The last two chapters of this thesis focus on the themes of identity and legacy, examining both the Kinder and Second Generation's feelings about national, cultural and Jewish identity, as well as their relationships with their birth countries and Wales. The last chapter specifically focuses on the interviews with the Second Generation Kinder, highlighting the inter-generational aspect of this study, and focusing on how and why these stories are shared between the generations. Interviewing Second Generation Kinder specifically about their relationship with Wales and their parents' connection to Wales has not been part of any research

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[26] Craig-Norton, p. 179.

previously conducted and therefore will contribute greatly to the Kindertransport in Wales field of study.

Literature Review

This study sits at the intersection of Holocaust oral history, the history of the Kindertransport and its Second Generation, and contemporary Jewish history and Welsh history. There have been numerous texts that have influenced this study and helped it find its niche amongst such prominent research fields. Because scholarly literature on the Holocaust is so vast, for the purposes of this study, Kindertransport texts will be the focus, rather than broader Holocaust texts, as well as those that focus on oral history in a Holocaust context, Welsh history, and the concept of a 'Second Generation' of Holocaust survivors (and their memories).

Rebecca Clifford's 2020 book *Survivors: Children's Lives After the Holocaust* was instrumental in guiding this study, as it uses oral history interviews as its main source and includes its subjects' entire lives, while many stories about survivors focus only on what they endured during the Holocaust.[27] *Survivors* does not focus specifically on Kinder, sharing stories of children who survived camps, and children who were hidden during the war. Clifford's insights on how her interviewees decided to share their stories, their struggles with their identity and how they relate to being 'survivors' are powerful and extremely relevant to this study. Even though the book does not focus on Wales or the Kindertransport, the Kinder belonging to this study certainly qualify as 'survivors', as the definition has expanded over time. Clifford writes about this extensively:

> In the twenty-first century we have come to take a broad view of who is a Holocaust survivor, and we include all those who were faced with the threat of murder by the Nazis and their collaborators before and during the Second World War, but who lived. This includes not only those who survived concentration camps, but also those who survived

[27] Rebecca Clifford, *Survivors: Children's Lives After the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020).

> in other ways: by hiding, by passing as Aryan, by fleeing to safer zones (such as into the Soviet Union) or leaving continental Europe altogether, or by joining the partisans.[28]

Survivors further delves into detail about the terms 'child survivor' and 'second generation survivor' and how these came to be, making this an important foundational text for this study.

Another of the most relevant books for this study is Andrea Hammel's 2022 book *Finding Refuge: Stories of the Men, Women and Children who Fled to Wales to Escape the Nazis*. Utilising oral history interviews she conducted, as well as archival sources, Hammel shares the stories of adults and children who fled Europe and found refuge in Wales, including three of the four Kinder featured in this study. Hammel's work is instrumental as a foundation for showing that Wales and Welsh culture had an impact upon the refugees who settled there. This study is able to build upon Hammel's research by featuring the stories of the Kinder Second Generation.

The Kindertransport itself as a research topic has only begun to be explored in depth since the 1980s. In recent years, scholars have begun to analyse the scheme more critically, instead of through the more common celebratory and congratulatory lens that was often used in past texts. Hammel also recently published *The Kindertransport: What Really Happened*, a book that tells the story of the Kindertransport as it actually happened, sharing the more uncomfortable and sometimes harmful aspects of the scheme, such as the separation of children from their parents and the fact that the UK government did not financially or organisationally support the scheme, instead of concentrating on solely the purely heroic aspects.[29]

Similarly, Jennifer Craig-Norton's 2019 book *The Kindertransport: Contesting Memory* is a crucial text for this study as it expertly analyses the Kindertransport through a critical lens, challenging the previously widely-held view of the

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[28] Clifford, *Survivors,* p. 200.
[29] Hammel, *The Kindertransport: What Really Happened*.

Kindertransport as a model response to a refugee crisis.[30] The book specifically shares the experiences of the Polenaktion Kinder (children of Polish heritage whose families had been deported from Germany to Poland by the Nazi regime in 1938), which Craig-Norton uncovered while researching in the archives of Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, an Orthodox-Anglo Jewish leader involved in the child refugee movement.[31] Through these newly discovered letters and records, Craig-Norton is able to share the struggles and obstacles Kinder encountered in their new country. These new archival materials allow historians to view the Kindertransport in a new light, as they show some perspectives not seen before, including correspondence from birth parents, as well as Kinder themselves to governing organisations. While this book does feature some stories related to Wales, it is not a prominent subject in the book, and nor is there a focus on Second Generation Kinder. It was extremely useful in its general overview of the movement and gave important context for the Kinder studied in this thesis, as well as the themes of identity and legacy.

Many other prominent British scholars have written about various aspects of the Kindertransport. Amy Williams and Bill Niven have focused on the memorialisation of the Kindertransport and its transnational identity in their most recent book, *National and Transnational Memories of the Kindertransport*, arguing that national memory around the Kindertransport shapes each country's remembrance and memorialisation, which in turn shapes its public discourse.[32]

Cai Parry-Jones has researched the history of the Jewish population in Wales, culminating in his 2017 book, *The Jews of Wales*.[33] Providing an extensive historical perspective of this minority population in Wales, this book gives readers an insight into the communities that the Kinder were entering in 1930s Wales. While Jones does feature some Welsh Kinder and their oral histories, the book examines the entire Welsh-Jewish experience from the late 1700s to the modern day.

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[30] Craig-Norton, p. 11.
[31] Craig-Norton, p. 15.
[32] Williams and Niven, pp. 1-15.
[33] Cai Parry-Jones, *The Jews of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017).

Kinder memoirs and older texts relating to the Kindertransport make up the bulk of previously published work on the Kindertransport. Specifically in this study, Ellen Davis wrote *Kerry's Children: A Jewish Childhood in Nazi Germany and Growing Up in South Wales* (2004) about her own life, and Henry Foner wrote *Postcards to a Little Boy: A Kindertransport Story* (2013), which features the postcards his father and other relatives sent to him once he arrived in Wales.[34] One of the earlier books written about the Kindertransport to feature stories directly from Kinder was Karen Gershon's *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography of Refugees* (1989). Gershon herself came to the UK on a transport, and the book presented the stories of over two hundred former child refugees.[35] Similarly, Barry Turner's 1990 book, *...And the Policeman Smiled: 10,000 Children Escape from Nazi Europe* included many voices and excerpts from interviews.[36] Both of these works provided the general public with knowledge about the Kindertransport and gave Kinder a voice with which to share their story publicly. However, while Wales receives a few mentions, it is not extensively featured in either work, and the main focus of the books is on the experiences of Kinder in England.

Marianne Hirsch, a prominent memory scholar and daughter of Holocaust survivors herself, coined the term 'postmemory' in 1992 and further expanded on it in her book *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*.[37] Postmemory describes 'that of the child of the survivor whose life is dominated by memories of what preceded his/her birth'.[38] This concept was helpful in analysing the Second Generation interviews conducted for this study, especially as 'postmemory' has become a term not only used to describe the Holocaust, but to 'describe the relationship that later generations or distant contemporary witnesses bear to the

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[34] Ellen Davis, *Kerry's Children: A Jewish Childhood in Nazi Germany and Growing Up In South Wales* (Bridgend: Seren, 2004); Henry Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem Publications, 2013).
[35] *We Came as Children*, ed. by Karen Gershon (London: PAPERMAC, 1989) p. 7.
[36] Barry Turner, *…And the Policeman Smiled: 10, 000 Children Escape from Nazi Europe* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990).
[37] Marianne Hirsch, Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[38] Marianne Hirsch, 'Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory,' *Discourse* , 15.2 (1992), 3–29 (p. 8) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41389264>.

personal, collective, and cultural trauma of others—to experiences they "remember" or know only by means of stories, images, and behaviors'.[39]

Similarly, Arlene Stein's 2014 book *Reluctant Witnesses: Survivors, Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness* was especially useful when thinking of the Second Generation Kinder and how they relate to their parents' identities and legacy.[40] While this book does not focus on Kinder experiences specifically, but on the overall broad experience of Holocaust survivors and their children, it explores how Holocaust memory has been shared from survivors and more recently, how the Second Generation is choosing to share their family's stories more publicly.

In the past, the focus of the Kindertransport has been celebratory, and the bulk of literature surrounding it has focused on the children who settled in England and had positive experiences where they were placed. As Anthony Grenville argues: 'The British, in particular, have come to see and celebrate the Kindertransports as evidence of their humanity and generosity, as part of the story of their "finest hour" in the war against National Socialism'.[41] Grenville also explains that some early publications like Gershon's were more intense and did not shy away from hard truths, and as time has passed, many accounts seemed to move their focus to the heroic aspects of the scheme. These texts have often highlighted the story of Nicholas Winton, who helped facilitate the rescue of hundreds of children from Czechoslovakia and praised the British government for saving children. The feature film *One Life,* released in 2023 and starring Anthony Hopkins, chronicles Winton's life story.

With new works like Jennifer Craig-Norton's *Contesting Memory* and Andrea Hammel's *The Kindertransport: What Really Happened*, the Kindertransport is now being explored in full, looking at the scheme from all angles, including its successes

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[39] Marianne Hirsch, 'Presidential Address 2014: Connective Histories in Vulnerable Times,' *PMLA : Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 129.3 (2014), 330–48 <https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2014.129.3.330>.
[40] Arlene Stein, *Reluctant Witnesses: Survivors, Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[41] Anthony Grenville, 'The Kindertransports: An Introduction', in *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives*, ed. by Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 1-14 (p. 2).

and failures. Oral histories and archival materials play a large part in this new research. The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) project, 'Refugee Voices' has collected over 280 recorded oral histories. As Kinder are growing older and passing away, research has begun to expand to include the second and third generations of Kinder and their stories. The AJR has begun recording interviews as part of its 'Next Generations' collection.[42] In regard to research about the Kindertransport in Wales specifically, the 'Refugees from National Socialism in Wales' project led by Andrea Hammel at Aberystwyth University has been promoting the stories of refugees who fled Nazi persecution and came to Wales, including many Kinder, three of whom are featured in this thesis. This study builds on that momentum in specifically focusing on the stories of Kinder in Wales, and featuring interviews with their children, Second Generation Kinder. There has been very little research on Welsh culture's impact on Kinder who settled in Wales, and none on the Second Generation of Kinder. This thesis seeks to address this critical omission through detailed analysis of the interviewees' experiences in Wales, and the longer-term legacies for their children.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

1) Were there distinctly Welsh Kinder experiences? To what extent did Kinder living in Wales have measurably different experiences compared with those hosted elsewhere in the UK?

2) How did their experiences living in Wales and encountering Welsh culture have an impact on the interviewees' sense of identity and belonging?

3) What were the legacies of the interviewees' time in Wales and experiences as a Kinder, and how have these been passed on to the Second Generation Kinder?

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[42] *Refugee Voices: Next Generations,* <https://www.ajrrefugeevoices.org.uk/next-generations> [accessed 02 April 2024].

Sourcing the Interviewees

This study was designed as part of a Fulbright Global Wales Postgraduate Award, and initially aimed to include more than ten Kinder in the study. When research commenced in 2021, expectations changed as it was clear it might be difficult to track down specific people who had spent time in Wales. While there are many Kinder still alive, the specific need for interviewees to have lived in Wales cut the possible interviewee pool to a very small number. As this study also began to focus on inter-generational aspects of the Kindertransport, it became clear that a smaller group of Kinder interviews would be sufficient, but interviewing would also expand to their children.

The study began reaching out to possible interviewees in spring 2021. Through conference forums, Google searches, assistance from the Association of Jewish Refugees and the Wiener Library, four Kinder were approached and agreed to be interviewed: Renate Collins, Ellen Davis, Henry Foner and Bea Green.

Conducting the Interviews

For many reasons, it is preferable to conduct oral history interviews in person. As Alessandro Portelli observes: , 'We may be looking for information, but what we ultimately get is the relationship'.[43] Speaking face to face and establishing trust and a relationship with an interviewee is a central part of oral history, and important to this study and interviewer.

However, in this new world of pandemics and social distancing, online interviews are becoming the norm, and in some cases a necessity. While this study had hoped to conduct all its interviews in person, it was also prepared to pivot to online interviewing, especially considering the advanced age of most of the interviewees.

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[43] Alessandro Portelli, 'Living Voices: The Oral History Interview as Dialogue and Experience', *Oral History Review*, 45.2 (2018), 239–48 (p. 243) <https://doi.org/10.1093/ohr/ohy030>.

Since 2020, most people have become familiar with online video applications, so this study was able to utilise Microsoft Teams, Skype and Zoom for its online interview sessions.

Another assumption made before this project began was that many Kinder who spent time in Wales would still be living in the UK. The availability of online interviewing also made this project much easier in respect to the geographic locations of the interviewees. Henry Foner moved to Israel in 1968 with his family, and his children also still live in Israel. Again, the familiarity with online video services during the Covid-19 pandemic certainly helped to facilitate these online interviews.

There are many other benefits to conducting interviews online. The interviewee may feel more comfortable simply speaking into a computer screen, rather than being surrounded by microphones and recorders. Recording equipment and devices can be distracting to some interviewees or make them feel they are in a more formal setting than necessary. Conducting the interviews online does sometimes have the feel of an informal conversation, which can lead to a more personal interview.

While online interviews offer ease and convenience, there are elements of in-person interviewing that cannot be replicated online. Interviews often evoke embodied responses that can be difficult to register through a computer screen. Furthermore, being welcomed into someone's home often offers a glimpse into their daily life that is not seen otherwise. Sharing tea or a meal with someone can create more of a bond or relationship that online interviews cannot facilitate.

The interviewer reached out to potential interviewees by email or phone and explained the general scope of this research project. In some cases, an introductory online meeting was scheduled simply to answer any questions or provide additional information.[44] This first pre-interview is helpful to be able to explain the interview process and establish a relationship; however, it usually lends itself to speaking about

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[44] Valerie Yow, 'Interviewing Techniques and Strategies' in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London: Routledge, 2016), 153-78 (pp. 153-54) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315671833-19>.

the subject matter, so the interviewer must be prepared to record or take notes if needed. A consent form is offered to the participant after recording the interview, providing the interviewee the chance to remove any sections of the interview, or make any additional requests. A copy of the recording of every interview is provided alongside the consent form.

Alessandro Portelli's writings on 'inter/views' and the flexibility of an interviewer are extremely important and relevant to this study.[45] When interviewing people of an older age, flexibility in all aspects is important, whether it is taking breaks while interviewing, repeating questions if necessary, or allowing the interviewee to make themselves more comfortable with the recording equipment (moving microphones, cords, etc.).

When these interviews were conducted in person, they were recorded on a Sound Device Mix-pre 3 recorder and Audio Technica A875R microphones, as well as backup versions on an Apple iPhone. Overall, seven interviews were recorded with Henry Foner online, one interview session with Renate Collins online, one interview session with Bea Green in person and one recorded session in person with Ellen Davis, in addition to many personal visits. Interviews were conducted online with four Second Generation Kinder: Maya Foner, David Foner, Jeremy Green and Daniel Green. Altogether, there are over sixteen hours of audio, with each interview averaging about 1.5 hours. Interviews were then transcribed using Otter AI transcription software and manual edits.

The Life History Approach and Oral History Methods

Beginning an interview by asking routine and uncomplicated questions, i.e. asking where they were born, and to talk about their family, allows the interviewee to choose how they want to start to share their story.[46] They may go into great detail about their ancestors and deep family history, or they might start at their birth and

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[45] Portelli, 'Living Voices', p. 239. ('inter/view' pertaining to Portelli's concept that an interview is 'an exchange of gazes' between the interviewer and interviewee).
[46] Yow, p. 157.

move forward chronologically. Either way, the interviewer can then be prepared to ask follow-up questions and can follow the interviewee's lead. However, it is imperative to note that the question of where someone was born and the details of their birth family are not the most simple questions to ask in this particular study. Because the very nature of this study revolves around children who were separated from their birth families and cultures, this can be an emotional question and topic.

Particularly in this study, it was important to utilise the life history approach, as this study is related to the entire life story of the Kinder, and not simply their childhood. While many other studies and interviews may purely focus on the experiences of the children before and directly after the Kindertransport, this research study wanted to record the entire life story of each Kinder, to see where their stories took them as adults and later in life as they might have had children and families of their own. Especially considering that many Kinder did not begin sharing their stories and memories publicly until they were much older, this study wanted to capture the experiences of the Kinder as they were beginning to share their life story with others.

A caveat to the life history approach is that all Kinder are now in their late eighties and nineties, and while this study always strives for best practices in audio recording, the interviewer also takes cues from the interviewees. It is always preferable to record all audio and include standardised introductions at the start of every session, however, this study was flexible as its participants are all over the age of ninety and often wanted to share their story in their own way. As Portelli notes: 'It is important that we enter the interview with a great degree of flexibility, ready not only to accept the narrator's agenda but also to modify our own'.[47] Going into an interview with a plan in mind is a sensible approach ; however, being able to follow the interviewee where they are willing to lead is a valuable interviewing skill. This is especially true when considering that the interviewees in this study have varying memory recall and might move fluidly through time and memories throughout the interview process.

[47] Portelli, 'Living Voices', p. 243.

Additionally, when interviewing the Kinder Second Generation, a life history approach is not always fully possible either. While the interviews mostly begin in a similar manner, they seem to inevitably take a stronger focus on the interviewee's relationship with their parent and their family. The goal is certainly to capture a full picture of the life of the Second Generation child; however, the constraints of the study sometimes limited the scope of these interviews.

In the case of this study's interviewees, it was always more important to record their stories, rather than focusing on the quality of the recording. This was especially possible since many of these interviewees had already recorded full oral history interviews. With these previous interviews in mind, an important consideration when beginning this study was whether or not it was necessary to re-interview Kinder who had previously been part of other oral history projects, or to just access their older interviews from archives and utilise those as primary sources. However, when considering Portelli's concept of inter-subjectivity and that the 'Inter/View' is a collaboration between the interviewee and interviewer, 'an exchange of gazes, persons both seeing and listening to each other',[48] it was clear that this study would benefit from conducting its own interviews. As long as the interviewees were willing to share their story, it would be beneficial to re-interview these subjects, especially considering Wales was not always a prominent subject in previous interviews, as a non-Welsh interviewer might not have thought to ask questions specifically about Wales and Welsh culture. Looking specifically at Bea Green as an example, her previous interview conducted in 2006 was extremely useful as it told her life story in detail, and Bea's current short-term memory is not as strong as it used to be. However, the interviewer was not overly interested in Bea's time in Wales as opposed to the rest of her time in the UK. Therefore, it felt prudent to conduct new interviews where more specific questions about Wales could be asked. Additionally, some of these interviews were conducted 30 or 20 years ago, and an additional interview could capture different emotions, and time might have changed some of the interviewees' opinions or feelings. Another consideration in these interviews is one that Rebecca Clifford observes:

[48] Portelli, 'Living Voices', p. 239.

> One of the obvious issues is that testimony about childhood rarely comes from children themselves. In general, oral history does not give us the child's voice: it gives us the voice of the adult trying to make sense of a child's experiences, using the categories and concepts that adults use to interpret and logically structure their worlds.[49]

All of these interviews are full of subjectivity, and that is, in part, what makes them valuable. Some Kinder are recalling what happened to them at six years old or younger, and while they may not remember everything perfectly, the memories they do recall are very telling and powerful in their own way. In Alessandro Portelli's book *The Death of Luigi Trastulli,* he writes about oral sources versus historical documents, in essence 'truth vs. Truth'.[50] Because someone's personal truth or memory does not perfectly line up with historical fact, it does not negate that that might be *their* truth. Oral history interviews capture this personal truth and allow for analysis and comparison with historical record.

When also interviewing Second Generation Kinder, there is an additional layer of analysis available. Because these children are sharing stories about their own lives and their parents' lives, it is possible to record distinctly different recollections of the same family stories. In this particular study, a Kinder that was interviewed did not speak ill of their foster parents, yet when their child was interviewed, they mentioned some ill treatment their parent received, noting that their parent would never speak ill of their foster parents, because they were grateful to them. The notion of gratefulness and the 'trope of being lucky' will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis, and this particular situation was interesting on many levels. When interviewing and speaking with children of Kinder, one is able to view and analyse the parent's experience much more wholly. Certainly, if the Third Generation were to be interviewed as well, they would have a different perspective on the opinions of both the Second Generation and the Kinder. The inter-generational aspect of these interviews has proven to be the most surprising and intellectually stimulating part of

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[49] Rebecca Clifford, 'Families After the Holocaust: between the archives and oral history', *Oral History*, 46.1 (2018), 42-54 <https://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa35204>.
[50] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

this study. Once more, this aspect was made possible because these Kinder had, for the most part, already been interviewed and already shared most details of their life story. Therefore, more questions about feelings and emotions could be asked in order to produce the desired information about the impact of Wales and Welsh culture, as well as the overarching themes of identity, belonging and legacy that will be discussed and proven throughout this thesis.

Chapter 1: Arrival

Renate Collins was born Renate Kress in Prague in 1933. Her parents secured passage for her on a transport out of Prague in July 1939, but she was quite sick with a fever and chickenpox. Her mother wanted to wait until Renate was healthier before sending her, but their family doctor, whose own daughter was on the transport as well, advised her that she should send her then because there might not be another chance. This turned out to be smart advice as that was the last Kindertransport to leave Czechoslovakia before the United Kingdom officially joined World War II.
Renate left behind her mother and father, Hilda and Otto, in Prague and arrived in Porth, Wales in July 1939 as a five-year-old. Her new foster family welcomed her immediately:

> When I arrived, my foster mum put me in the bath…and then she put me on her lap and gave me a cwtch.[51] Do you know I'd never had one, didn't know what she was doing. Because my mother said [in the letters] that when I was born, she realized it was going to be a hard world and she wanted me to be able to stand up for myself, which I suppose was okay. But there are limits. You know, when a child doesn't have the kiss or cuddle or be comforted, you know, I think it's probably - but then she was doing what she felt was right for me. And so was my foster mum.[52]

Renate's story of her first night in Wales raises questions concerning class, hospitality and 'Welshness' that will be discussed in this chapter, exploring the effect Wales had on its Kinder as they first arrived. Some elements of the Kindertransport experience that were particular to Wales can be discerned, and care should therefore be taken not to conflate the Welsh Kinder experience with an English, or more broadly 'British'

[51] Robert Penhallurick, "'Cwtch': What the Most Famous Welsh-English Word Reveals about Global Dialects", (2018) <https://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa45555> [accessed 30 March 2024].
[52] Renate Collins, interviewed online by Anne Cardenas about her life and Kindertransport experiences, 8 August 2022.

one. To fully observe the effect Wales had, it is important to look at the families the Kinder left behind and the families they joined, the Welsh language and immigration in Wales, as well as their name changes and relationships with their foster parents and communities. Although other historians have previously grouped Wales with England (or broadly with Great Britain) when studying the Kindertransport, this chapter argues that these Kinder encountered aspects of Welsh culture, as well as the world of immigrants within Wales, that had a deep impact on their experiences, particularly as they first arrived in their new homes.

1.1. BIRTH FAMILIES AND FOSTER FAMILIES

While examining these four case studies of Kinder who spent time in Wales, it is imperative to look into their lives before they came to Wales, and the families they were born into, in order to understand their experiences upon arrival in Wales and in their new families.

Figure 6: Renate Collins (Renate Kress) skiing as a child in Czechoslovakia.

As mentioned, Renate was born into a wealthy middle-class family in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1933. Her father, German-born Otto, moved to Prague when his father received a job in banking, and he followed in that same line of work. Her mother's family was from Bohemia and Renate was an only child with a large extended family of relatives that lived throughout Prague and Central Europe. Her grandfather and great uncle were members of the Austro-Hungarian Parliament which met in Vienna, and her great aunt studied sculpture with Auguste Rodin in Paris. Renate remembers visiting this aunt in Prague, walking from her school to her aunt's flat with German soldiers watching her every movement. While her early

childhood memories in Prague are scarce, she does remember spending time outdoors with her family, skiing and ice skating. These activities were so much a part of their life that young Renate's ice skates were included in the one suitcase that she was allowed to bring to Wales.[53]

Renate's parents communicated with her foster family before she left Prague and shared photos as well. In these letters, Renate's mother, Hilda, translated her saying, 'I hoped there wasn't any spinach in England because I didn't like spinach. But if there was plenty of ice cream, if I had some, I could be a very good girl'.[54] Her foster parents, Sidney and Arianwen Coplestone lived in Porth, in the Rhondda Valley in South Wales. Sidney was a Baptist Minister, originally from Wrexham, and Arianwen grew up in Fishguard.[55] The Welsh couple had no other children and embraced Renate as their own. While Renate does not remember her birth parents as being especially physically affectionate, as that was not their custom, her foster parents, as evidenced in the opening *cwtch* story of this chapter, were very welcoming and affectionate.

Henry Foner was born Heinz Lichtwitz, in Berlin, Germany in 1932. His family was considered upper middle-class and a fairly well-to-do family. He was a young boy and only child when his mother Ilse died by suicide in 1937, a fact that was not made known to little Henry at the time. He was then brought up by his father Max, a nanny called Nopi, and his grandmother, Margarete.[56]

The Lichtwitz family had been living in what was formerly Prussia since the 18th century. Henry's family ran a printing business, established by his great-grandfather and his father worked as a lawyer for the business.[57] The family all lived together in an apartment building owned by his mother's family. His grandmother lived in the apartment above his family and he remembers afternoon teas with her, and her little dog Tommy. Visits to the nearby Berlin zoo with his father were frequent outings, as

[53] Collins, 1989.
[54] Collins, 2022.
[55] Collins, 2022.
[56] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 9.
[57] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 9.

‘the animals weren’t Nazis, so it was a sort of safe place to go’.[58] Henry does not remember leaving his family in Berlin, but has vivid memories of the train ride into the Netherlands and arriving at Liverpool Street Station in London, where he was taken with a group of other children to Paddington Station and boarded the train west to Swansea.

Figure 7: Henry Foner (Heinz Lichtwitz) in 1939.

Upon arrival in Swansea in February 1939, Henry went to live with Morris and Winifred Foner, or Uncle Morris and Auntie Winnie, as Henry learned to call them. The Foners lived in a neighbourhood in Swansea called Sketty, in a detached house with a large garden, at 99 Vivian Road. They were both in their fifties and owned a watch and jewellery shop in the town centre.[59] Morris was born in Poland and his father had sent him and his siblings to Great Britain as young adults. Morris was apprenticed as a watchmaker in Pontypridd before moving to Swansea to open his own shop. Winnie was born in Wales and after they married, she helped Morris with the business, eventually overseeing the jewellery side of their shop.[60] They had no children of their own but had a history of looking after more unfortunate members of their families, so it was not the first time that they had a child or a new houseguest in their home. As Cai Parry-Jones writes in *The Jews of Wales: A History*, the idea of ‘Welshness’, in general and within the Welsh Jewish community, is complex and varied.[61] For Henry, living with the Foners and encountering Wales through a Jewish

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[58] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 1.
[59] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[60] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[61] Parry-Jones, p. 128.

immigrant family certainly impacted his experience and sense of identity, as will be discussed further in this chapter.

As both Henry and Renate were so young when they left their birth countries, their memories of their families and life before the war are limited. Ellen Davis and Bea Green, on the other hand, were both older Kindertransportees and retained many more memories of their families and life in Germany in the 1930s before the war.

Ellen Davis was born Kerry Wertheim in Hoof, a small village near Kassel, Germany in 1929.[62] She was part of a very close-knit religious family and lived near her mother's siblings and parents. As the eldest of her siblings, she always took care of her younger brothers and sisters, calling them her children, and this is reflected in the title of her memoir *Kerry's Children: A Jewish Childhood in Nazi Germany and Growing Up in South Wales* (2004). Her Papa worked for her mother's father, a kosher butcher; however, he preferred weightlifting and socialising with his friends to working. Her Mutti [mother] was loving, but in Ellen's eyes, constantly pregnant and ill. Much of the housework and caring for the children fell to Ellen. They observed the seder and kept kosher as well. Ellen learned Hebrew and felt at home among Jewish and non-Jewish friends in her small village. In 1935, amid rising tensions in Germany, Ellen's Oma and Opa[63] secured passage for themselves and four of their children on a ship to Argentina. With the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and increasing violence against Jews, Ellen's family struggled to survive on their own, without the network of their extended family. Her father was frequently taken to Dachau and released sometimes for a week, then taken again. The family was forced out of their home and made to 'swap' homes with a Nazi-supporting family. Eventually they lived in a backroom of their synagogue until the synagogue was attacked and set on fire. They were helped by a neighbouring family, but eventually could not stay together. With her father in Dachau, Ellen's mother was sent to a nearby camp with her youngest brother Ludwig. Ellen, her younger brothers Rolf, Heinz and Sally, and her sister Ruth were sent to a Jewish orphanage in Kassel in 1937.

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[62] All of the details of Ellen's early life were sourced from her memoir, *Kerry's Children*, pp. 11-60.
[63] German translation for Grandma and Granddad.

At the orphanage Ellen once again took on the role of caring for her younger siblings, sneaking away to buy food from German shops, because her blonde hair and blue eyes allowed her to get away with this, for a time. Her brothers went to school, while she and other girls cooked and cleaned the orphanage. Ellen and Rolf were able to visit their mother occasionally, travelling ten miles to see her at the camp.

Figure 8: Ellen Davis (Kerry Wertheim).

During the November 1938 Pogroms, the orphanage was fire-bombed, and all of the children worked all night to prevent it from going up in flames. Shortly after, Ellen remembers her photograph being taken and then her Papa began appearing at the orphanage and taking her to appointments and filling out paperwork. One day, her Papa and Mutti showed up to take her from the orphanage to the train station where she began her Kindertransport journey. She vividly remembers the image of her parents getting smaller and smaller as the train left the station and was very upset that she had not been told she was leaving, and had not been able to say goodbye to her siblings.

Ten-year-old Ellen's memories of the voyage to the UK were confusing and painful. She did not understand why she had been ripped away from everything familiar, she did not know where she was going and, like many of the children, had never been on a train or ship, or seen the sea before. She remembers arriving in London, and eventually taking the train to Swansea:

> What was Swansea? As we entered the train in London, I heard a man who went up and down outside, shouting Swansea, Swansea. I had no idea what he was saying, but I was struck by the word and the funny voice he had. When our long journey ended, there was another

> man shouting Swansea. He sounded very different. So again, what was Swansea?[64]

Even from her train ride, Ellen could sense that accents around her had changed and that she had arrived in a different place than her disembarkation in England.[65] She was accompanied by her new foster father, Hyman Feigenbaum, who was 70 and had emigrated from Russia many years before and, like the Foners, he owned his own shop where he made and sold ladies' clothing accessories. He was kind and gentle and Ellen felt an immediate connection with him. Her foster mother, Sarah, was 50 and had thought taking in a child would ensure there would be someone to take care of the couple in their old age. She was not very loving or affectionate and was quite cold and stern with Ellen. They lived in a house in the city centre and had a maid, Phyllis, who befriended the young girl and cared for her. As Jennifer Craig-Norton has written:

> Families took in children for a variety of reasons, from the altruistic to the avaricious, the selfless to the self-interested, though in most cases, their motives were a complex mixture of these impulses. [...] Carers faced a host of challenges and problems, to which some responded with compassion and others with insensitivity. Care models and integration levels existed along a spectrum in which children were treated 'like family' in some settings and regarded as guest, lodgers, employees, or even servants in others. Age - both the child's and the caregiver's - was often a factor in foster relationships, and so too were social class and gender.[66]

In this case, the fact that Ellen's foster parents were older could have played a role in her foster mother's cold and unaffectionate demeanour. Perhaps because they were working class as well, the foster mother expected Ellen to 'pull her own weight' and treated her more as a lodger or employee rather than a daughter, which clearly impacted her entire experience of coming to Swansea.

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[64] Davis, *Kerry's Children,* p. 55.
[65] Carol Tully, 'Out of Europe: travel and exile in mid-twentieth-century Wales', *Studies in Travel Writing*, *18*.2 (2014), 174–186, (p.178) <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2014.896077>.
[66] Craig-Norton, pp. 97-98.

Bea Green was born Maria Beate Siegel in 1925 in Munich, Germany to a proud Bavarian Jewish family. She also came from an upper middle-class family. Her father was a lawyer, at one point even acting as counsel for the former King of Bavaria, and her mother was an artist. Both her parents enjoyed writing and music and were ‘unconventional’ parents with a wonderful sense of humour. Bea remembers her father walking her to school each day and enjoying the long conversations they had along the way.[67]

Figure 9: Bea Green's father, Dr Michael Siegel photographed during his 1933 arrest and harassment in Munich.

Bea’s parents were religious, observing the sabbath and attending those services in the morning. As a Reform household, Bea remembers observing all the Jewish holidays, and living a very Jewish life; however, she did not see that as separate from also being very Bavarian. Her brother Hans was four years older than her and while they fought like most siblings, he always took his duties as her brother very seriously, holding her hand in public and looking out for her. Bea does have many memories of the rise of anti-Semitism in her home city. Specifically, she remembers an incident where her father was detained, beaten and paraded around the streets of Munich for attempting to help his Jewish client who was being detained by police in March 1933. The incident was photographed and eventually published around the world.[68]

Bea continued attending her school until 1938, when she was forced to leave and then attended a Jewish cooking school. Her parents, although reluctant to leave Germany at

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[67] WHL, Tape 1.
[68] *Understanding Newspapers: The Story of Dr. Michael Siegel* <https://newspapers.ushmm.org/post/the-story-of-dr-michael-siegel> [accessed 16 March 2024].

first, began looking for ways for their children to leave. Hans was able to secure a visa and moved to London in 1939 and then continued on to Liverpool where he worked as a film projectionist. A distant relative of the Siegel family obtained a visa and ended up in Sevenoaks, England. When Bea's parents asked if they could find anyone willing to sponsor Bea, a Mrs Williams agreed to take her in, in addition to another Jewish girl from Hamburg she was housing.[69]

Figure 10: Bea Green (Beate Siegel) on the left, leaving Munich on the Kindertransport in June 1939.

Bea remembers thinking of her trip to England as an adventure. The Kindertransport trains left at midnight, so as to not attract so much attention from the public, and therefore added to the adventurous atmosphere for the fourteen-year-old Bea. Her parents and a few friends came to the train station to see her off, and she remembers leaning out of the window to wave goodbye: 'I was leaning out and that's when I saw my mum step behind my father and pull out her handkerchief, so that I shouldn't see her cry. And it wasn't until then that it hit me'.[70]

Similarly to Henry, Bea vividly remembers the Dutch women who greeted her train upon arrival in the Netherlands, with orange juice and soft bread and butter. At Liverpool Street Station she was greeted by one of Mrs Williams's daughters. Mrs Williams was a wealthy, liberal woman who came from aristocracy and lived in Brasted Hall, near Sevenoaks.

Bea lived in Sevenoaks with Mrs Williams and the other German girl named Margot and attended a private school there until January 1940 when Mrs Williams passed

[69] Hammel, *Finding Refuge*, p. 129.
[70] WHL, Tape 2.

away. Her son, Colonel Ainslie Williams and his Scottish wife Hilda then took in the girls at their home near Itchen Abbas.[71] Bea's school in Sevenoaks was bombed and the owners of the school found property near Welshpool in Powys where they evacuated those students whose families allowed it. Once Bea finished secondary school and was awarded her school leaving certificate, she gained acceptance to University College London, which then evacuated to Aberystwyth University in October 1942. Bea once again found herself in Wales, this time as a seventeen-year-old university student, living in student housing and then taken in by a Welsh couple, Mr and Mrs Terry. Bea's friend was initially living with the Terry family and the extension of their care to Bea is another example of a Welsh family treating a refugee with particular kindness, perpetuating the idea of Welsh hospitality.

These four Kinder were born to Central European Jewish families and then taken in both by Welsh-born foster parents, and by more recent Jewish immigrants to Wales. All of these family aspects impacted their experiences and will be explored further in the subsequent chapter sections.

1.2. IMMIGRATION IN WALES AND LANGUAGE ADJUSTMENTS

When Kindertransport children, like these four interviewees, began arriving in Wales in 1938, they would have been confronted with a country that perhaps at first glance looked very much like the England where they came ashore in Harwich. However, life in Wales had many differences compared to the rest of Britain, and these children's new lives and experiences reflected those differences. The Kinder who came to Wales would have had a unique experience encountering the Welsh culture, especially upon their initial arrival.

Wales, a country with centuries of its own conflict against England, and struggles to maintain its own culture, language and heritage, also has a history of hospitality and

[71] WHL, Tape 3.

welcoming refugees into its communities.[72] Known for its coal, copper, metal and slate mining industries, by the 1930s, Wales was experiencing the same economic depression as the rest of the world and these industries suffered greatly, with mines closing and jobs disappearing.[73] In 1921, even after the First World War and 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic, there were about 2.6 million people living in Wales, and by 1939, the population in Wales had declined to roughly 2.4 million due to economic migration, with Cardiff and Swansea as the largest cities.[74] While the cities and larger towns most likely had similar amenities to English towns, rural areas and villages were late to receive gas and electricity, with some rural areas in mid-Wales and North Wales not having access until the late 1950s and 1960s.[75] The Kinder who came to Wales were met with challenges that Kinder in more densely populated areas in England and elsewhere in the United Kingdom did not experience to the same extent.

Something that perhaps helped the Kinder who came to Wales acclimatise is the fact that Wales has always been a destination for immigrants. In the 1911 census of the United Kingdom population, 'Cardiff, with 4,786 "foreigners" was second only to London as a centre for immigration, whilst Swansea was in fourth position and Newport in eighth place with regard to the number of foreign-born people who had recently moved in'.[76] Groups of Italian, German and Irish immigrants settled throughout Wales in the early twentieth century at the same time that many native Welsh were also emigrating in the 1920s and 1930s, seeking jobs in London and America, due to the economic downturn. Many Kinder found themselves living with Jewish immigrants who had arrived in Great Britain from the Pale of Settlement; in Henry and Ellen's cases, their foster parents were originally from Poland and Russia, respectively. This had a significant impact on their dynamics as parents, as they

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[72] Franz Bernhardt, ' "In Wales … We Do Things Differently". The Politics of Asylum Dispersal in the UK and Emerging National (Self-) Imaginaries of Hospitality in Wales', *Political Geography*, 103 (2023), 102886 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2023.102886>.
[73] Russell Davies, *People, Places and Passions: 'Pain and Pleasure': A Social History of Wales and the Welsh, 1870-1945* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), p. 172, Ebook Central ebook.
[74] Russell Davies, p. 22. (The historian of modern Wales is deeply indebted to the late Professor L. J. Williams who diligently collected a treasury of statistics on all aspects of Welsh life. These are published in L. J. Williams, *Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics*, 1 (Cardiff, 1985). Pages 1–88 contain information on the Welsh population.).
[75] Russell Davies, pp. 155-56.
[76] Russell Davies, p. 25.

themselves were immigrants and attempting to be a part of or live within Welsh culture in their own ways, while then welcoming these young Central European Jewish children into their homes.

One of the main differences that stood out to the Kinder who arrived in Wales would have been that they were exposed to both English and Welsh languages. In some Welsh counties (particularly in north Wales) in the early 1930s, four out of every five people spoke Welsh. [77] While it was not as commonly spoken in all areas of Wales, including south Wales, it still was deeply embedded within the culture and society of Wales. Even when living with non-Welsh-speaking families, these children encountered friends in their neighbourhoods and schools who spoke the language. Henry Foner shared:

> We spoke English at home, the Foners. But for instance, the next-door neighbour one up the road, they were Welsh-speaking, they had a little boy and I couldn't talk to him. Because he only spoke Welsh, and I only spoke English. That mostly sorted itself out as soon as you went to school, of course, except that the Welsh speakers learned English. And the English speakers were forced to learn Welsh, but…being Britain, never actually learned the foreign language properly. It's a shame, [we learned] only a few words. [78]

It is instructive to note that Henry characterizes Welsh as a foreign language in this quote, rather than Wales's indigenous language, thereby adding to the sense of estrangement. As a young child, Henry had already encountered significant language changes in his short life. Henry spoke no English when he first came to Wales, and the Foners spoke no German. As was common in first-generation Jewish immigrant households, the Foners spoke Yiddish.[79] When first speaking with Henry, they cobbled together conversations using Yiddish and Hebrew. In only a few months, Henry went from being surrounded by German with his family in Berlin, to then hearing Yiddish spoken by the Foners, to then learning English and quickly losing his

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[77] Trevor D. Williams, 'The Distribution of the Welsh Language, 1931-1951', *The Geographical Journal*, 119.3 (1953), 331–35 (p. 331-32) <https://doi.org/10.2307/1790647>.
[78] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[79] Parry-Jones, p. 115.

German skills. Within four months, Henry had lost his German language and his family in Berlin had to switch to English in their letters and phone calls. All the while, Henry was also hearing Welsh, this other, new language alongside English, and unable to communicate with some of his peers.

Renate had her own experiences with language as she first arrived in London:

> I didn't know any English apart from yes and no. And that's very dangerous, because how do you know when to say yes or no, if you don't speak the language? And I arrived at Liverpool Street Station. And on the platform was this gentleman, he must have been six foot high. And he had a black suit, black coat, black hat. And he was a reverend, so he had a collar, you know, ministerial collar… And I was just taken up to him, and he smiled at me. And I caught his hand and went off with him. You know, I don't know whether a child would do it this day and age, but I trusted him. So then of course, we had to go to Paddington station, where one guess where I wanted to go. And in those days, you had to put a penny in the toilet slot. There's a huge grey brass thing. You put the penny in the top. And then you have to pull this knob across which was quite heavy. So of course he gave the lady a penny and asked her would she take me down? In fact, on platform one in Paddington, the toilets are still down in the basement the same as they were when I arrived. Anyway, so the lady, let me in. And, she must have gone, and of course I couldn't get out. So I don't know whether I was shouting in German or Czech. But he had to give somebody another penny to go down and let this little girl that was shouting in a foreign language out of the toilet. So that was my first experience of this country.[80]

Renate's experience at Paddington Station highlights the strange situation these Kinder found themselves in upon arrival in their new country. With no knowledge of English, they were expected to trust strangers and rely on them for essential tasks such as finding a toilet.

Even for Kinder who did speak some English upon arrival, there was still a cultural language barrier. Bea Green had studied English while growing up in Munich, and

[80] Collins, 2022.

'had learnt enough English to misunderstand nearly everything'.[81] She described meeting her sponsors for the first time in London: 'I went up to her and she said, "How do you do." And I said yes. What did I know about How-do-you-do? They didn't teach us about how-do-you-do'.[82] This interaction not only highlights the differences in language that many Kinder experienced, but the differences in class, and the struggles those differences in class could create, when children were placed with wealthy families like Bea, or perhaps with working-class families. Bea shared another misunderstanding that took place during her first few days:

> We sat in this huge living room and Miss Williams asked me if I needed the loo and I thought she asked me to shut the door. And I said yes, yes, and leapt to my feet and she thought it was too late and she leapt to her feet, so we sorted that one out. [83]

The word 'loo' being so specific to the United Kingdom, it is not surprising that young Bea was confused by the question and colloquial word. Similarly to Renate, Bea found herself having to rely on others to have her basic needs met, a struggle made complicated for young children not comprehending the language surrounding them.

Many Kinder experienced initial difficulties with language when they first arrived in the United Kingdom, and adding the Welsh language as well as English only compounded the culture shock they felt. A Kindertransportee's experience with the English and Welsh languages was greatly shaped by the host family they were taken in by. In Renate's case, her foster mother was born in Fishguard, a town on the west coast in a prominently Welsh-speaking area, and her first language was Welsh. Her foster father, however, never fully learned the language, despite being born in Wrexham in north Wales, and did not care to engage in speaking Welsh. 'If I said "nos da" to him at night, he'd say 'I can see stars.'[84] Even in this joking manner, her

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[81] WHL, Tape 2.
[82] WHL, Tape 2.
[83] WHL, Tape 2.
[84] 'Nos da' meaning 'good night' in Welsh, can sound like 'North star'.

foster father showed his indifference to the Welsh language, even as Renate was trying to embrace it herself.

While her foster mother did speak Welsh, especially when with her extended family, they attempted not to speak it around Renate, since they knew she would not understand: 'When I went down and she spoke to her sisters, they said, "oh, we mustn't speak Welsh, because Renate is here." But two minutes later, they were into it'.[85] Despite being aware of Renate's lack of understanding, her foster mother and her sisters slipped back into speaking Welsh as it was comfortable for them and their native language. While they were trying to spare Renate from feeling alienated, she clearly remembers this instance and being on the outside of the language and these interactions.

Similar to Henry's experiences, Renate also experienced exposure to the Welsh language within her community, outside of her family. 'You had to ask for your bus fare on the bus in Welsh. And you couldn't say a cup of tea, please? It was "dishgled o de." So, yes, so it was hard'.[86] As Renate describes, simple phrases were expected to be spoken in Welsh, at shops or in public areas, like the bus and train stations. Furthermore, this specific phrase, 'dishgled o de' is used in southern Welsh dialect, so Kinder in Wales were contending with different dialects in both Welsh and English as well. For the young Kinder who found themselves in Wales, this was certainly an adjustment they and their families might not have anticipated coming to the United Kingdom, due to a lack of awareness and comprehension of the existence of Wales as a separate entity as well as the prevalence of the Welsh language. These four Kinder all had different experiences with language as they arrived in Great Britain and Wales, and in particular, arriving in a bilingual country with a new separate language had an impact on their introduction and assimilation to Wales.

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[85] Collins, 2022.

[86] 'Dishgled o de' is the south Wales Welsh phrase for 'cup of tea', whereas in north Wales the Welsh term 'panad o de' is used; see <https://welearnwelsh.com/words/how-to-say-cup-of-tea-in-welsh> [accessed 27 February 2023].

1.3. Name Changes

Another change that Kinder might not have anticipated coming to their new home was a change in their name or how they were addressed. As Rebecca Clifford observes in the prologue to her book *Survivors*, names have complicated emotions attached to them for child survivors:

> Names are a fraught territory for children who survived the Holocaust [...] Many young children lost their original names [...] [some] took the names of their adoptive families; they may not have learned that they were born under a very different name until they were adults.[87]

While some names became anglicised, as in the case of Heinz becoming Henry, other Kinder experienced a more jarring name change. As discussed earlier, Kerry Wertheim left her large close-knit family in Germany and was taken in by an older couple in Swansea. Kerry describes how her foster mother changed her name to Ellen:

> I couldn't speak a word of English. And my name was Kerry. And she didn't like that. I didn't know who Ellen was. And she kept calling me Ellen and I didn't know who she was. So every time she called me Ellen, I didn't answer, I didn't know who she was. And she would shout and she wanted to hit me and my father wouldn't let her.[88]

Clearly, this was a confusing experience for Kerry, for such a young child to suddenly have their name changed, in a language they are just learning. While she now uses the name Ellen Davis, she also utilises her birth name, Kerry Wertheim, in the memoirs she has written and articles in which she is featured. In this way, she can still claim her past and heritage and the identity that accompanied Kerry Wertheim, while acknowledging that she is also Ellen simultaneously.

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[87] Clifford, *Survivors,* p. xv.
[88] Davis, 2022.

The experience of a Kindertransportee's name being changed by an adult was not unique to Wales, however. Bea Green, born Maria Beate Siegel, experienced a similar name change when she arrived in south England, where an adult did not like her name and her peers had trouble pronouncing her given name:

> I came to England on the Kindertransport and I came to an English school and the headmistress said: 'What is your name?' and I said 'Beate' and she said: 'What!' And I said it over and over again. And then she said– asked me if I had another one and I said Maria and she didn't like that one either. So then I was called Beate, but the other people couldn't get their tongue round it, so it was Be-a, so that just became Bea in due course.[89]

While Kerry became Ellen, Bea's name morphed from her given middle name and Henry's name became the anglicized version of his birth name Heinz. It is worth noting that Renate, the only Kinder of this group placed with two Welsh foster parents in the Rhondda Valley, did not have her name changed, but almost honoured, in a way. Because her arrival was such an event in the small town, three local women named their babies 'Renate' after her. 'You know, they must be somewhere wondering how they got that name'.[90] Her small Welsh town and foster parents chose to embrace her name instead of changing it to something more familiar and manageable for them. Both Ellen and Henry's name changes were perhaps initiated to help them assimilate into Welsh and British culture, especially considering their foster parents were Jewish immigrants, who themselves attempted to integrate into their new communities. In this way, each Kindertransportee encountered Welshness and/or the world of immigrants within Wales.

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[89] WHL, Tape 1.
[90] Collins, 2022.

1.4. Relationships with Foster Parents, Welsh Hospitality and Class

Each Kindertransportee's experience was shaped primarily by the family and community they were placed within, and understandably these experiences varied widely. Jennifer Craig Norton extensively researched Kinder case files and archives for her book *The Kindertransport: Contesting Memory*. In looking into cases across the United Kingdom, she found that 'above all, foster parents' motives, understanding and perseverance had an enormous impact on the adjustment and integration of young Kindertransportees'.[91] This was certainly true for the Kinder interviewed who spent time in Wales.

Foster parents played a large role in how each Kindertransportee adapted to Wales and their new home. Henry called his new foster parents Aunt and Uncle, and they went to great lengths to ensure that Henry kept a connection to his family members in Germany:

> And they treated me for better or worse, as if I'd been their own child. So you can't ask more of people than to do something like that. Although they never pretended to be my parents. They could have said 'call me mum and dad.' But they never did that. I went to bed each night, there was a photo of my mother and father on the bedside table.[92]

Henry was fortunate to receive regular postcards and letters from his father and grandmother, up until the start of the war and their deportations. His father was even able to arrange a phone call in June 1939 for Henry's seventh birthday, during which they realised that Henry had lost his German, from which point on the postcards arrived in English.[93]

[91] Craig-Norton, p. 138.
[92] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[93] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 10.

Renate originally referred to her foster parents as Aunt and Uncle when she wrote letters before arriving in Wales, but that changed after she arrived in Porth, and began to call them Mum and Dad:

> ’Cause my mother wanted me to. She felt there was a continuity in it, and that if I call them, I believe when I wrote to them, it was ‘Uncle’, ‘Reverend Uncle’, that's what I called him, but she felt that once I was there, to say mum and dad was continuing what I'd just left behind. It was quite wise of her really, wasn't it? Yes, looking back on it now, I think, to be living with somebody and calling them ‘uncle’, ’cause in those days, you called your father's friends uncles and aunts, although they weren't really, so it gave that bit of homeliness to it.[94]

Renate’s birth mother actually wanted her to call her new foster parents mum and dad, as she thought it would help Renate’s transition process, a thought that demonstrates how selfless her mother was, and how she only wanted the best for her young daughter. Renate was welcomed into her new family and community very warmly. Her foster father was a Minister of the local Baptist Church and she was quickly embraced by the community there:

> I can remember being put to bed that first night, as I say, having the cuddle and the kiss, and the next morning, I was taken to Church, first time in my life, and knowing none of the children there at all, and the service ended, and I saw two little girls picking up the hymn books, and Mum looked around, and I wasn't there, and she looked down the front of the Church, and I was with the other two little girls, collecting hymn books, and the three of us were laughing our heads off.[95]

Despite the complete language barrier, these two girls welcomed Renate and became long-term friends. Those first few days Renate remembers her foster parents desperately trying to understand what she needed, taking her all around the house until she found the tap, when she needed a glass of water.[96] As she arrived in Wales

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[94] Collins, 1989.
[95] Collins, 1989.
[96] Collins, 2022.

right around her sixth birthday, they gave Renate her first birthday cake with candles and a party.

Renate also had to get used to the affection she was shown by her new parents, as shown in the opening story of this chapter. The story of her first night with her new family and her experience receiving a *cwtch* beautifully illustrates how Kinder who found themselves in Wales experienced a different culture upon their arrival. The word *cwtch* does not have a direct translation to English; however, in its simplest definition, it is a hug or a cuddle. The word has grown to mean so much more than just a hug, however. For many, it is tied distinctly to childhood and the ideas of warmth, safety and cosiness. It has also taken on a larger cultural meaning, occupying a distinct space in Welsh culture and society, specifically in South Wales.[97]

While the difference in warmth and attention that Renate received from her birth mother and new foster mother could certainly have been due to personal differences in her birth mother's thoughts on nurturing, however, their cultures and their surrounding environment most likely played a part in their decisions and actions. Renate's mother in Czechoslovakia saw that the world was not going to be a warm and welcoming place to her Jewish daughter, so perhaps she felt she needed to prepare her for what might be a tough and challenging life. Her foster mother, on the other hand, saw this young girl, in a foreign country with no family members around her and maybe felt she could do her part to welcome her and make her feel safe, a feeling Renate might not have known while in her home country as a young Jewish girl, due to anti-Semitism.

While each of these Kinder experienced different levels of affection, Bea Green certainly lived with a more stereotypical 'stiff upper lip' aristocratic English family, as she described meeting her new foster mother that she called Auntie: 'She was nice and friendly, but there was no hugging. No hugging, I mean for years no hugging, verboten, you don't hug'.[98] Because Bea was eventually evacuated to Wales multiple

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[97] Penhallurick.
[98] WHL, Tape 2.

times, there is the unique opportunity to compare her English sponsors with her Welsh hosts. While evacuated to Aberystwyth, Bea was able to live with a Welsh host family:

> My dear lovely friend Celia Sharpe known as BC who – we were the two youngest –- and she was instrumental in getting me out of university accommodation to live where she was living which was with Professor Terry and his wife. So I was with a private family, which was actually lovely for me. Because Mrs Terry was in a way more of a mother than Auntie had ever been to me. Auntie had left laundry, that's my business. Lovely, we called her Mrs Terry, Mother T, both BC and I called her Mother and Father T. Mr and Mrs Terry. Mrs T washed my undies for me, I mean she looked after me like a mother and that was very nice. We were quite close, that was lovely.[99]

While it is tempting to compare Bea's affectionate and caring Welsh host family to her kind but standoffish and reserved English hosts, we should be careful not to make sweeping assumptions about differences in Welsh and English hospitality. Cai Parry-Jones explored the myths surrounding Wales and the concept of Welsh hospitality in his book *The Jews of Wales,* and reminds us that while Wales has often been portrayed as a nation of tolerance, this is also disputed by some historians, arguing that Wales has played its own role in Great Britain's imperial and colonial empire.[100] Examples from these case studies also complicate these stereotypes, including the factors of being a foreigner or immigrant to Wales, and societal class structures. For instance, combining Bea's time in Aberystwyth with Renate's experiences being hosted by a Welsh family, it could be said that Welsh families were perhaps more affectionate than the immigrant families who hosted other Kinder. Furthermore, this comparison of Bea's different host families raises the idea of class and how that affected her as a foster child. Her upper-class family hosts in Sevenoaks would have had hired help who would sort out laundry, while for her Welsh family hosts, a more middle-class family, laundry was just another household task that Mrs T took care of for Bea, as she would have for any of her children. As Bea says, in this way she felt

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[99] WHL, Tape 3.
[100] Parry-Jones, p. 88.

that Mrs T was caring for her as a mother would, whereas perhaps she felt Auntie had not been as maternal.

To further complicate stereotypes about Welsh hospitality, not all foster parents were kind and welcoming. In particular, Ellen Davis's experience with her foster mother was not a positive one. When asked if she felt welcomed when she arrived in Wales, Ellen answered, 'She [foster mother] didn't make me welcome. Oh, my father did. He gave me all the love that she didn't. She wanted a skivvy...Somebody to make, do the work for her. That's all she wanted'.[101] Ellen did not feel loved or wanted at all by her foster mother, yet she only spoke kindly of her foster father. As Craig-Norton discusses in *The Kindertransport: Contesting Memory,* this scenario was unfortunately a reality for many Kinder: 'Disparities in foster parents' treatment of refugee children is frequently reported in Kindertransport memory literature. Almost invariably, it follows the pattern […] in which the husband is remembered fondly and the wife as cold, unkind, or exploitative'.[102] While this trend could stem from fathers being more absent in the home, or mothers being more responsible for the children's daily activities, the fact that this pattern emerged from analysing many Kinders' experiences reinforces the fact that each Kindertransportee's experience was dependent upon those they were placed with. Therefore those Kinder in Wales, being placed within different households, all had different experiences.

Settling into her new environment was not easy for Ellen. It was not only her foster mother who was not welcoming, but some of her schoolmates as well:

> And I had to go to school. And the little boys used to call me Nazi. The headmistress found some girls who were going the same way as me. And she made sure the girls would come with me and not let the boys hit me.[103]

[101] Davis, 2022.
[102] Craig Norton, p. 106.
[103] Davis, 2022.

Whereas Ellen was persecuted as a Jew in Germany, she was then bullied for being a German in Wales. While it is appalling that there were young boys harassing Ellen at school, it is also notable that there were girls who, at the very least, were willing to walk with her and make sure she was safe and out of harm's way.

Contrastingly, Bea had a very different experience of being a German in Wales. As stated above, she arrived in England in June 1939. When she was first evacuated with her school in 1940, she remembers meeting some town residents:

> And there was a village and the funny thing was, it had its posh inhabitants who thought he'd better do his bit and he invited two or three of us for tea. I remember him but I don't remember his name. And they gave me a feeling of having arrived. You know, I wasn't just an evac refugee. But I was taken on by this gentleman who I think thought quite well of me [...] because neither of us, neither he nor I were English.[104]

This would be a recurring theme for Bea in Wales: feeling accepted *because* she was not English. In 1942, she was evacuated to Wales for the second time at the age of seventeen, attending Aberystwyth University:

> I absolutely adored Wales, because first of all, they didn't bother about me not being Welsh, because all the kids were English. The fact that I was German, they thought was rather nice, you know, not English. That was a difficulty sometimes between the two nations.[105]

Amongst the rest of her majority English peers, Bea must have certainly stood out as a German refugee. Instead of being ostracised, as some Germans might have been (this being during the height of the war), Bea was warmly welcomed by her new Welsh classmates, perhaps even more so *because* she was German, and therefore not English.

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[104] Bea Green, interviewed by Anne Cardenas about her life and Kindertransport experiences, 5 December 2021.
[105] Green, 5 December 2021.

Ellen also spoke of her difficulties with language when she arrived in Wales. 'And I couldn't speak a word of English. I had a teacher straight out of school, college, who had the patience of Job'.[106] Once again, although in a difficult situation, there was a teacher who was able to support Ellen through the early stages of learning English.

With Morris Foner being an immigrant to Wales himself, this would have affected Henry's experience and interaction with Welsh culture, especially in comparison to other children who lived with Welsh families. As explained earlier, Henry did not learn Welsh at home, as Morris himself did not speak the language. Additionally, Ellen's foster father was also an immigrant to Wales. Both families kept and practised their Jewish faith and both families owned shops in Swansea as well. However, the two families fell into different socio-economic classes, creating a perhaps unspoken but understood divide, as Ellen explains:

> He too came to a childless elderly couple. They owned a jewellery shop [...] and mixed with only the very wealthiest people in town. Mother and father did not come into this category. This situation made it impossible for him and me to become friends.[107]

Ellen's perception of her foster family's class and wealth, and the Foners' class and wealth, put them in different categories, therefore making it unlikely for her and Henry to ever interact.

When possible, Kinder were placed in Jewish homes, and while the Jewish community in Wales was small in comparison to England, there was still a thriving Jewish culture in some areas. The first Jewish community in Wales was established in Swansea in 1768 and both Henry and Ellen participated in Swansea's Jewish community.[108] Swansea's Goat Street Synagogue was built in 1859 and the Foners attended it, as Henry describes: 'It was an Orthodox Jewish community, but people came to the synagogue by bus, otherwise [they] wouldn't have got there. And I had to

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[106] Davis, 2022.
[107] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 71.
[108] Parry-Jones, p. 19.

do my errands before I went to a synagogue on Saturday morning, which was most Saturday mornings'.[109] He often went alone to synagogue, as the Foners kept their shop open on Saturdays and worked there instead. Ellen became very involved in the Jewish Youth Club in Swansea as well.

Of course every Kindertransportee's experience was unique, but those who spent time in Wales were certainly influenced by Welsh culture and the simple fact that they were living in Wales, and not England or any other part of the UK. With a separate language and culture, the Kinder in Wales had a different experience as they arrived and acclimatised to their new home. Impacted by a new language, name changes and their new foster families and communities, these Kinder adjusted to their new lives in Wales. Examining their individual experiences in Wales, it is evident that these cases complicate stereotypes about Welsh hospitality, and through these Kinder's stories we see there are many ways to be Welsh and many ways to be received as a refugee and immigrant in Wales. All of these factors contributed to a distinct arrival experience for each Kindertransportee.

[109] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.

Chapter 2: Relationships

In January 1942, Ellen received a letter from the Red Cross letting her know that her mother and six younger siblings had been deported to Riga, Latvia in December 1941. She took this to mean that they had perished and was completely distraught. 'That letter haunted me. I read it a thousand times. I hated reading it, yet something forced me to read and reread this awful piece of paper'.[110] A few weeks later, the letter was destroyed, along with most of Ellen's foster family's possessions, when their house was destroyed during a bombing campaign:

> A few weeks later, Hitler, for once, did me a favour. He bombed our house and destroyed my hateful piece of paper. The bombing was dreadful; the bomb that destroyed our house fell directly on to the reinforced part of the cellar. We were lucky and crawled out from under the debris safe and sound. We spent the rest of that night in one of the big shelters across the road.
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> As always the shelter was jam packed with people. Some of whom had been there all night and perhaps, like us, had their houses destroyed. What I remember most was the way people reacted to their loss and fear. No one sat and cried, they made the best of what tragedy they had suffered. Many times I heard people say 'We were lucky none of us was killed. It was only a house and can be replaced'. Many comments like that remain in my memory. I felt their loss and could not really understand their cheerfulness. To me the loss of our house was a reminder of the home I had lost in Hoof. I never could think of the big house in Swansea as home. Home was with my 'children' [her siblings], either in the hovel in Hoof or the misery of the orphanage.[111]

The UK officially joined what became known as World War II on September 3, 1939. As most Kinder had only arrived in the UK in 1939, their early lives in Wales were defined by the war, experiencing bombings, rationing and evacuations. Among their

[110] Davis, *Kerry's Children,* p. 69.
[111] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 69.

everyday activities of attending school, improving their English and making friends, these children were further occupied with wondering how their families were faring, waiting for letters and phone calls. While they lived their everyday lives, they also dealt with the loss of communication with their families, the choice of whether to try to return to their birth countries, or to continue their lives in Wales and the UK. This chapter will explore the relationships the Kinder had with Wales, their foster families and their birth families, all through the lens of the war. It will argue that Wales was both a safe haven and a place of fear and danger for these Kinder, and that their relationships were deeply impacted by this wartime period.

2.1. Fear and Safety in Wales

As Ellen's story above illustrates, the Kinder in Swansea specifically dealt with the terrifying effects of living in a major war target for the German Luftwaffe. After the fall of France to German forces in June 1940, citizens of Swansea braced themselves for the unknown. Anti-invasion defences were put in place on Swansea's beaches and air raids and blackouts were expected, but most in Swansea, especially the children, could not have expected the destruction of the city that was to come.[112] Because of its large copper industries, Swansea was heavily targeted, starting on 27 June 1940, when the first bombs were dropped on the city.

Leading up to the war and even during the early days of World War II, life in Wales for some of these Kinder resembled a normal childhood. Henry remembers his neighbourhood Sketty and one of his jobs:

> Oh, the neighbourhood was...Sketty had been a village which was incorporated into Swansea. So there was still a village atmosphere. And there were cars. We lived on the road and the road [was] called Vivian Road, number 99. But there were still horses and carts as well. So one of my big jobs was when a horse and cart went up the street and it dropped its droppings - my job was to get a spade and shovel and go and collect the horse manure and put it in a big tub where it

[112] Jim Owen, *Swansea's Frontline Kids: 1939-45* (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2014), pp. 9-10.

> would ferment and be used for fertilizer. That was... one of my jobs.[113]

While Henry was living with the Foners, a fairly middle-class family, he was still expected to do chores and help around the house. This need to help out at home only increased with the start of the war:

> So it was, this was a middle-class neighbourhood…I think the class distinctions in Wales were much less than they were in England, at that time.[114] I had friends, if I think back on it, who were quite poor, and I had friends who were quite well off, in that time. Things of course changed when the war came in. Started in September 1939, things became harder. There was rationing. There were food shortages. But even when food was really short, you could just go down to the seas or the docks and fish for whiting, it's a sort of cheap fish. So we weren't ever really hungry.[115]

While the war and rationing made life more difficult, Henry notes there was still some feeling of reassurance that they could rely on the seas for fish, in essence, relying on local resources for some sense of safety and comfort. Henry goes on to describe that his family was lucky to never go hungry, partially because of the land and garden the Foners kept at their house:

> It was a big garden, it was a quarter of an acre garden. And we had to dig the garden, especially during the war, of course, when we had to grow as much of our food as we could. And the rule was that you fed the animals before breakfast. Because Uncle Morris used to say they can't feed themselves. They're dependent on you. So you have to feed them before you feed yourself.[116]

While they were living in wartime and feeling the effects through their food supply, many Kinder like Henry experienced the normal trappings of childhood, completing

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[113] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[114] By contrast, Ellen maintained there were significant class differences in Swansea which meant that she and Henry would not have met, thus underlining the differences in perceptions of class of Kinder sent to the same city.
[115] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[116] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.

chores and tasks around the house, all during the backdrop of an increasingly dangerous war. While Henry's early days in Swansea gave him a sense of normalcy and safety, with the start of the German bombing campaigns, he soon felt that safety slip away as his new reality involved air raids and bomb shelters:

> I certainly remember. First of all, we would take shelter under the stairs. That's the strongest part of the construction of a house. And then we had a garage, which was built into the ground…and so we put up sandbags outside this garage and had bunk beds, we spent weeks in there.
>
> And the interesting thing was we had a dog. We had a few dogs, they were all called Tim, Tim 1, Tim 2 and Tim 3, not very imaginative. But Tim 2, he could...the German planes would come at a certain time, the bombers would come. And they would send up British planes to try to intercept them. When they came near enough, the air raid sirens would go. But that dog could tell a German plane from a British plane, and he could tell a German plane before the air raid sirens. So the dog would start to cry. He was terrified 'cause we would just get up from the table and run off, outside into the air raid shelter.
>
> I think the main bombing of Swansea was called…the three-day blitz or the three-night blitz...and I remember it well, because the whole town, the centre of the town was bombed to extinction. And we were, I don't know, two miles out in the suburbs. And I remember that all the adults left the shelter and went up the hill. To Coed-Saeson Crescent I think it was called, to see the town burning and just left me and the dog in the air raid shelter. And the dog was terrified. And he jumped in the bed with me and we were in our bunk, hugging each other until people came back. So yeah, I remember the air raids very well.[117]

Henry's experience during the bombings is a great contrast to his earlier descriptions of life in Swansea. He describes the centre of Swansea being bombed extensively, and while he was in Sketty in the western part of Swansea, somewhat away from the immediate danger, he was still left alone with his dog to brave the rest of the air raid without any adults. As a nine-year-old boy living in Swansea, life changed very drastically once Great Britain joined the war. His sense of safety that Wales provided

[117] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.

quickly changed during those nights when fear and uncertainty gripped those hiding in shelters, waiting for the inevitable bombs to drop.

While children in Swansea experienced fear and uncertainty during the bombing campaigns, children in England were often evacuated to Wales and the English countryside as it offered a sense of safety and security that London and other large cities could not provide. Bea experienced the start of the war while at boarding school in England and a near bombing experience caused the school to evacuate its students to Wales:

> War started in '39 and come 1940 I was a boarder and we had a bomb drop next to the school and blow the roof off and all the windows in. Injuries were only superficial because we were all sitting there knitting and the headmaster shouted: 'Get on the ground!' and the girl next to me decided the same spot. And I thought, 'Oh good, if the house comes down it will come down on her first and I'll live.' I was ashamed subsequently of thinking that, but it was amazing if you are honest with yourself, you know, the need to live, survival instinct. Well, the house didn't come down and we remained good friends.
>
> And then the headmaster shouted, get into the cellar, where the younger children were already in bed and there was one who had hysterics and again I went over to her and said, 'It's alright Jo, It's alright Jo, we're alright,' little realising that I was streaming with blood because as we walked across the corridor to go down the stairs another bomb fell outside the glass front door and whoosh glass came all over it and you don't feel it, you are busy going downstairs. So I was sort of– I must have looked quite awful and looking as awful as I did, and saying to this poor girl who was actually green in the face, 'We're alright. Everything is alright,' when I clearly wasn't alright must have been difficult for her. So then we were evacuated to Wales to a farmhouse called Nathravel [?] and there again the actual train journey to Wales was frightening because we had to– it was an all-day journey, the blinds were drawn and the light was dim, but through every town that we went there was an air raid. And having been bombed that then became scary.[118]

Bea shares this vivid memory, illustrating the real danger she and her classmates lived through at their school in England. While the train journey to Wales itself might have

[118] WHL, Tape 2.

scared Bea, with the air raids bringing up memories of her recent experience with a bombing, she describes thoroughly enjoying the more simple, and in her case, more safe life in Wales, once the school had settled in north Wales:

> I was very happy in Wales, for I felt comfortable, I was in the country, I was comfortable in the country. I– again I was trusted by the headmistress because once a week we had to go to Oswestry to do ordering of foodstuffs to be delivered and it was always me that was allowed to go by bus. And I was given one shilling and sixpence to buy myself some lunch with and then come back by bus. And it seemed to me quite normal that it should be me, I never asked why me and why not the others. I don't know. And then I was comfortable too because there was no war. I mean the war was nowhere, so it was again really a normal life.[119]

She remembers the normal tasks of ordering food for her school and being trusted to travel independently. Interestingly she notes that the war felt far away, nowhere near her in north Wales, while she had been so aware of the war while in England. In this way, evacuation served its purpose in making British children feel safer and more secure during a time of war and an unknown future. However, as was the case with Henry and his routine chores, or Bea and her life in the country, whilst children might have felt that life was normal, there was always the backdrop of war in Wales as well. It is important to note that this use of Wales as a 'safe haven' for England, came at a cost. Even in the phrasing of that sentence, one can see that Wales was viewed as a commodity, harking back to the notion of Wales as England's first colony.[120] As Martin Johnes writes in his book *Wales: England's Colony?*, the War Office requisitioned 40,000 acres of Welsh land and the influx of English people, including wartime evacuees, was seen by some as a detriment to Welsh culture and identity.[121]

The idea that Wales simultaneously provided both a safe haven and moments of terror for these children is important to note. Depending on your location within Wales, your feelings of safety and general opinion of Wales could vary greatly. North Wales,

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[119] WHL, Tape 2.
[120] Martin Johnes, *Wales: England's Colony?: The Conquest, Assimilation and Re-creation of Wales* (Cardigan: Parthian, 2019), p. 2.
[121] Johnes, *Wales: England's Colony?,* pp. 144-45.

with fewer bombing threats than south Wales, was especially viewed as safer and maintained the idyllic feeling that Bea remembers from her time in north Wales. Much of this can be attributed to the different experiences north and south Wales faced during the war. Ellen and Henry in Swansea saw bombing and destruction up close and the war became entangled with their childhood. Bea experienced bombing in England, and viewed her time in North Wales as a place of refuge, safe and away from the dangers of war. As Martin Johnes notes in *Wales Since 1939*, most of Wales was designated as a reception area for evacuees, as it was thought unlikely that it would be a target for German forces.[122] It makes sense then that Kinder in Wales experienced this mix of fear and safety, as Wales itself was split in how it experienced the war.

In 1942, Bea was evacuated to Wales for a second time, as a student of University College London. In Aberystwyth, she lived a simpler life as a student and enjoyed walking along the Promenade:

> We went up and down the prom, sometimes two or three of us, sometimes a few more. Oh, that's right and you went to the end, to the end of the prom. And you did the traditional thing, you kicked the bar, there was a bar, a handle, sort of a rail on top of the stone base. And you had to kick with your foot to make sure you'd been there. Kick bar. So that's what I did in Aberystwyth, apart from studying.[123]

A tradition that continues today, students and visitors 'kick the bar' for good luck before an exam or to celebrate before a night out.[124] Bea also joined the university's rowing team while in Wales and enjoyed the natural beauty of mid-Wales.

While the experience of encountering two new languages when the Kinder arrived in Wales might have been daunting, these four Kinder continued to have interesting relationships with language as their time in Wales and the UK extended. In her first

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[122] Martin Johnes, *Wales since 1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 15.
[123] Green, 5 December 2021.
[124] 'Aberystwyth staff and students "kick the bar" to celebrate 150 years since the university's founding' <https://nation.cymru/news/aberystwyth-staff-and-students-kick-the-bar-to-celebrate-150-years-since-the-universitys-founding/> [accessed 6 March 2023].

few months in the Rhondda Valley, Renate did not encounter many other German speakers, besides one German teacher at her school:

> I had to go to school. I think it was the beginning of September, which must have been quite difficult because in those days you didn't have an interpreter in school. I didn't have anybody that spoke German or Czech near me. The local school, which was next door but one, there was a German teacher there. But all foreigners had to move outside a 15-mile radius of a port. So you couldn't have lived in Swansea or Cardiff or Newport. There were a lot of Italians who had cafes, but they kept their [cafes] but they lived up where I was, you know to get – So they were residents about 16 miles away from Cardiff. And Nicole, she had to leave the school so I had no one to speak to. But my foster parents were very keen to teach me proper English. And they, you know, encouraged me. So when I went to the senior school, I was usually top of the class in English grammar.[125]

Renate references all foreigners having to move outside a 15-mile radius of a port, because in May 1940, 'protected areas' were established near port cities considered targets of possible invasion by the German army and its allies.[126] Her teacher Nicole would have fallen under this category of foreign alien and had to leave the school. Renate was later required to study German in school:

> When I was in the senior school, they put me in the German class. And I was bottom of the class…Looking back on it later, I think it was mental. I didn't want to remember those days either, a fresh life.[127]

This conscious or unconscious avoidance of German was a common occurrence among Kinder. Similarly, Henry did not wish to study German either. When deciding what language to study before applying for universities, Henry eventually chose Latin, specifically noting he was not going to choose Welsh and did not want to learn German. 'Because of my past. Because anything to do with Germany was anathema

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[125] Collins, 2022.
[126] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of A Nation: A History of Modern Wales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 225.
[127] Collins, 2022.

to me'.[128] For Henry, at least at the time, the German language was associated with negative emotions and Latin felt like a safe choice for him.

2.2. Correspondence and Connection with Birth Families

As the war went on and Kinder continued settling into their new homes and communities, the children had to balance adjusting to these new foster families and keeping in touch with and feeling connected to their birth families.

When the UK officially declared war on Germany, corresponding with families in Europe became more and more difficult. With communication severely limited, it was difficult for Kinder who did not know the location or status of their family members. Henry said: 'We followed the war on the world scale with maps and pins in them to show whether British [troops] were advancing or more often retired, or retiring. But what was happening in Germany, we knew nothing about'.[129]

The Foners in particular were very open with Henry about the unknown fate of his family:

> And when we talked about it, they'd always say, 'Well, Henry, you know when the war came…' They'd say, 'Henry, your family, your other family, we don't know what happened to them, we'll have to wait till after the war and see what happens'.[130]

Henry's father and grandmother sent frequent postcards as soon as he arrived in Swansea in February 1939. These postcards are beautiful and were lovingly written. The Foners meticulously kept everything Henry received and stored them in an album for him that he received as an adult. These postcards portray what a loving family Henry left in Berlin, with his father frequently asking after him and expressing his thanks to the Foners for taking care of Henry. The postcards changed to English at the

[128] Foner, 9 December 2021.
[129] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[130] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.

end of June, after Henry's father called him on his seventh birthday and realised young Henry had lost his German within four months of living in Swansea.[131] The last postcard Henry's father sent was dated 31 August 1939, as the war began in September, and it became much harder to send post between the UK and Germany. Henry received his last message from his father, a Red Cross letter in August 1942. His father was deported to Auschwitz on 9 December 1942 and killed one week later.[132]

Other Kinder did not receive such regular communication from their families, especially when, like Bea, they were evacuated to other locations within Great Britain and it could be difficult or even impossible to pass on their new addresses to family in mainland Europe. When Bea was evacuated the first time to Wales with her school in 1940, she did not know where her parents were or if they were safe:

> Well, my brother was in the army when he received a letter from the dentist I mentioned earlier, Dr Schindler, the old acquaintance of my father who had received a telegram in September of 1940 from Irkutsk in Siberia and the telegram said 'travelling to Peru, beg to inform children. Reply Poste Restante Kobe Japan'. They received this telegram because of course, my parents knew their address, but they didn't know where my brother and I were. And they sent it to my brother who was by this time in the army in Kettering and he sent it to me in Wales, in Bryn Gwalia Hall that was the third big place we went…I burst into tears, I couldn't believe it. I mean once before when I had, as it were, contact with my father was the picture, was the famous picture that had appeared in Picture Post earlier that year.[133] And it had come to my notice and I was fairly upset because at that point I didn't know where my parents were, so the next time I actually get this telegram, I knew they were safe. It was wonderful.[134]

The telegram her parents sent had to travel to family friends first, as they did not know where either of their children currently were located. While not the case for so many other Kinder, both of Bea's parents survived as they escaped to Peru and settled

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[131] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 60.
[132] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 96.
[133] This is a reference to the photograph in Figure 5 featured in Chapter 1.
[134] WHL, Tape 3.

into the small Jewish community in Lima. Once there, they were able to correspond regularly:

> I knew that they were all right and they could write from Peru. So we did have a correspondence, if you like, throughout the war between Peru and England. Postal services took ages. I was not a diligent letter writer and I would often get a second letter from my poor mum saying: 'I am starting this letter in the hopes that there's one from you in the post'.[135]

Bea had the experience that many Kinder did not, in knowing that her parents were safe in Peru. With slow post and still separated by the Atlantic Ocean, Bea was able to have a small peace of mind, knowing her family were out of Germany.

Like Bea, many Kinder also received similar telegrams and Red Cross letters providing a short but vague update on their loved ones' whereabouts, as we saw in the opening story of Ellen's family and the letter she received. No matter what Ellen experienced in Swansea, she still did not feel as though it were her home, because her beloved siblings and family were not there with her. While she dearly missed her mother and siblings, Ellen had the unusual experience of seeing her father while she was living in Wales. He actually left Dachau and somehow made his way to Great Britain, where he was then interned because he was classified as an Enemy Alien. He was eventually released from internment and became part of the Pioneer Corps. Ellen received a letter from him saying he was coming to visit Swansea: 'It was a strange visit. Papa and I spoke German, mother and father did not understand and my English was so little that there was no way I could translate. Seeing Papa again was a gift from heaven'.[136] This visit was for her Papa to say goodbye, as he was being sent to Australia on the notorious ship HMT Dunera, and while he survived the harrowing journey, that visit in Swansea was the last time she ever saw her birth father. Simply because some birth parents did survive the war, it could not erase the time they had spent apart from their children, nor the emotional rifts that often arose. Rebecca

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[135] WHL, Tape 3.
[136] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 64.

Clifford writes about family reunions and difficulties surviving parents might have experienced:

> Surviving parents, for their part, had had a very different set of experiences during the war: they had worked as slave labour, had been held for months or years in internment and concentration camps, had spent years running and hiding, or had gone through any number of similar traumatic and terrifying experiences. They had been pushed to the brink of physical and emotional collapse.[137]

It may seem improbable that a father would not see his only surviving child again, however, it is possible that her Papa had experienced too much trauma while interned in Dachau (and later on the Dunera) to be able to think of taking care of her. Ellen was in touch with her Papa through letters later in life, and perhaps he thought Ellen was in better hands with her foster parents in Swansea. As Ellen described, her Papa's visit might have painted a false picture of her life in Swansea:

> Father [foster father] was very proud of our beach and all the surrounding bays. This was what he wanted Papa to see when he came. So we went on a picnic in Uncle and Auntie Wolf's car. Papa was duly impressed and kept telling me how lucky I was. I did not tell him of all the misery I had to bear. I wanted the two days he was with me to be perfect. Mother of course was a very different person in public. She pretended to care for me -- all sham. The days soon passed and Papa had to return to his unit. [...] The visit had been sweet but terribly short.[138]

Ellen wanted her Papa to enjoy his visit and not worry about her, and in turn, he most likely thought she was living a much better life than he could provide for her. Especially with him being sent to Australia on the Dunera, her Papa might have realised he could not be there for her and support her in the UK. On this point, later in her life, when Ellen was to be married for the first time, she wrote to her Papa:

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[137] Rebecca Clifford, 'Families After the Holocaust: between the archives and oral history', *Oral History*, 46.1 (2018), pp. 42-54 <https://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa35204>.
[138] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 64.

> At the time, 1948, the age of consent was twenty-one. Therefore it was important for me to have my Papa's consent to this marriage. Papa and I had corresponded during these years, many of which he had spent in an atrocious camp for aliens in the desert of Australia. Eventually when this camp was closed, he had moved to Melbourne. [...] Our letters were few and really said nothing. He did not tell me of the atrocious conditions in which he had to live. I, not to worry him as I thought, told him nothing of the misery of my existence.[139]

Ellen's own analysis of her correspondence with her Papa supports the idea that each one was trying to protect the other, and hoping for a good life for the other as well.

Renate also received some communication from her parents, and her foster family also saved these letters. She received a Red Cross letter dated 10 June 1942 that read, 'Many birthday wishes, we think continually of you. Are well, hope you too, much love. Kind regards and thanks to your foster parents. Signed mummy, grandmother and Felix'[140] This was the last communication Renate received from her mother.

An underlying question throughout the wartime for these Kinder was wondering what would happen to them next, after the war. While it was assumed that some children had made a permanent move to the UK, with few family members left in Central Europe, other children thought they might return to their parents and home country once the war had finished. 'I thought I was going on holiday',[141] Renate remembered. What young Renate had not known at the time was that her mother Hilda had already written to her foster family about what they hoped would happen following the war:

> There is something laying hard on my chest…you will understand our desire, by the love of God, to be reunited with our dear little one again…you have given us by your letters, many proofs of deep understanding and human feeling. This encourages us to write frankly. We call ourselves happy to know Renate over there in your peaceful home but we do hope, that if ever in several years time, only we should love to have Renate with us again and therefore we beg

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[139] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, pp. 81-82.
[140] Collins, 1989.
[141] Collins, 2022.

> you most heartedly to abstain from eventual adoption. We hope you will understand our feelings as it is concerning our single child.[142]

This heart-wrenching letter beautifully portrays the myriad emotions most Kinder parents felt about sending their child away. While they were grateful for their child's safety and wanted the foster family to treat her as their own, they were also very clear that they did not want to give her away forever. The idea that parents felt they had to explicitly say they wanted to reunite with their own children highlights how unfathomable their situation must have felt during the war. For this reason, and because adoption of foreign children was not legal at the time,[143] Renate was not adopted by the Coplestones until 1947, when her second cousin, who had also escaped to Great Britain, visited Czechoslovakia and returned to the UK with the death certificates of her family members.[144] Before the adoption could take place, Renate had to first become a British subject.

As an adult, Henry received a letter that his father, Max, had written to a cousin in 1941. This relative passed on the 'farewell letter' to Henry.[145] Similarly to Renate's mother's letter, it portrays the horrible position that Kinder's parents were placed in:

> I think that my Heini is in good hands and that the Foners will look after him as well as any parents could. Please convey to them one day when appropriate my deepest gratitude for making it possible for my child to escape the fate that will soon overtake me. I hope that one day he will thank them for all they have done for him. Naturally it is important for me that in the future he should find out and know what his origins are and who his parents and ancestors were. I have taken steps to ensure that one day he will come into possession of the family papers. Please tell him one day that it was only out of deep love and concern for his future that I gave him away, but that on the other hand I miss him most painfully every single day and my life would lose all meaning if there were not a possibility of seeing him again one day.[146]

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[142] Collins, 1989.
[143] Clifford, *Survivors*, p. 80.
[144] Collins, 2022.
[145] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, pp. 98-103.
[146] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, pp. 101-02.

Max's letter is difficult to read, knowing his fate, but his unwavering love for his only child is shown so clearly in these words.

Beyond letters, there were occasionally other items sent during the wartime. Henry's father somehow managed to send through a large crate with many family heirlooms:

> Because another strange happenstance of the war was that although they were busy doing body searches on six-year-old kids, my father managed to send out a tree lift which is like a wooden container, huge thing full of furniture and silver and carpets and valuables and he sent it to the Foners, to me at the Foners in Swansea. We have the packing there's still swastikas all over it. So you wonder why they're letting them send this stuff out when they're searching small children's luggage…that furniture was put into a store – it was a storage company, still is as far as I know, Pickfords. And they had a warehouse storage facility in Swansea, and it was bombed. So the Foners got a notice to remove anything they had stored there so they had nowhere to put it so they got rid of their own furniture and put my furniture in their house…the thing was, this was furniture from a huge flat in Berlin. And this was not a small house, but it wasn't the sort of scale, so the house was always crammed full of furniture.[147]

Most Kinder did not have the chance to take any more than their one allotted suitcase, and most parents did not have the means or foresight to send treasured items away, so Henry's case is unusual. Moreover, the fact that the Foners chose to get rid of their own furniture, once the storage unit needed to be emptied, and opted to use Henry's family's furniture shows how much they cared. When Henry got married later, the Foners gave him all of his family items. Perhaps as an immigrant himself, Morris knew how special it could be to have reminders of home and heirlooms to preserve family history. In many instances, Kinder returned to their home countries and to trusted neighbours to try to retrieve precious family items and were refused or told those items were theirs now. For the Foners to take such care with Henry's family's belongings was a mark of their care for the boy, as well as his family.

[147] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.

Bea's family also had some foresight into sending her with extra belongings. When she originally arrived in Harwich off the ferry, she went to collect her bags:

> Now, my mum – Officially we were allowed one little suitcase – now my mum said two things, nobody mentions a sack, nobody mentions luggage in advance. So here I was with all these kids with one suitcase, I had three suitcases, a sack, my hand luggage and my accordion.[148]

This image of Bea illustrates how some parents grasped the situation they were in and chose to send as much as possible with their children, whereas perhaps other children had no parents to pack for them, or no other belongings to bring with them. This brings to mind that those children of middle-class families had more to bring with them, whereas children coming from orphanages, like Ellen, brought only what few items they had.

As was stated in Chapter 1, the Jewish communities in which the children were raised in continental Europe were quite different than the Jewish communities they encountered in Wales and Great Britain. Henry recalled being raised in a fairly 'assimilated' household in Berlin, even receiving Easter eggs from his father as a young boy.[149] Henry describes Swansea's Jewish community:

> But it was so so different. For instance, it was an Orthodox Jewish community, but people came to the synagogue by bus, otherwise they wouldn't have got there. And I had to do my errands before I went to a synagogue on Saturday morning, which was most Saturday mornings. So the main job was, when the war started, there were rations. We had chickens, and the chickens - if you kept chickens, you got chicken food rationed. So I had a little trolley made out of pram wheels. And I'd go down from a house down the road to Sketty, to the court, and I would load it up with bags - give him my coupons and I'd load it up with chicken food and I'd drag it up the hill, to the house and put chicken food wherever it had to go. And then I was free to go and either walk or take the bus to go to the synagogue,

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[148] WHL, Tape 2.
[149] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.

> which isn't exactly the sort of thing that Orthodox Jews are supposed to do.[150]

Henry acknowledges that taking the bus to synagogue was not what Orthodox Jews were supposed to do; however, given the locations of the synagogues in Swansea, congregants had little other choice. As Cai Parry-Jones notes, by 1955, residents in Swansea were tired of the three-mile journey from Sketty and the Uplands, and a new synagogue was built in the Uplands neighbourhood.[151] Moreover, because this was wartime, Henry's chores were important and took precedence over Orthodox rules, especially considering that he often went to synagogue alone as the Foners were tending to their business.

2.3. Post-War Lives and Aftermath

As it was helpful to understand the background of each child and where they grew up, it is also helpful to understand the fate of each family and where each Kindertransportee lived out their life after the war and into adulthood.

As stated earlier, Henry's father, Max Lichtwitz, was deported from Berlin in December 1942 and killed at Auschwitz. Henry's grandmother survived Theresienstadt and Henry was able to visit her before she passed away in 1951.[152] His uncles survived the war as well, and despite their language differences, Henry continued relationships with them for the rest of their lives. Henry graduated from college in Swansea and joined the British Army, where he served in Egypt and the Sudan. He attended the University of Leeds, studying Chemistry and obtaining his PhD. While working as a food chemist in Leeds, he decided to take a short fellowship in Israel for a summer. There he met Judy Ophen, and they eventually married, with her joining him in Leeds, where their first two children were born. They then relocated to Israel in 1968 and their third child was born in Jerusalem. Henry worked as an analytical and environmental chemist at the Geological Survey of Israel and

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[150] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[151] Parry-Jones, pp. 48-49.
[152] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 11.

retired officially in 1997. He continued to have a close relationship with the Foners and has stayed in touch with many extended relatives as well.[153]

Bea's parents made it to Lima, settled into and helped build up the small Jewish community there, her father working as a lawyer and later becoming a Rabbi. They lived there for the rest of their lives.[154] Bea graduated from University College London in 1944 with a degree in Modern Languages. She married and taught at Bristol University. She had separate reunions with each parent as they visited her and her brother in the UK. Her father came in 1951 on a trip to Germany, where he was stopped by customs and was searched because of the gifts his friends in Peru had sent with him to give to family members back in Germany.[155] Bea helped sort out the issues with the customs officers in Plymouth:

> Because I had – he felt that I had rescued him, the boot was on the other foot, I was the parent. And it was wonderful, we just talked, no problem, I mean, they allowed me to actually go in to talk to him before he came out of whatever you call it, the sort of search area, so we had a quick hug. And I remember saying to him: Überlass es mir. Leave it to me. I remember actually saying that to him because I felt that he was maybe too honest or telling them things they didn't even want to know. So I explained that he was a lawyer and he had all these friends and it was the first time back in Europe after the war. And they understood, I mean they believed me, and I told them the truth. So I rescued him, and you know that was nice and my brother was alright by then so there wasn't anybody– there was nothing sad about this trip.[156]

As Rebecca Clifford notes in *Survivors*, most post-war reunions were not as joyful as Holocaust film and literature would have us believe, but much more complicated.[157] A common thread amongst Kinder and child survivors who were reunited with their parents was the role reversal that often came with those reunions, as the children helped their parents navigate new languages, cultures and customs. As Bea said, she

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[153] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, pp. 10-11.
[154] WHL.
[155] WHL, Tape 3.
[156] WHL, Tape 3.
[157] Clifford, *Survivors*, p. 92.

felt that she rescued her father, and in that sense, she was the parent, taking care of him. Bea was also in the rare position where she was able to reunite with both parents. Her mother came to Liverpool in January 1948 as Bea's brother was very ill.[158] Bea met her ship at its dock in Liverpool:

> And I don't remember the time between seeing her and her coming up and I don't remember an embrace, but there must have been one and I think we both cried. I mean it was, it was something that you– there just weren't any words, it is a long time, nine years, a long time between her stepping behind my dad and taking out her handkerchief and meeting in peace.[159]

Juxtaposing the image Bea had of her mother when she waved goodbye to her in Munich with her greeting her mother, now as an adult, post-war, is an example of this reversal of the parent-child relationship, like how Bea described greeting her father in Plymouth and helping him through the customs process. In the time away from her parents, she had become an adult, and was taking on the responsibility of caring for her own parents and seeing them in a different light.

Bea married in England and when that marriage did not work out, they separated and she moved to Lima to live with her parents in 1952, when she was 27 years old.[160] She had remained close with her foster family, Auntie and Uncle, and recalls them being nervous about her trip to Peru:

> Auntie was seriously concerned when I decided to go to Peru…I stayed with them the weekend before I left and she said to me, you will come back, darling, won't you. That was as far as she allowed herself to go.[161]

This quote highlights the stereotypically unemotional state of Bea's English foster parents, yet also shows how she did in fact know they cared and showed it in their

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[158] WHL, Tape 3.
[159] WHL, Tape 3.
[160] WHL, Tape 3.
[161] WHL, Tape 3.

own way. She did indeed return to London two years later. She married Michael Green in 1957 and they had three children. They lived in Ceylon [now Sri Lanka] for two years and later she worked as an English teacher, in the film industry, as a translator and interpreter, and became a magistrate.[162]

As stated earlier, Renate was officially adopted in 1947 and became a British subject after the death of her family was confirmed.[163] Renate learned that her mother and grandmother were shot en route to Treblinka extermination camp, and her father and uncle were killed at Auschwitz. Altogether, she lost 64 family members in the Holocaust.[164]

Renate began working for British Overseas Airways, the predecessor to British Airways, and met her husband David through family friends. She moved to Cornwall and they married in 1954.[165]

> So I thought I'd never leave the valleys but there we are, things change. The only thing when you're in the valleys and it rains you feel you're in a shoebox and the lid's come down. Because you got mountains on one side and you feel as if you've got a lid over you. I mean, Cornwall, the north coast of Cornwall is the windiest place on earth, I think. 'Cause there's nothing between us and America.[166]

After 47 years of living in Cornwall and raising their two children, David retired and they decided to move back to Wales in 2001, settling in Caldicot, outside of Chepstow.[167] During the COVID-19 pandemic, Renate once again left Wales for Cornwall, settling near her son and extended family.

Ellen Davis's foster father passed away when she was 15 and her relationship with her foster mother only deteriorated further. She married in 1948 and had her daughter in

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[162] WHL, Tape 3-4.
[163] Collins, 2022.
[164] Hammel, *Finding Refuge*, p. 195.
[165] Hammel, *Finding Refuge*, p. 204.
[166] Collins, 2022.
[167] Collins, 2022.

1950, when she was twenty years old, and her son was born a few years later.[168] Her husband owned and operated a shop in Llanelli where she worked as well. Eventually she opened her own shop in Swansea, selling knitting machines and teaching her customers to use the machines. She later worked as an estate agent receptionist and a service manager at a garage. She and her first husband divorced and she married Colin Davis in the 1970s.[169] Ellen and her birth father, her Papa, remained in touch sporadically after he left for Australia. Then confusingly, in the 1970s, her letters went unanswered. Eventually, Ellen came into contact with her stepmother in Australia and found out her father passed away in 1976. She and Colin visited Australia for four months in December 1981, where they connected with her father's new family and some of his friends from the Dunera.[170] Ellen and Colin eventually moved to a house in Pennard, a village on the Gower peninsula, where she still lives today.

These Kinder were not only separated from their birth families and brought to a brand-new country, where they encountered a new culture, language and customs, but they also did all of this during an intense wartime period, marked by the fear of the unknown. Living in Wales was a particularly different experience for these children, as some areas of Wales were under persistent bombing campaigns and others allowed for a simpler rural country life and escape for the Kinder and other evacuees. Their childhoods and experiences in Wales, as well as the relationships forged during this wartime period, changed the trajectory of their adult lives.

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[168] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, pp. 81-95.
[169] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 113.
[170] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, pp. 115-19.

Chapter 3: Identity

Like so many other Kinder, as an adult Renate began sharing her story with the public, including groups of school children. She recalled one particular question a young man asked her at a school in Caldicot, Wales:

> He never took his eyes off me. He didn't move. And when I asked if there are any questions, I used to pick out people and say, you know, would you like to ask a question?…And he asked me a question that I'd never been asked before.
>
> 'Are you still Jewish?'
>
> And I thought that lad has been really thinking about it. So I said to him, 'Where were you born?' He said, 'Caldicot.' So I said, 'Well, you're Welsh.' I said, 'You will always be Welsh.' 'Oh yes,' he said.
>
> So I said, 'Well, I was Jewish.' And I said, 'So I'll always be Jewish.'[171]

Issues of identity and belonging are complicated and difficult to articulate for most Kinder, considering they were born in one country and culture, then dropped into another as a child, and perhaps even moved again as an adult. This chapter will explore the way these four Kinder feel about their national, cultural and Jewish identities, their relationships with their birth countries and Wales, and their feelings about having survived when others did not, as well as how they have expressed and shared their story throughout their lives.

For each of the Kinder in this study, their background and experiences within the United Kingdom led them in very different directions. Henry, born in Germany, spent his youth in Swansea, then joined the British Army, attended university in Leeds and

[171] Collins, 2022.

emigrated to Israel in the 1960s. His wife Judy grew up in Israel and they raised their children there. Ellen was also born in Germany and came to Swansea, where she married twice, raised her children and continues to live. Bea was born in Germany and came to England, where she was twice evacuated to Wales, both north Wales and mid Wales, with her schools. She then married and lived in England for the rest of her life, with stints visiting her parents in Peru and living in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Renate was born in Czechoslovakia and then spent her childhood and teen years in south Wales, moving to Cornwall, England when she married. Upon her husband's retirement in 2001, they chose to move back to Wales, outside of Newport, although in 2021, Renate moved back to Cornwall. With these four distinct paths, cutting through multiple countries, languages and cultures, it is not surprising that the issue of identity is a complicated one for these Kinder.

3.1. National, Cultural and Jewish Identity

Illustrated by the opening story of the young boy's question to Renate, common questions raised by their stories revolve around: Who are you? Where are you from? Where do you feel tied to? These are not simple questions, and nor do they always have simple answers.

Bea however, has developed a phrase that succinctly ties up her feelings about her identity:

> I say this simply because I actually find myself associating, or identifying rather, with Bavaria. I have a possible problem with Germany as such, I don't associate with Germany so much as I do with Bavaria. I am a Bavarian, I mean I'm a Bavarian Jewish Brit. Fits me. That was, I thought about that by the way when my youngest son once asked me: 'Well, how do you feel Mum?' and I thought about it and I came out well with: 'I am a Bavarian Jewish Brit.' A Bavarian Jewish Briton if you like.[172]

[172] WHL, Tape 1.

This idea of blending identities makes sense for Bea, as someone who spent the first main part of her life in Germany, Bavaria specifically, yet feels conflicted saying she is German, and obviously feels connected to her British upbringing as well, rounded out with the constant thread of Judaism throughout her life. She was able to find this concrete idea that represents many facets of her identity. As Andrea Hammel notes, 'Rather than adopting hegemonic narratives, they [refugees or survivors] are able to construct new ones, even in a playful, somewhat performative manner'.[173] Bea created this new identity for herself that she seems to enjoy sharing.

And while Bea does seem happy to share this explanation of her hybrid identity, her journey to realise this firm identity was not simple, nor unemotional. She shared the story of being invited back to Germany by the mayor of Munich and visiting with her husband. Upon arrival in Munich they went to a typical beer cellar and ordered potato salad, a very Bavarian dish:

> I took one mouthful and burst into tears and my husband said, 'What is the matter?' And I said, 'I don't know.' To this day I don't know. I just have to – it was sort of a wallowing cry, I was just overcome with some emotion and I think that is when this irretrievable loss of original identity hit me. So maybe that was when it was coming together who was I, who am I and what is the bridge. I think I have got there, I think I have got there. I remembered that when– my first few days at school in England I discovered something, and that also has to do something with your question.[174] I suddenly realised, they don't know who I am, because I was in this community in Munich with Jewish friends, with non-Jewish friends. But the people I knew, knew who I was. And here I found myself and these guys didn't know who I was. They don't know and I thought I'll show them who I am and that was another thing that was another reason why I studied. I'll show them who I am, so being a refugee maybe made me more aware of who I am. I didn't think of myself as a refugee…

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[173] Andrea Hammel, 'Narrating the Margins and the Center: Kindertransportees' Stories of National and Religious Belonging' *Shofar*, 37.3 (2019), 203–28.

[174] The interviewer (Sharon Rappaport) asked: 'I am interested to know how did the refugee experience influence your life?' and 'How did the premature, let's say, ending of your childhood influence your life, do you think you have any emotional effects of leaving home at such a young age and what did it bring to you as a person?'.

> No, I never thought of myself. I don't even think of myself as a refugee now. I just came here. I came here. I came here for a good reason and I came here with the Kindertransport. Thank goodness it existed. But I don't– I don't think I have ever attached the label refugee to myself.[175]

While Bea says she has not ever felt like a refugee, it is also clear that being a refugee was pivotal to her discovering her own sense of identity. She says she felt a loss of her original identity, but conversely, being a refugee made her more aware of her identity, even as she refused it as a label.

A huge debate during the administrative organization of the Kindertransport was the question of deciding which families could foster Kinder. Could only Jewish families be considered? What if the child was raised in an Orthodox family and their foster family practised Reform Judaism, or vice versa? What would these decisions mean for the child's religious identity after the war?[176] While some families felt adamantly that their child should be taken in by a Jewish family, others just wanted them to have a home, regardless of religion. Now, in retrospect, one can look back to see how these placements affected individual Kinder's sense of identity and specifically, their identity as a Jewish person. Renate certainly had a unique experience, growing up in the house of a Baptist minister:

> I don't describe myself as anything, cause I'm Jewish. And really, a few of the Jewish people now look down on people like me, because they think the people that took us in should have kept the Jewish faith but my parents weren't Orthodox Jews. They got married in the cathedral in old Prague, which isn't Catholic and it isn't Jewish. And anyway, when I went to Wales, there weren't any synagogues around, apart from one in Cardiff and of course, that couldn't be used during the war. And I've been in a Baptist Minister's house, although he studied Judaism quite a bit, when he was in Swansea, actually taught at Swansea University in his older life, non-Christian religions. So he, you know, he – I knew all about the Jewish faith.[177]

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[175] WHL, Tape 4.
[176] Hammel, 'Narrating the Margins and the Center', p. 226.
[177] Collins, 2022.

Renate describes feeling the pressure, or judgment of others regarding how she should have been raised, but reveals that her parents themselves were not particularly religious, not having been married in a synagogue; therefore, one can infer that as she still identifies as Jewish, her religious identity has remained the same as it might have been, had she been raised by her birth parents. Curiously, while some might have thought her being placed with a Baptist minister would have put her in a situation to be converted to Christianity, because her foster parents were open-minded and even knowledgeable about the Jewish faith, she maintained that Jewish identity. Renate shared: 'So I've been Kress, Kressova, Coplestone and Collins'.[178] Her family name she was born with was Kress, and the 'ova' added to her passport when she came to the UK, then Coplestone was her adopted family's name, and finally Collins was her husband's name which she took. No matter her last name, or whether as a child in Prague and an adult in Wales and Cornwall, Renate maintained her Jewish identity through every phase of her life.

It can be seen as doubtful that Kinder would feel only one specific national identity, as they spent their formative years split between different nations. This feeling might be even more intense for Kinder who spent time in Wales and, like Renate and Henry for example, also spent significant periods of their adult life in England, Renate moving to Cornwall when she got married, and Henry joining the British Army and later attending the University of Leeds.

Henry, in particular, faced many situations as an adult where others called attention to this Jewish identity, specifically during his time in the British Army. His decision to actually enlist also brings up important issues around his feelings of national identity:

> I never considered myself German for a minute. Never. In fact, when I got to be 18, I had to - there was national service. And the question came up whether I should do national service. I could have, I could have got out of it by claiming German citizenship, for instance, or by leaving the country, as many of my friends did. I quite deliberately decided to enlist, or not to not enlist that way. [...] I really thought

[178] Collins, 2022.

> that if the country had saved my life, you have to serve in the army. Then, okay, I should serve in the army, which I did.[179]

Henry's rejection of his German identity, as well as his gratitude towards his new home, meant he felt called to enlist in the British Army. He enlisted in early 1953 and was assigned to a Light Infantry Regiment:

> First of all, I was called up in Wales. So I was called up to the Ulster rifles, which is in Ulster, Northern Ireland. So the first thing you have to do is get on a train and get on a boat and get to Northern Ireland. There's plenty of army in Wales, there was anyway, why they decide to send you to Ireland? It's a typical army thing. Carried on like that for two years. So we trained in, in a place called Ballymena in Northern Ireland. It was pretty tough…But basically, the officers were English. The non-commissioned officers were from the Irish Free State. And the conscripts and the grunts were mostly national service people from all over.
>
> I think the funniest thing was, it was coming up to St. Patrick's Day. So this was a big thing. So they had church parades, and there were Catholics and there were Protestants. So I'll tell you the story. There was a week we were there, we were doing all new little things, crawling the mud and shooting and that sort of thing, because it rains worse than in Wales there. And there was a little corporal and so he said, you know, 'Protestants to the left, Catholics to the right, move.' And I stood there, at attention. And he came up to me about two centimetres from me and he said, he screams in my face and drenches me with spit. 'Rifleman.' He says, 'Protestants to the left, Catholics to the right, move! Don't you, didn't you hear m-Didn't you hear me? Move.' And I stood there. He said, 'Rifleman. Didn't you hear me?' And I said, 'Yes, Corporal.' So he said, 'Why don't you move?' I said, 'I'm a Jew.' So he looked at me, he stepped two paces back. And he said, 'No Jews here. Protestants to the left, Catholics to the right, choose.' So I went with the Protestants because in Wales, there were mostly Protestants [laughs].[180]

While Henry laughs remembering this story, it gives a very striking picture of how the British Army viewed religion, as well as national identity, and furthermore, how the general British population viewed religion in their country, being predominantly Christian and divided in some areas between the two major Christian denominations.

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[179] Foner, 29 November 2021, Session 2.
[180] Foner, 9 December 2021.

It is no mistake that Henry mentions the officers being English, with the non-commissioned officers being Irish and the grunts being from all over the United Kingdom. This sums up the imperial hierarchy in Britain at the time, with England presiding over Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Growing up in Wales, this hierarchy would have felt familiar to Henry while stationed in Northern Ireland. While it should be noted that Northern Ireland, with its own share of religious strife in The Troubles, did not have the highest population of Jews in the UK, this example still highlights how different some Kinder felt while living out their lives in the UK.[181]

Henry served in the British Army in the Sudan and Egypt, and visited Israel for the first time while on break from his duty in Egypt. That two-week visit left him with a feeling that he might someday move there:

> I just agreed with the idea of Zionism, that Jews should have a country of their own where they could go as a right, not as of somebody else's pleasure. I suppose always I felt some sort of residual restlessness or, uncertainty – that's the word I'm looking for – when I was in Britain.[182]

Even as he was grateful to Britain, Henry shared that he felt uncertainty about his future in the UK and where he should be, and Israel, with its identity as a dedicated Jewish homeland, felt like a place where he could feel at home and safe.

Ellen shared some of her feelings about identity and Germany when she was part of the historic 50th anniversary reunion of the Kindertransport that took place in London in June 1989:

> The reunion lasted two days. On the second day there was a symposium, consisting of local teachers asking questions of a panel

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[181] Shira Schoenberg and Mitchell Bard, 'United Kingdom Virtual Jewish History Tour', <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/united-kingdom-virtual-jewish-history-tour#8> [accessed 20 April 2023].
[182] Foner, 9 December 2021.

> made up from people from the Kindertransport. If the audience wished, they too could answer some of the questions.
>
> After a number of questions and answers, one of the teachers asked what we of the Kindertransport now felt was our homeland? Answers came thick and fast. To my dismay a number of people in the audience answered that despite all the things they had gone through and their allegiance to Britain or wherever they now lived (I haven't mentioned that the Kinder came to the reunion from all over the world, one man even came from Peru), they still felt that their homeland was Germany.
>
> Without knowing what I was doing, I left my seat and walked to the stage. I cannot remember ever being so angry. When it became my turn to speak, I was told I spoke with great passion. I told the audience that I was disgusted with these answers. I was myself a wife, mother and grandmother. That this country, despite my foster mother, had been very good to me. I was Jewish and proud of it. But what I did not feel was any affinity for Germany. How could I? Germany had robbed me of a mother, four brothers and two sisters. I was British and proud of it. I wanted nothing to do with Germany. I was amazed at myself. There were some 970 people in the hall. I was truly shy, yet I had stood in front of this audience and had spoken from my heart.
>
> As I came off the stage, the room erupted. People were fighting their way to me, they hugged, kissed me and everyone told me that I had spoken the words that they had in their hearts yet couldn't find the ability to speak. It had become sheer chaos. I was very touched and in tears. People I had never met would not let me go back to my seat, all they wanted was to touch or kiss me to release their emotion at hearing the words they could not speak and I had spoken for them.[183]

Ellen was able to speak her mind and articulate what many other Kindertransportees were also feeling about the complicated issue of identity. While perhaps some Kinder felt strongly about their ties to Germany, from Ellen's perspective, it seems that many struggled to understand their own identities, perhaps from feelings of guilt or sadness, yet they connected to her statements that day. As each Kinder experience was unique, it is understandable that they each would have their own complex feelings about their identity and how they fit into their homeland versus their adopted country.

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[183] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 131.

3.2. Relationships with Birth Countries and Wales

As so many Kinder struggled with their sense of identity and belonging, having spent their lives living between cultures, it is important to analyse their relationships with their birth countries and how those relationships may or may not have evolved over time, as well as their relationships with Wales. In these four cases, each Kinder has indeed visited their birth country as an adult.

Henry has made multiple visits back to Germany since the war ended, including one in 1950 to visit his grandmother. When asked if he enjoyed these visits, he answered:

> Well, not the first one, when we went to visit my uncle, it was very stressful for me. There were still too many people who'd obviously been in the war and then the army. And so that's why we spent all our spare time at the zoo. Because [we] didn't think the animals would be Nazis.[184]

At this point, so soon after the war, Henry was not able to separate Germany from Nazism. Henry's wife Judy also shared: 'Yes, you were sitting there in the restaurant. You wonder what these people had done during the war. You know, it's that feeling, that was very unpleasant'.[185] Yet, Henry describes a later work visit to Germany very differently:

> And I had a co-partner or two in, in Germany, we went to meet them, but that was already in the 80s or 90s. No 80s, late 80s. So those were younger people, and that was a different feeling altogether. We've been once or twice now… We've also been for the Kindertransport Memorial… unveiling. And that was sort of different too, because we were with people we could identify with.[186]

Henry notes that his experience was different when interacting with younger Germans, as they were not alive when the war occurred. He also describes identifying

[184] Foner, 31 January 2022.
[185] Foner, 31 January 2022, (Judy Foner).
[186] Foner, 31 January 2022.

with fellow Kinder, as they might also understand his complicated relationship with his birth country. Henry describes his feelings toward Germany and German people as evolving over time, and Bea felt very similarly, as she has visited Germany many times as an adult:

> I must tell you, I have German friends who are in their 30s, 40s and maybe early 50s. They have nothing to do with the Germans that I wouldn't want to meet. I would not want to meet anybody older than me because I would not know who they were or what they were doing…Now I cannot talk about forgiveness because I cannot forgive the second or third generation something that they haven't done. To me, I take them as they are and the people I meet, all of the people I've met are fantastic and I have met a whole lot of them from Bremen down to Munich.[187]

Bea echoes Henry's sentiments about feeling unsure of anyone their own age or older, as one could never be sure what role they played during the war years. Bea's first post-war visit to Munich was in 1950, where she travelled for her ex-husband's work conference. She noted that the city was being built up quickly, and when asked by journalists at the conference if she was impressed by the building, she responded:

> What I am not impressed by is some of the whingeing that is going on, because, damn it, who started the war? And of course it was all reported except for that last remark. They couldn't – nobody could talk about anything then, nobody wanted to talk.[188]

Bea's remark implies that back then, so close to the end of the war, West Germany was not yet acknowledging its past and all that took place during the war years. On that same visit to Munich, Bea recalled visiting her father's friend, Mr Eisenhofer:

> Eisenhofer, who was decent and who would have protected my brother when he called on them after leaving the school on Kristallnacht and his wife wouldn't have him. And it was his wife who said to me at that time when I visited them, standing in the bay window she said, 'Well, you did alright then, you missed all this,'

[187] WHL, Tape 4.
[188] WHL, Tape 4.

> looking, pointing to all the rubble. What a cow, you know; she didn't know what the Jews went through. Or she didn't want to know, she was just sorry for herself and this being sorry for themselves, I don't know how long it lasted, but it was still going on in 1950.[189]

The trope of being lucky will further be discussed in this chapter. However, this encounter with Mrs Eisenhofer and her insinuation that Bea was lucky for missing the destruction of Munich has a dark edge to it; as precisely as Bea says, this German woman can certainly not understand what the Jews experienced during the war, or what Kinder experienced leaving their families and homelands behind.

Some Kinder have made trips to their birth countries with their families as well, to share their full life story with their children and grandchildren. Renate was advised not to visit Prague until after the Communist rule had ended, so she and her husband visited in 1996. 'Well, I had to do that. I'd been wanting to do that. You know, ever since I was married and my husband wanted to do it as well, to see where I came from'.[190] Her husband might have sensed that seeing where Renate spent her first few years of life would be an important part of knowing her fully.

Similarly, Bea took her children on a trip to Munich and Lake Walchensee in the early 1970s:

> I subsequently went with my husband and my children because I wanted to tell my children everything, about how when the Nazis came to look for Feuchtwanger we were able to find – we knew the way through the forest to get to their house and warn him to go away and I knew where all the mushrooms grew.[191] Except, when we went back after the war, they'd cut the trees down and that was another shock to me, where is my forest, because we were on the edge of the forest. No, I told my children everything of what happened.[192]

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[189] WHL, Tape 4.
[190] Collins, 2022.
[191] Edgar Feuchtwanger was a childhood friend of Bea's that she has kept in touch with since (WHL, Tape 2).
[192] WHL, Tape 4.

While Bea felt the need to take her children to show them her family's history, it was also apparent that so much had changed in her lifetime, and it did not feel like her childhood memories: 'I didn't want to go back ever again. I didn't, what for? … My Walchensee had disappeared'.[193] Conversely, she had created a new home in England:

> My Heimat is in Munich, but I feel at home in England. You can't change a Heimat, it is where you were born and brought up. I have two pictures of Munich on the wall there; I have pictures of Walchensee in the kitchen. Yes, I think of it with great affection, would I want to live there now? I doubt it. You can't really turn the clock back. No, I love being here, I love being in England.[194]

Once again, Bea's identity as a Bavarian Jewish Brit is clear to see, as she still feels strong ties to her ancestry in Germany, describing it as her Heimat, yet admitting that it is no longer her chosen home, as England is now.

After many years of turning down opportunities to visit her hometown, Ellen returned to Germany in June 1992. It was there that she visited a local historian and learned how and where her mother and siblings were killed:

> According to his records of which he had many, two teenage boys had gone with my family in the cattle trucks to Riga. These boys had then been sent to a work camp. They had Russian surnames, so when the Russians liberated their camp, the boys had been returned to Kassel. This was in 1945. The war was over. All of Germany was feeling the guilt of what had happened to the Jewish people. Now many came forward to witness and remember. It must have been difficult not to notice a woman with six children. Of course they remembered what had happened. It had shocked them badly. As Mutti and the children came out of the cattle truck, the monsters in charge wanted to separate Mutti from the children. Rolf, aged nearly eleven…stood in front of my family with his arms outstretched and said, 'We are going to die, we will die together'. As soon as he had finished speaking, all my family were shot. This took place in December 1941, in Riga, Latvia.
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> No one can imagine my feelings on hearing these words, words I felt to be true and would never be able to forget. I had spent all my adult

[193] Green, 5 December 2021.
[194] WHL, Tape 4.

> life watching the horror films about concentration camps, watching in case I could see a brother or sister amongst these abused and wretched people. Thank God I had never succeeded in seeing any of them. I had imagined the greatest horrors happening to them. Now after all these years I felt great relief. They had travelled a terrible distance without food, water or any sanitary facilities but no other pain had been inflicted on them, and they had died, to me, a clean death. I could not stop crying, after all those years of imagining the horrors they might have endured.[195]

While this was an emotional visit, as Ellen said, it brought her a sense of relief, knowing that her family had been together, and their suffering was not prolonged. While not her own homeland, Ellen did visit Latvia in 2001 for the opening of the Bikernieki Memorial, to honour her family and their final resting place.

It is also interesting to look at the relationship these Kinder have with Wales. Each clearly had a very different relationship with Wales: Ellen staying in Swansea and living her whole life there, Henry eventually leaving Wales for Leeds and then Israel, Renate leaving Wales for Cornwall, only to return for twenty years as an adult when she and her husband retired, and Bea, who only spent time in Wales during the war.

While they might not explicitly identify as Welsh, there are certainly clues that tie them to Wales today. Henry's car is easily identifiable on his street in Jerusalem as it has a Welsh flag sticker on its back window. When speaking to Angela Merkel and the Israeli Prime Minister and sharing his life story, the Prime Minister remarked that Henry did not have a Welsh accent, so as Judy shared: 'So then Henry put on his Welsh accent, properly, to let them hear and everybody burst out laughing… And so the whole thing became less formal, and more relaxed'.[196] Similarly, both Renate and Ellen carry a slight Welsh accent with them as a sign of their time spent living there.

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[195] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, pp. 136-37.
[196] Foner, 31 January 2022, (Judy Foner).

3.3. SHARING THEIR STORY AND THE TROPE OF BEING 'LUCKY'

An important, almost universally shared experience of Kinder, is that most did not speak about their experiences until much later in their lives. The 50th anniversary of the Kindertransport in 1988-1989 was a turning point for many, as they saw that a) the public was interested in their story b) the number of people who could speak about the Kindertransport and the Holocaust in general was beginning to decrease as survivors passed away and c) the idea of what qualified as a Holocaust survivor or child survivor was changing.[197]

Craig-Norton discusses the public perception of the Kindertransport at length in her introduction to *The Kindertransport: Contesting Memory.* She emphasises that the ways in which so many, especially officials who worked within the government and agencies, chose to highlight the positive aspects of the Kindertransport, in some ways airbrushes the story of the Kinder:

> This reflection reinforced the perception of a successful 'happily-ever-after' outcome for the Kinder (whose suffering had all occurred before arriving in Britain), placed a mantle of exceptionalism on all the actors, and airbrushed the lost families out of the narrative. This paradigm was sustained in several managed histories that emerged in later decades, prompted by an upsurge of interest in the Holocaust, the 'rediscovery' of a cache of materials from the CBF, and the first reunion of former child refugees in 1989, which cemented the Kindertransport in the public consciousness.[198]

In the case of all four of the Kinder interviewed for this study, their children were aware of their story and history, having grown up knowing that their parents had a different sort of accent, or knowing they had 'two families'. However, deciding to share their story with the wider public came later. As Arlene Stein notes: 'Holocaust stories first told within the worlds of survivors and their families, began to circulate

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[197] Clifford, *Survivors*, p. 200.

[198] Craig-Norton, *The Kindertransport: Contesting Memory*, p. 13.

far beyond them, in a culture where painful memories were increasingly discussed in public'.[199]

The BBC programme *That's Life* aired an episode in February 1988 that focused on Nicholas Winton and his efforts to save children from Czechoslovakia. Renate, being one of the children on the last trains out of Prague, was invited to be a part of that episode:

> Well, I mean, until 1988 I, you know, nobody wanted our story. But I got a letter from the BBC saying, Would I go up to this Elstree Studios? Because they'd found the gentleman who brought us out and of course that was marvellous. So I said, Yes, I would go, I didn't realize there were only 40 of us going to be there. And I didn't know anybody there apart, we got talking to a gentleman who was the head children's surgeon in the Heath [Hospital] in Cardiff, course that's a university hospital, he and his wife were there. But it was a bit like, regimented, you were taken into one room and given a talk, and then you went somewhere else. And then in the end, "Please stand behind each other, we're now going to walk in, go to the front place and go into the front seat to the far end, and then fill up that row, and then the next one," which was okay. And I happen to be in the middle of the first row, or the second row, of course, Nicholas Winton was in front of us.[200]

Many view the broadcast of this episode as the awakening of the Kindertransport story within the public consciousness in the UK. During the episode, Nicholas's life story and his efforts to save these children was broadcast and at the end, he realizes he is surrounded in the studio by those same children, now grown adults.[201] It is a powerful moment and still today, this episode and revealing moment is the main point of reference for many British people when the Kindertransport is brought up in conversation.

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[199] Arlene Stein, *Reluctant Witnesses: Survivors, Their Children, and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 103-104.
[200] Collins, 2022.
[201] 'Holocaust hero Nicholas Winton on That's Life', 1988, online video recording, BBC Archives, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/nicholas_winton_on_thats_life/zbmxhbk> [accessed 10 April 2023].

As mentioned, the idea of what a ‘survivor’ of the Holocaust meant was also evolving within society. As Rebecca Clifford explored in detail in her book, *Survivors: Children’s Lives After the Holocaust*, at the end of the war, the children whose lives had been upended were not necessarily considered Holocaust survivors, nor was that term widely used at that point:

> No one at the time thought of these children as ‘child Holocaust survivors’. They were called ‘unaccompanied children’, ‘Jewish war orphans’, or ‘war-damaged children’, among other things. More often, they were simply told that they were the lucky ones who had lived when others had died. They should consider themselves lucky to be alive, lucky to be young enough and resilient enough to be able to shed the weight of unbearable memories, lucky to be the objects of reconstruction efforts, rather than the subjects (who after all had to do the often demoralizing grunt work of rebuilding ruined families and communities, physically, economically and psychologically). This was a loaded phrase.[202]

For many Kinder, even this word, ‘survivor’ was not one they used to describe themselves, as they felt since they did not experience the camps, that they could not be considered survivors. Henry said: ‘I think many of the Kindertransport children, myself included, didn't really think of us as victims of the Holocaust. If we landed up lucky, like, like I did, especially in comparison to those people stayed in Europe’.[203] It is notable that Henry uses the word ‘lucky’ in reference to escaping Germany in contrast to the fate of so many others, and also his good fortune in being fostered by a family that took care of him as their own. However, to most, ‘lucky’ would not describe a young child who lost his only surviving parent and his future in his birth country.

Kinder often experienced being told they were lucky to survive the war. Renate recalled her foster father telling her she had been saved from the fate of so many others:

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[202] Clifford, *Survivors*, pp. 2-3.
[203] Foner, 24 January 2022.

> And I was always reminded that they saved me from the gas chambers, which I think for a small child was a bit [pause] well, he had saved me from the gas chambers, I know that, but to be continually telling a child, that that's why you're there, you know, I think… but they, they felt that was their duty to tell me…And I mean, they even said it to my husband once or twice, you know, 'We saved Renate from the gas chambers.'[204]

While said in a matter-of-fact manner, or perhaps to explain how lucky they think a child is, it still is an odd label to bear. To feel 'lucky' when their lives were changed forever, and they were separated from their families at such young, pivotal ages. Furthermore, to feel lucky when they lost so many family members; similarly to those who survived the camps, these children struggled with knowing they were able to live out their lives, while so many others were not. Moreover, while they did live out their lives, their futures that would have been, were destroyed the moment they left their home countries and their birth families. The opportunities they would have had and the trajectories their lives would have taken were forever changed by the events of World War II and the Holocaust. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, even those who were able to reunite with their families after the war, realised they had lost so much that could not be repaired or regained.

The trope of being 'lucky' however, is not limited to outsiders looking in on survivors. When writing about her experience at the Kindertransport 50th anniversary reunion event in London, Ellen wrote about meeting two other Kinder who were from her same town of Kassel, called Henny and Dorrith:

> Henny had been lucky, she had come with her sister. I thought this was wonderful; to have another person with you was, as far as I was concerned, heaven. Dorrith had gone to a non-Jewish family in Scotland where she had had a good childhood. She was also lucky enough to have had grandparents who had managed to get to Canada. This must have been wonderful. Although she was brought up in a Christian household, she was always conscious of the fact that she was Jewish. Of course, my grandparents had been in Argentina, where I had corresponded with them, but not very satisfactorily for they wrote in German and I replied in English. I had managed to make

[204] Collins, 2022.

> out the gist of their letters, and had even received two photographs of Opa and Oma. Oma, by this time, had died some years before. I had so wanted to see them just once. I rather envied both Dorrith and Henny. They had something to show from their past and I nothing. We three became friends immediately.[205]

Even as Ellen acknowledges that she also had surviving grandparents, she cannot help but compare her Kindertransport experience and life afterward to those of Henny and Dorrith. While it is understandable that Ellen would feel envious that Henny came to the UK with her sister, as all Ellen had wished for was to be with her siblings, it does not mean that Henny or her sister had a positive experience, as they were separated from their parents and family, just as Ellen had been. When Ellen calls Henny 'lucky' for coming with her sister, it is the same concept as someone calling Ellen 'lucky' for coming to the UK at all - a misplaced sentiment.[206]

When asked if people were familiar with the Kindertransport when he and his wife Judy were later living in Leeds and Israel, Henry said no, maybe just a few people. Judy added:

> It was never mentioned. At some point, it became, I don't know how, it became a topic of interest. And I remember, we went to our first meeting. Henry always felt he wasn't part of this, because he didn't know any of these children on the train, let's say they're not, not kids he'd been to school with or anything like that. So he didn't really want to go to these gatherings when they started having them. And then I persuaded him to go to one. And I remember it was very interesting, to me, because one of the Kinder, [inaudible] said, that they were never able to mourn as children, because there was a war on, a thing, you know, and they were lucky, they were being looked after, they had, they didn't, they were not sent to concentration camps or whatever. And don't talk about and it was not talked about. And he felt, and a lot of children afterwards said, children said, that they had not had time to mourn the loss of their families. And also, they didn't know if they'd lost them or not, perhaps after the war, they would see them again. And I remember that was a very interesting

[205] Davis, *Kerry's Children*, p. 130.

[206] In his analysis of luck and the Holocaust, Robert S.C. Gordon examines links between the tradition of storytelling about fortune, and the Shoah, particularly focusing on the role of chance in surviving the concentration and extermination camps. Robert S.C. Gordon, *Outrageous Fortune: Luck and the Holocaust* (New York: CPL Editions, 2017).

> view of looking at it, I can say he said their suffering was nothing like the suffering of people, kids hidden for years, and then lost or in a cellar, or things like that, true. But suffering nevertheless. So that was very eye-opening.[207]

This idea of comparing suffering comes up often in many Kinder's memoirs. How could they feel misery and suffering, when so many others suffered worse fates? However, as Judy recalls another Kinder saying, this was suffering nevertheless, and their experiences should not be compared with those who survived the war differently, as they all have their own past and history of suffering and trauma. The phenomenon of 'survivor guilt' is common amongst Kinder, as they often think of family members who did not survive, or those that did experience camps, and how their experiences were so different:

> Society and their own consciences seemed to say that only those who were freed from the extermination camps were real survivors, while nothing really happened to them [Kinder] because they spent the worst period in the security of Great Britain, without suffering hunger or pain.[208]

Yet, as has been discussed, Kinder's entire lives were changed once they departed their birth countries. They lost family members and the only homes they knew, as well as the futures and lives that would have been theirs. While many do feel guilty that they survived when others did not, it does not negate the suffering they did experience.

For Ellen, sharing her story came quite by accident, as one of her friends hosted a women's group and when the speaker fell through, she asked Ellen to speak and share her life story:

> She told me and said, you could come and speak. I said, I've never spoken to anyone. I should have nothing to speak about. Oh, come

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[207] Henry Foner Interview, 5 (Judy Foner).
[208] Göpfert, Rebekka, and Andrea Hammel, 'Kindertransport: History and Memory', *Shofar (West Lafayette, Ind.)*, 23.1 (2004), 21–27 (p. 25) <https://doi.org/10.1353/sho.2005.0020>.

> on. I said, I can’t. I said I can’t speak to people. Oh, come on you’ll think of something. I said I can’t. Well come with me anyway. And she has me on…On the stage. And I don’t know what I’m doing there. And suddenly, I’m talking… I don’t know what I'm doing. And I'm not joking. I do not know what I'm saying. And I'm talking and I don't know what I'm saying. I just don't know. And suddenly I stop and I look around, there are about 50 women…
>
> They looked at me as if I have gone mad. And I have gone mad because I don't know what I've said. They start telling me what I've said. And that's the first time, I was 50. Yeah, that's the first time I’ve spoken about Germany, when I was 50. I've never spoken about Germany before. And then I never stopped. Because I've felt once I've said it, I have to tell people what happened. Before this, I've never ever opened my mouth.[209]

As mentioned previously, Ellen’s timeline of not speaking about her experiences until she was older matches up with other Kinder and child survivors’ experiences of sharing their story. Like Ellen, many did not think they had any story to share, yet once they did speak, they could not stop telling their story. Ellen went on to speak to thousands of schoolchildren for the next thirty years; she estimated she had shared her story with almost 7,000 children by 2003.[210] When asked how she told her own children about her past, Ellen answered:

> No. They're not interested – oh my daughter is, sorry. They are now, only now, becoming – they possibly were interested without my knowing it because, lately, you'll have to realize I'm 93 and I have very little time left. I have to ask where do I put my past because I have bits and pieces that I don't, I don't want to lose and do I give them to my son or to my daughter? And they said neither, they want to give - want me to put them into one of the Holocaust museums so if one of the family or one of the families-to-be want it, they're there for any of them.[211]

As Kinder are becoming the last eyewitnesses to the Holocaust and Europe during the Second World War, many, like Ellen describes, have begun to think about how best to preserve their memories and share them with future generations.

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[209] Davis, 2022.
[210] Davis, *Kerry’s Children*, p. 141.
[211] Davis, 2022.

This chapter has broadly explored the idea of identity – national, cultural, and Jewish – and found that all four Kinder (while maybe not throughout their entire lives) in their later years, all still very much identify as Jewish, more so than any nationality. When Ellen was asked if she considered herself Welsh at all, she responded: ‘I don't feel anything. I'm Jewish. And I always will be. But other than that, no I just never think about it. I'm just, it's just me. Take me as you find me’.[212] As discussed previously, Bea’s succinct idea of identity also speaks to the idea that identity is a complex issue for Kinder, and a multi-faceted one:

> I am a Bavarian Jewish Brit and that fits. And when people think that I have to be one thing or the other, not necessary, we have many facets. I am Bavarian, when I speak German I speak Bavarian, I can speak proper German, but why should I? I am definitely British and I will tell you when I actually feel English, when I’m abroad, I mean in France, “Je suis anglaise.” I am an English woman. When I am in Munich, no I am a Bavarian, maybe a funny Bavarian to them, but I am a Bavarian.[213]

The identities of these Kinder have evolved and changed alongside their relationships with their birth countries and Wales (and the broader UK). Sharing their stories and feelings about survival have all impacted these relationships and feelings of identity.

[212] Davis, 2022.
[213] WHL, Tape 4.

Chapter 4: Legacy

> I think the most important thing is that living memory is precious. And it decays over time, and we need to capture it while it's still capturable [...] I don't know. It's only 10,000 kids. So in the world, it's not that many. But for us, it was important, and maybe it's symbolic of something that needs to be encouraged.[214]

Daniel Green, one of Bea's three sons, shared his thoughts on his mother's legacy and the overall legacy of the Kindertransport. As he states, on a larger scale, the Kindertransport only affected so many; yet, for those who were a part of it, it was life-changing and its effects have carried on through the children and extended families of these Kinder.

This final chapter features interviews with the children of Kinder, known as Second Generation Kinder (sometimes referred to as 2G). As the children of Kinder, their lives have been shaped in many ways by the experiences of their parents. This chapter will share their stories of navigating their own identity, their relationships with their parents' heritage and countries, and their hopes for the legacy of the Kindertransport and their parents' stories. This chapter argues that the perspectives of the Second Generation prove that the experiences of Kinder, including their time in Wales, deeply affected their identities, and that their experiences as Kinder are also passed down and shared through their families and descendants.

Daniel and Jeremy Green, two of Bea Green's three sons were interviewed, as were Maya Foner and David Foner, two of Henry Foner's three children.

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[214] Daniel Green, interviewed online by Anne Cardenas about his family and connection to the Kindertransport, 27 February 2022.

4.1. Navigating Personal Identities, Cultures and Countries

Similarly to their parents, Second Generation Kinder often find themselves living between cultures and their ideas about identity reflect this. Navigating their feelings about their birth country versus their heritage and their parents' birth countries and adopted countries leads to complicated identities.

Both Daniel and Jeremy Green expressed that they feel very European, with their mother having held tight to her Bavarian roots and their father's family hailing from Eastern Europe:

> I'm definitely English, in the sense that this is where I grew up, but we did also grow up in a family where nationalism is frowned upon. And all these - all the many disadvantages of nationalism and parochialism and provincialism are described as things that are bad, you know, you need to have a worldview, your horizons need to be far away. You need to have empathy for people who are not necessarily your neighbours. I feel incredibly European, I think Brexit was criminal. I applied for and got German citizenship. And when I got my German passport, it was a very emotional moment for me [...] And I thought, I'm back in Europe again.[215]

Daniel gave this interview in March 2022, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine began and dominated the world news. As he stated, his parents certainly influenced his worldview, and their experiences in Nazi-occupied Europe affected his views on nationalism and how different countries relate to one another. Since Bea held so tightly to her identity as a Bavarian, it is fitting that her sons would also have positive feelings toward their mother's birth country, which is demonstrated by their choice to petition for German citizenship following Brexit. Since as recently as 2020 and 2021, Germany has passed laws easing the process for victims of Nazi persecution to receive German citizenship, and these laws also apply to their descendants.[216] When

[215] Daniel Green, 2022.

[216] *Naturalisation of victims of Nazi persecution and their descendants* (23 August 2021), <https://www.germany.info/us-en/-/2370240> [accessed 1 December 2023].

asked how his mother felt about his new citizenship, Daniel said, 'She loves it. She thinks Hitler tried to get rid of all the Jews. And now we're coming back'.[217]

Interest in or affinity for their parents' birth countries varied among the Second Generation. David Foner grew up with no interest in Germany at all. He knew his father's story, and ended up visiting for a 'stumbling stone' memorial ceremony with his father.[218] Following that ceremony, David wound up working in Munich and visiting often, which changed his feelings towards the country.[219] 'I would say never even if you offered me a free ticket [to Germany], I'd never go, okay. But now I think I would happily go and visit'.[220] David's son, however, continues to boycott anything related to Germany:

> He will tell you he will never, his foot will never step in Germany or he will not agree to, he is mortified by the thought that I'll have a German car and things like that. And for instance [...] when I was working in Germany, so I used to come back every week, but it happened twice that I had to stay over the weekend. So my then wife and daughter they came to visit, and he refused to come. He said, I'm not going because of what they did to my grandfather.[221]

The strong sentiment David's son feels towards Germany shows that each generation has formed its own opinions and relationships with their ancestral homeland, but they can also be opinions that change over time, as David's did. Branwen Okpako, a Nigerian and Welsh filmmaker spoke about her own journey with identity when delivering the 2023 Richard Burton Lecture at Swansea University. With a Nigerian father and Welsh mother, she spoke about belonging in both places [Nigeria and Wales] and also nowhere at all. She said that 'cultural identity could be understood as

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[217] Daniel Green, 2022.
[218] Stumbling stones, also known as stolpersteine, are memorial cobblestones set in the street to mark where a Jewish person or family once lived, as a memorial: see Linde Apel, "Stumbling Blocks in Germany," *Rethinking History*, 18.2 (2014), 181–94 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2013.858448>.
[219] David Foner, interviewed online by Anne Cardenas about his family and connection to the Kindertransport, 17 March 2022.
[220] David Foner, 2022.
[221] David Foner, 2022.

a series of resting places on the way to becoming yourself'.[222] In the interviews with these four Second Generation Kinder, their 'resting places' certainly evolved as they grew older and had children of their own.

Becoming a father, David felt that he thought more about the Kindertransport than he had ever before, especially how it might have felt for his own grandparents to send his father away:

> It made me think about it more. It made me [pause] it made me think about - I don't think I would have found the courage to do something like that. [...]
>
> You know, Israel sometimes is a worrying place to live in. Okay. And it's not - and my thinking is, you know, it's not something so drastic as it was in Nazi Germany. [...] I don't think there will be a catastrophe, but there are lots of political problems a lot. [...] And I don't think it would come to a catastrophe, but even taking that into account. [...] So I think, okay, do I have the courage or the selflessness to tell my kids, okay, you'd better get out. Because you'll have a better chance elsewhere. [...]- but so yeah, I think about it that way. I think, you know, if even if it's not something drastic, if I'd have the courage to do it I... [pause] I don't think I'd have the courage to do something like that.[223]

With the Kindertransport as such an integral part of his family's story, David does think about these scenarios, and that shows how deeply Second Generation Kinder can be affected and how their identities are also impacted by the legacy of their parents and grandparents. In Aaron Hass's book, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust,* he shares his own perspective on becoming a parent, as a child of survivors:

> Choices. I think about choices made for our children, both mine and those made by just a generation before me [...] A mere forty-five years ago, the options were different. Do I send my child to what I

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[222] Branwen Okapako, Wales, Nigeria and Cinema: The Berlin Years, lecture, Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea University, Swansea, UK, 16 November 2023.
[223] David Foner, 2022.

> hope is a safer place with gentile strangers, perhaps never to see her again?[224]

As David showed and Hass confirmed, many second generation think about the choices the generations before them had to make, and how difficult those decisions would be. Comparing David's hesitancy to send his own children away to the intense emotions of Max Lichtwitz's farewell letter when he spoke of the heartbreak at sending his only son, Henry, away to safety, it is easy to see how no one is prepared to make those hard choices until they face a certain terrible reality, as Max did in 1938. Similarly, Maya also shared that her perspective on her father's story changed once she became a parent herself:

> I became less detached. You know, I was, it was more like, I could experience it on an emotional level. I mean, I remember once I took one of my daughters to get a vaccination. I don't know, she was maybe five or six. And I don't know, I took her to the clinic or something. And there were lots of children crying, and I heard somebody crying inside a room and they were just getting vaccinated. And, somehow it was like, oh my god, this is just a vaccination. And this child is with their mother and, or father and it's okay. But what if my dad needed a vaccine - he was only six and a half - it kind of - the penny dropped - the age, you know, like how young he actually was. And to lose then his family and to start in a new place and with a different language, it kind of made me - when I was a mother, when I became a mother, it became all much more clear to me and much more sad, much more accessible and emotional.[225]

Rebecca Clifford states that this is a common occurrence for child survivors: 'Many [child survivors] found that memories of the past rose up around the time that their children turned the age they themselves had been when they last saw their own murdered parent or parents'.[226] As Maya found herself in a new stage of life, she was able to put herself into her father's narrative in a way she never could before. While Maya herself was not the child, she was able to imagine her own father as a child, and

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[224] Aaron Hass, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1996), p. 156.
[225] Maya Foner, interviewed online by Anne Cardenas about her family and connection to the Kindertransport, 4 May 2022.
[226] Clifford, *Survivors*, p. 191.

in another sense, perhaps understood the perspective of her grandfather a bit more, feeling how emotional it must have been to send his young son away to Wales. In this way, becoming a parent increased her understanding of her father's story. Hass observes: 'As children of Holocaust survivors became older, they came to view the Holocaust legacy and their parents more positively. With age, they were more likely to recognize the inherent strength of their parents'.[227] In instances dealing with Kinder, it is true that many children of Kinder view their parents and grandparents in a different light as they grow older, and also have children themselves.

As Chapter 3 focused on how Kindertransportees identify themselves, it is important to consider how their identities are intertwined with those of their children, and how they affect them. Psychotherapist Ruth Barnett and her colleague Judith Elkan facilitated workshops for the children of Kindertransportees at the 60th anniversary reunion event in 1999 and followed up with seminars connecting multiple generations of Kindertransportees. Identity became a major theme throughout the seminars:

> In their stories, both generations could identify with the common thread, 'I never felt I belonged' or 'There wasn't anywhere I could feel I belonged.' Severed from their roots in another country, the Kindertransportees could not fully belong anywhere in England. This was so even for those who were sensitively treated in caring foster-families. Parents, home, and mother tongue could not be replaced. Painfully, the dialogue uncovered how the Kindertransportee parents transmitted this feeling of 'we don't really belong here' to their children, who felt all through their childhood that they were 'not quite like the rest'.[228]

While the idea that children of Kinder would be made to feel as if they do not belong is certainly true for many Kindertransport Second Generation children, that feeling of being 'other' or different was transmitted in different ways. Daniel Green expressed the idea that his childhood was normal, in a sense, and as a child he did not think his family was very different:

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[227] Hass, p. 88.
[228] Ruth Barnett, 'The Acculturation of the Kindertransport Children: Intergenerational Dialogue on the Kindertransport Experience', *Shofar,* 23.1 (2004), 100–08 (p. 106) <https://doi.org/10.1353/sho.2005.0002>.

> You know, like, I always feel that my parents had among the toughest lives in, you know, typical, in some ways, typical 20th century lives, you know, when World Wars and Cold Wars and, and things were ever-present. So in that sense, I was spared that. [...] You know, I wasn't aware that my mom has a very slight German accent, that's really something I've grown to, to hear, to be able to hear as an adult. [...]
>
> So from a personal perspective, I had a completely normal English upbringing... [...] And the only exceptions to this, were the stories of what happened in Germany in the 1930s. So I grew up surrounded by these stories, which tells us – I can't remember a time when we heard them for the first time – But they were always presented to us in a very, I wouldn't say dispassionate way, but they were presented in a non-traumatic way. There wasn't a kind of a "woe is me, these terrible things happened and poor me and I'm forever damaged." They were just, "this is what happened", and quite like a documentary. So which, again, I think is a reflection of my mother's psychology.[229]

As Daniel notes, there were moments he recognises in his childhood, reflecting now as an adult, that were very different to the upbringing of his peers. He mentions his mother's 'very slight German accent', a more obvious difference in his family, but also mentions the constant stories of 1930s Germany. Even though he feels these stories were not shared in a traumatic way, they still clearly were a part of his childhood, and that is an experience not common for every child growing up in Britain. It is worth mentioning that Bea herself does not say that she felt as if she did not belong in Britain, always proudly proclaiming herself a 'British Bavarian Jew'. Using the logic presented in Barnett's study, it makes sense that Bea's attitude and feeling of belonging to multiple cultures would also be passed along to her children, and Daniel's sentiments about feeling European certainly reflect his mother's hybrid identity.

As discussed in Chapter 1, names played an important part in the Kinders' sense of identity, and names have also had a lasting effect on the Second Generation. Maya spoke about her decision to keep her father's last name:

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[229] Daniel Green, 2022.

> I never changed my name. I'm a Foner. I felt like, you know, I thought it was really important. It was important for me to keep the name Foner when I got married. First of all, I didn't feel like I should change my name because I was already my own person. But I also felt I didn't know, my brother at the time, he was married, his first marriage [...] So I didn't know. And my sister, her children, were going to be her husband's name. So I kind of felt like I should stick to Foner. Because at least me, not my children, but at least me.
>
> And then later, I asked my dad about it. And it wasn't a decision that he decided to take the name Foner. He just kind of took the name Foner, because it was impossible to be Lichtwitz when he was growing up, and then by the time he even thought about it, he was already in his 30s. And he already was, you know, he was already known as Foner, also in his career, and his writings and the articles he wrote, so it didn't make sense to change back but it wasn't like - I always thought he decided that as like a token of gratitude [to the Foner family] to take this name, but it wasn't like that. But for me, it was like that.[230]

As Maya stated, Henry did not really have a choice in taking the name Foner; he went from Heinz Lichtwitz to Henry Foner overnight, and then as his life progressed, he kept that name. Maya, however, made a conscious choice to keep her name as Foner, to honour her father and his story.[231] In this way, his story has maintained its presence in her identity and his legacy is carried on through her chosen surname. Through this and all the above examples, it is clear that the Kinders' own identities have greatly impacted the way their children view themselves and the cultures they grew up within and around.

4.2. Relationships with Wales and Parents' Birth Countries

Much like their parents, Second Generation Kinder live in many different countries and exist across multiple cultures. In addition to the country in which they actually grew up, many Second Generation Kinder also feel ties to their parents' adopted

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[230] Maya Foner, 2022.

[231] Maya shared that she originally always thought that her father intentionally changed his name to Foner, but he actually never chose to change it himself.

countries, and similarly to their parents, they have complicated relationships with the European birth countries of their Kindertransportee parents. It is accurate to say that while Wales did have an effect on the Kinder who spent time there, that same relationship with Wales was not necessarily passed down to the Second Generation. Because some of the Second Generation never spent time in Wales and grew up in completely different countries to those of their parents, their connections with Wales and their parents' birth countries are varied and complex.

Being the only one of Henry's children to have been born in Israel, Maya grew up in a place where it was not uncommon to have parents born in a different country, yet she felt conflicted about how to explain her father's past:

> I remember, like, I always had this dilemma when people ask me, 'Where's your father from?' [...] I always said Wales. But then when I actually was like, oh, but he was actually born in Berlin and he's actually German, but it wasn't so pleasant to say that he was German. Because in Israel, I don't know, it's always like... so and it was also confusing, because his accent was very English. And he was very British in his whole, you know how he is. So it was just more convenient. And I just was like, okay, I'm not going to go into this. I'm just going to say he's from Wales, or he's from Britain or something. I'm not going to go into that.[232]

As Maya states, the idea that Henry is 'actually German' is not one that seems obvious to most people, as his slight Welsh lilt and British accent present a different persona to anyone not aware of his story. Having to think about how to present your parent's backstory is not a universal experience, but is one that children of survivors and Kinder experience frequently.

Both of Henry's children feel connections to Wales, however indirect they might be. David was born in Leeds and Maya was born in Jerusalem, neither one of them have lived in Wales, yet through their father and his past, some things link them to Wales. Maya stated:

[232] Maya Foner, 2022.

> I do feel a connection to the UK and Wales and Swansea and very much so. And the stories about the Gower and [pause] like, yes, very much, like, connected and although I never lived there, but we did visit there. [...] the first time I went there, I was 10. So I wasn't a very young child. But it made an impression.[233]

Swansea and Wales were special places to Henry and in essence, Swansea felt like his hometown. On Judy's first visit to the UK, she stayed in Henry's house in Leeds with housemates, but was alone most of the time when Henry was working, a situation not conducive to romance, she said. Then Henry took time off work and as Judy describes, their trip to Wales changed everything:

> We went to North Wales and, and to meet his family in Swansea. And it was 10-hour drive [...] And then I met his family and friends in Swansea and that changed the picture, and [I saw] how he was loved and treated by everybody and how his background suddenly and, and he was free and I had his attention and it changed the picture.[234]

For Judy, she felt that she was able to see a different side of Henry, by meeting his family and friends and seeing his 'hometown'. These visits continued as they married and had children, and because they continued to visit the Foners and friends in Wales, this connection was passed down to their children. Henry's connection to Wales was shown in other ways as well. David remembers that 'our childhood was peppered with Welsh words here and there'.[235] Henry's eldest daughter Naomi shared that she did not realize until recently that the reason they say 'tuth' for 'teeth' was because her father still uses the Welsh slang today.[236] They knew Swansea had been a special place for their father and therefore it played a part in their growing up as well. David also fondly remembered these visits:

> I remember we went to Swansea. And so we visited them [the Foners], we visited the house, we visited the shop - there was the

[233] Maya Foner, 2022.
[234] Foner, 15 December 2021, (Judy Foner).
[235] David Foner, 2022.
[236] Naomi (née Foner), personal conversation, 15 July 2022.

> local grocery store, my father hadn't seen him in 34 years or so. But you know, still remembered him. So we went there and so we you know, trip down memory lane to all of my father's places he grew up in Swansea. Yes, so I have good memories from that part of the family.[237]

Visiting the town where their father grew up is an emotional experience for David and his siblings, and a much different experience to visiting Germany, where Henry was born but does not have the same connections. To be able to meet people who remember their father, like the grocer, created a positive association for Henry's children with Swansea and again, this instils the sense of it being Henry's 'hometown'.

Conversely, as Bea left Germany when she was 14, Walchensee was much more of her hometown, as was evidenced as Jeremy remembered a family visit:

> We went a couple of times, actually, as a family, visiting not only Munich, but Walchensee, which is this little tiny, little village next to this beautiful lake in the sort of Bavarian Alps, maybe an hour's drive south of Munich itself. And, you know, lovely. And I remember my mum meeting people who, you know, elderly people who had known her as a kid so this is, I'm talking now visiting back in the early 70s. [...] So yeah, so that was interesting. And it was sort of, you know, she was greeted warmly by anybody that had known her.[238]

Similar to David meeting a grocer in Swansea who remembered his father, Jeremy experienced the feeling of visiting his mother's hometown in Walchensee, as town members remembered her, even though more than thirty years had passed since she was a child there herself. This reinforces why Jeremy and his brother feel close ties to their German heritage, as other residents affirm her childhood existence in Walchensee.

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[237] David Foner, 2022.
[238] Jeremy Green, interviewed online by Anne Cardenas about his family and connection to the Kindertransport, 2 April 2022.

While Bea was older when she came to Wales, and remained there a shorter amount of time than other Kinder, it still made an impact on her, enough so that her sons knew of her fondness for Wales. Daniel reflects on his mother's time in Wales and why she might have felt so comfortable there:

> She's always been very positive and very optimistic and always made friends very easily, including in Wales. And but she would never say it's because I am who I am. She always used to say, the reason I made lots of friends in Wales was because 'I'm not English'. [...] So she always spoke very fondly of Wales. For her it was a very warm and welcoming place.
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> But so my other half over there, Julia, she's Italian and she thinks it's hilarious that the Bavarians think of themselves as the Italians of Germany. And i.e. they're warm, they're passionate, they, it's those northerners that are kind of prudish and stiff upper lip and all that kind of stuff - militaristic - and [in Wales] so she felt kindred spirits, in the camaraderie and the singing, and the rugby. And there's little communities of Wales where she felt the warmth that she had memories of, in Bavaria, in contrast to the militaristic stiff upper lip marching up and down, stuff that they do in what she calls Prussia. But what she calls Prussia basically applies to the whole of Germany.[239]

We should bear in mind that his mother said: 'I found that Welsh people, discovering that I wasn't English, [we] were immediately friends'.[240] This negational way of defining identity, situating oneself in opposition to England and the English, is very common in Wales. In essence, Daniel is also comparing Wales to Bavaria, in that his mother felt comfortable in both places and felt a certain warmth toward those communities, and furthermore comparing the wider UK and England to Prussia and the rest of Germany. These distinct nations and regions of countries develop their own cultures, and in Daniel's view, Bea felt a kinship between Bavaria and Wales. Through her stories to her son, Bea gave off the impression of Wales being a lively and welcoming place. Most likely, because Bea was placed with an aristocratic family in England, where more emphasis was placed on propriety and etiquette, her time in Wales felt more familiar and familial. He goes on further to explain:

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[239] Daniel Green, 2022.
[240] WHL, Tape 2.

> So my main memory of how she talks about Wales, was that she felt incredibly, warmly welcomed and comfortable there (and this next bit is my interpretation) which is exactly what you need when you're a refugee. [...]
>
> She went there [Wales], when UCL was evacuated. So you have to remember that - I mean, my mum is, she's pretty smart. She arrived in this country speaking about three words of English. She passed her equivalent of the GCSE O level within two - in English - within two years of arriving in this country, and she went to UCL at the age of 17, i.e. a year earlier than people, you know, I think, bloody hell mum, that was amazing. But very modest about it.
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> So she was very young, for a university student, hadn't seen her parents. And of course, you had almost no communication in those days, by this time they'd arrived in Peru. At that point, you were talking about letters that might take months to get here, and if the ship was sunk in the Atlantic they might never get here. So she was truly on her own, with the exception of her brother, her elder brother, [...] He was in the British Army. That's right. He was drafted into the British army. So he was also far away. So my feeling is that part of her warmth towards Wales was because it was a substitute family.[241]

When Daniel refers to this substitute family, he means Bea's friends in Aberystwyth, as well as the Terry family she ended up living with. As discussed earlier in Chapter 1, Mrs Terry treated Bea as one of her own children, washing her clothes and undergarments. While her English family clearly cared for her, the level and type of affection Bea received in Wales might have felt more similar to her own family in Bavaria. Even for Bea's sons, who themselves have no ties to Wales, to realise Bea's fondness for Wales and her friends there, her time in Aberystwyth certainly made a lasting impression. From Daniel's perspective, there seems to be a sense of gratitude that his mother found herself in a place where she felt comfortable and embraced. In this case, the idea and legacy of Wales being a welcoming and warm place of refuge has been passed on to Bea's sons through her experiences, thereby echoing the common thought that Wales is a welcoming nation.

[241] Daniel Green, 2022.

4.3. Legacy of the Kindertransport and Sharing Their Parents' Story

As Holocaust survivors and Kindertransportees are passing away, the Second Generation is left to consider: what legacy do their parents leave behind and how can they continue sharing these stories? The Second Generation interviewed in this study shared their thoughts on what they hope the legacy of their parents will be, what they have learned from their parents, and how they hope to continue these legacies.

Amongst the Kindertransport community, it is usually assumed that most Kinder did not share their stories until much later in life, or even, never at all. This included not telling their own families and children about their experiences. As explored in Chapter 3, the majority of Kinder did not speak in public until later in their lives, choosing to share their story only once the narrative of the Kindertransport was much more widely known. However, as explored through the interviews with these Second Generation children, these specific Kinder were very upfront with their children and families about their past. For the children of Bea and Henry, there was not a sense of silence about their parents' experiences, rather their stories were simply their parents' story, as any child knows their parents' origins; however, some details were not readily given. Just as the notion of Kindertransportees' identities as survivors has evolved, their children's views of them have evolved as well. Maya Foner described how she grew up knowing her father's general story:

> I always knew, it wasn't like one day they sat me down and told me that he was an orphan or something like that, I always knew that he was an orphan [...] but I didn't grow up thinking he was a Holocaust survivor at all. And he also didn't consider himself a Holocaust survivor until maybe he was 75. So we didn't grow up knowing that or thinking that, we grew up thinking that, the message we got was that he was really lucky, that his father was killed in the Holocaust. But we didn't know exactly how we didn't know much about his mother either. We heard like, she was sick. It was always a bit mysterious. She died when he was four.[242]

[242] Maya Foner, 2022.

While Maya knew Henry had grown up an orphan and that her grandfather was killed in the Holocaust, as she stated, details were not abundant, and she did not grow up thinking of him as a Holocaust survivor. Her idea of him as a 'survivor' evolved as Henry's own perception of himself evolved. Similarly to Henry, Bea was also very upfront with her children, as emphasised in Daniel's observation quoted earlier in this chapter sharing that the stories of Germany in the 1930s were always in the background of his childhood and his mother's story was not a mystery to him. Through their parents' stories, the Second Generation has learned and internalised many lessons. Maya shared that her father's humility is part of his legacy:

> I think it's, it's not being a snob. Like just, just seeing every person as a person, doesn't matter what their background [is], who they are, what their accent is, and just being very, let's say, not letting your education or advantages or privileges that make you forget that you're just a human being at the end of the day.[243]

Similarly, David shared that the aspect of his father's legacy that meant the most to him was actually unrelated to the Kindertransport:

> I think his achievement. I mean, his legacy is of course my mother, the kids, the grandkids that they're all alive and well. [...] This is his legacy. Okay. But him as a person, I'd say his legacy is that we never were adversely affected by his experience. That's, but I think the thing I would say was, wouldn't be even related at all to the Kindertransport.[244]

David went on to share a story of how his father put his (David's) needs before his own, choosing to stay in Jerusalem instead of uprooting the family to Haifa for a better job. David had finally settled in school and his father could see that:

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[243] Maya Foner, 2022.
[244] David Foner, 2022.

> To me at this critical stage, he gave up that job. And he stayed in a place where things worked out eventually, but he didn't know that at the time he stayed at this job, just to keep me in the place where I thought that I would do better. So I think that we'll start with that, that he was that kind of person.[245]

David and Maya reflected on their father as an individual, but also were able to think about the legacy of the Kindertransport and their dad's story, and how it has affected their family's legacy. David brings up the sacrifice his father made, in order to keep him in a familiar place and school. Perhaps Henry learned from his father's heartbreaking sacrifice and wanted to put his son's wellbeing ahead of his own. As Arlene Stein discusses in her book *Reluctant Witnesses*, how stories were passed down and how they were received through generations 'was shaped by the broader context of the parent-child relationship, as well as the larger emotional economy of the family'.[246] Maya shares how her father's process of sharing his story through his book, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, helped her view her family's story in a broader sense. The Foners had kept all of the postcards Henry received from his father, grandmother and other relatives and put them in an album, which they gave to him as an adult. Henry eventually made a photobook of the postcards for his children and donated a copy to Yad Vashem. Yad Vashem contacted Henry about collaborating to make a book of the postcards and his story and it was published in 2013.[247] The book was published in three languages and Henry has since presented it to numerous dignitaries, including former UK Prime Minister David Cameron and HRH Prince William.[248] Maya explains further how the process of publishing the book affected her father's experience of sharing his story:

> And the whole story was just, you know, from the age of when, when the book came out on and everything around the book, that he grew

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[245] David Foner, 2022.
[246] Stein, *Reluctant Witnesses*, p. 59.
[247] Foner, *Postcards to a Little Boy*, p. 10.
[248] *Yom HaShoah Program with Henry Foner: 'Postcards to a Little Boy: A Kindertransport Story'*, (Jewish Funders Network), online presentation, YouTube, 26 April 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=us-IYPLI8GU> [accessed 2 April 2024].

> to understand that he is a Holocaust survivor. And his story is interesting, because he never thought the story was interesting at all. So he was quite astonished in the beginning that anyone would find it even interesting. And so many people find the story inspiring. I mean, if you look at the recording afterwards, it's I mean, people were sobbing, you know, and it's such a minor story, but because of the father and the love.[249] And it's - people connect to it. And because it's not horrifying also, in a way, you can connect to it more than sometimes the really, really awful stories that you hear. And I think every - it's a universal thing, father and son.
>
> I also think the other thing I always found really, that my father always says that, oh, it's all about my mother [Maya's mother, Judy]. You know, like, she taught him how to express love, and she taught him how to be the father that he is and if he was married to someone else, it wouldn't have been like this and - which is amazing, but I don't know, I think it's also a lot about him. And he doesn't give himself the credit.
>
> And I think, for me, it's a theme, this love. Like the postcards, I think are a central theme in our family, because they are the love of a father to his son. I think it had a big impact on who he became and how - the fact that he had those postcards as a child, the fact that he knew his father loved him and didn't throw him to the dogs and he knew it, he just, he just knew it. I guess also what happened between the age of zero and six, you know, that also has a big impact. So I guess something there was also right.
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> But these postcards, and then to have that as your backbone that your father loved you. I know a lot of the Kindertransport kids felt they were thrown away, they were just thrown out, they were bitter towards their parents, even though in their head they knew that they saved them, they still felt deserted. But I think my father didn't grow up deserted and so he was able to give us that kind of love. And then now we're able to give that kind of love to our children. So the story is very – and my children grow up with this story of the postcards. So there's a lot of love, I think.[250]

Sharing that the postcards her grandfather and great-grandmother wrote to her father have become a symbol and model of love in her family, Maya illustrates the value in passing down her father's story to each generation. The postcards and letters her grandfather and great-grandmother sent are tangible representations of love. As Leo Spitzer and Marianne Hirsch write: 'For us, in the context of our second – and third –

[249] Maya is referring to the Yom HaShoah event recorded on YouTube and cited in footnote 246.
[250] Maya Foner, 2022.

generation remembrance, the [...] [item] is less a souvenir or gift than an invaluable record – a testimonial object, a point of memory'.[251] These postcards allowed Henry to grow up, knowing he was loved, and he is able to continue giving that love to his children, and they in turn pass it on to their children. This is a beautiful example of the legacy that Max Lichtwitz left for his family. By publishing the postcards in a book, Henry also made sure that his father's legacy of love would be shared and appreciated by the greater public, ensuring its lasting legacy.

While books like Henry's and Ellen's memoir certainly create a lasting legacy for their stories, the public speaking that many Kinder do similarly contributes to the Kinder legacy. Jeremy shared his hope that Bea's testimony will live on through the people who have heard her bearing witness:

> My mum, I don't know, maybe 30 years now, certainly, certainly, 20 years, did quite a lot of, kind of talks to school kids, through, you know, various invitations, and the Jewish Museum had a programme that she did quite a lot with.
>
> And, you know, I think it really, I'd like to think, again, it's hard to know, but I'd like to think that hearing an eyewitness testimony of events of that time, makes a difference to those kids. I hope that it has, and that they remember and that they can, for themselves, and their friends and their kids and so on, can say, well, you know, I heard this elderly lady talking about her time, and, you know, under the Nazis, and obviously, that wasn't made up, it's, it's real and serious.[252]

Jeremy revealed that he hopes part of his mother's legacy will be her work sharing her story with schoolchildren throughout the UK, that these stories might live on in the children who have listened to her presentations over the years. Aaron Hass, as a child of survivors himself, has argued: 'Only by learning about the past can we have some appreciation of what was lost, destroyed. And, perhaps, only through knowledge of the Holocaust and our parents can those in the second generation fully understand

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[251] Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, 'Testimonial Objects: Memory, Gender and Transmission', in *Diaspora and Memory*, 2006, xiii, 137–63 (p. 367) <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401203807_012>.
[252] Jeremy Green, 2022.

themselves'.[253] Along this line of thinking, Jeremy also shared how he hopes to play a role in continuing that public work:

> And I hope that I can, I mean, [...] we're in an interesting moment now [after the Russian invasion of Ukraine] in the sort of history education process of this relatively recent history, which is of course all of the eyewitnesses are either, as my mum is, you know, losing memory, or dead. And, you know, fortunately, there's now a lot of sort of video recordings, and so on. So there's that. So that's part of the legacy is having borne witness and being recorded, doing so.
>
> I like to think that if I'm - if there are opportunities for me to do that, at least I can talk about my mother talking about it. So it's a real human being conveying that message, you know, you should go and look at these videos, but I can tell you that this is, you know, well established, you know, before it was public, so it's not made up, and it's real, and so on. This is real history.[254]

Jeremy says more than once that he hopes by hearing his mother's story, that people know that this history occurred and was real. As incidents of antisemitism continue to rise around the world, this emphasis on future generations understanding the Holocaust becomes even more important.[255] By continuing to share his mother's story, Jeremy can contribute to the Kindertransport legacy, ensuring that it lives on past her lifetime.

In even this small subset of Second Generation Kinder, it is clear that the ideas of identity, belonging and legacy are complex and important parts of each individual's story and how they view their parent's stories as well. While perhaps unexpected, the Second Generation Kinder showed that no matter the amount of time their parent spent in Wales, that part of their Kinder experience was impactful, and traces of that impact are heard through the Second Generation, which actually does convey a sense of Welsh identity from the stories they have heard from their parents. Moreover, the

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[253] Hass, p. 164.
[254] Jeremy Green, 2022.
[255] See for example Jonathan Greenblatt, 'State of Hate: Never is Now 2024', Anti-Defamation League, 6 March 2024, <https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/adl-ceo-jonathan-greenblatt-delivers-2024-state-hate-never-now [accessed 13 March 2024].

Second Generation's relationships with their parents' birth and adopted countries are profoundly impacted by the way their parents have shared their stories and legacies.

Conclusion

While it is not clear exactly how many Kinder spent time in Wales, through these interviews and oral histories, it is certain that Wales had an impact on these four specific Kinder, as well as their children, as Second Generation Kinder. Through analysis of their oral histories and archived interviews, it is possible to see that there was a Welsh Kinder experience and that the Kinder's time in Wales had an impact on their sense of identity, as well as the legacies they leave for their families. Whilst experiencing Welsh hospitality with their foster families, they also encountered issues of language, class and religion.

This study was able to produce new knowledge in the Kindertransport field of study, and fill a research gap in regard to both Wales and Second Generation Kinder. By interviewing, and in many cases re-interviewing, these Kinder this study was able to ask specific questions about their time in Wales, their interactions with Welsh language and culture, and their perception of the communities they joined. For example, Bea was able to share more about her life as a student in Aberystwyth and Henry spoke about his language adjustments as a six-year-old, with both English and Welsh. Furthermore, interviewing Second Generation Kinder has not been a specifically explored research area previously and these interviews can add a Welsh perspective to the growing field of Second Generation Kinder oral histories.
To revisit the research questions of this thesis:

1) Were there distinctly Welsh Kinder experiences? To what extent did Kinder living in Wales have measurably different experiences compared with those hosted elsewhere in the UK?

While they varied, there were in fact distinct Welsh Kinder experiences. Most obviously, Renate receiving a *cwtch* on her first night in her new home in Porth is an experience that could only happen in Wales, as a *cwtch* is so distinctly Welsh. Henry learning English as a six-year-old but still not being able to converse with all of his neighbours because he did not speak Welsh is an experience Kinder elsewhere in the

UK did not encounter regularly. Similarly, Renate was often surrounded by the Welsh language with her new foster family. Bea's interactions in north and mid Wales where she was accepted simply because she was *not* English are also a prime example of a very Welsh Kinder experience. For some, like Bea, Wales was a safe haven, away from bombings, and for others, like Henry and Ellen, their lives in Wales were dangerous and full of time spent in air raid shelters and moving house for safety.

2) How did their experiences living in Wales and encountering Welsh culture have an impact on the interviewees' sense of identity and belonging?

For these four Kinder, living in Wales affected their sense of identity and belonging much in the way that being a refugee did. For Bea, in mid Wales, she felt accepted by her fellow students and felt cared for by a Welsh family in a familiar way that her English hosts never quite replicated. For Henry, Swansea became his 'hometown' where he grew up and knew the community. He has carried this Welsh connection with him through every phase of his life, to Leeds and Israel. All four Kinder related to Wales in different ways, having had vastly different foster families and experiences, and because of this, adopted very different identities, with their Jewishness being the one through line. Whether they rejected their German or birth heritage, embraced their Welsh or Britishness, they all spoke of their identity in reference to being Jewish.

3) What were the legacies of the interviewees' time in Wales and experiences as a Kinder, and how have these been passed on to the Second Generation Kinder?

For all four Kinder, their time in Wales and experiences as a Kinder changed the trajectory of their lives. Whether it was their worldview and feelings toward their birth countries, or Welsh phrases and fond memories of Wales – these all have been passed on to their children, the Second Generation Kinder. Through childhood stories and trips to their parents' birth countries and Wales, the Second Generation Kinder learned their parents' story and it has now become part of their story. In Henry's case specifically, the love of Henry's father, and the sacrifice he made has passed through

each generation and has itself become the legacy of their family. The Second Generation Kinder have been profoundly impacted by the legacy of their parents, especially in regard to their own issues of identity and relationships with their heritage, including with Wales and the UK.

Upon reflection as this study comes to a close, there are some limitations that affected this project and its ultimate results. If this were a PhD study, there would have been additional time to interview more Kinder, and especially additional Second Generation Kinder. With more time and analysis allowed, Third Generation Kinder could also have been included, which would have widened the scope of the study a great deal. Moreover, with additional time and resources, this study could have benefitted from interviewing additional family members, both of the Kinder and their foster families. In terms of methodology, there are always questions that come to an interviewer later, that should have been asked, yet as was discussed in the Introduction, these interviews have turned into relationships that still exist. While there is an urgency due to the advanced age of the Kinder, there is currently still time to ask more questions, if one acts quickly.

In thinking of the directions that this research could be taken further in the future, Third Generation interviews are definitely an area to develop. In recent years, the Third Generation of Kinder has become much more involved in sharing their grandparents' stories. Bea Green's grandson, Ben Green wrote a post in 2021 for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's blog.[256] He discusses the arrest of his great-grandfather Dr Michael Siegel, as well as his grandmother, Bea:

> I am so glad my grandmother tells me about her father. It is a painful history, but I nonetheless hope she repeats it every visit until she is gone. She is full of spirit, and she plans to retire from life at the very respectable age of 120, at least. My grandmother has instilled in me

[256] Ben Green, *HMDT Blog: My Great-Grandfather Dr Michael Siegel*, 10 March 2021 <https://www.hmd.org.uk/news/hmdt-blog-my-great-grandfather-dr-michael-siegel/> [accessed 30 March 2024].

> the importance of her father's experience, and I can only hope that I am repeating it to my grandchildren when I am 95.[257]

Ben's determination to continue sharing his family's history shows that the Third Generation of Kinder are also motivated to carry on their families' stories. The legacy that Kinder have passed to their children is also being passed along to their grandchildren. Renate also spoke of her granddaughters' interest in her story and history, as they are both hoping to visit Israel as part of a heritage programme, and have also expressed interest in visiting Prague with her.[258] As this next generation of Kinder descendants grows older, it will be important to capture their stories to demonstrate if and/or how the Kinder legacy has affected them.

Again, thinking of the scope of this project, a much larger study of the Kindertransport in Wales would be able to include more research about Gwrych Castle and the Czech school in Llanwrtyd Wells. A recent book by Andrew Hesketh entitled *Escape to Gwrych Castle: A Jewish Refugee Story* (2023) is the first comprehensive study that chronicles the history of the agricultural training scheme [*hachshara*] and educational programme at Gwrych Castle, and the relationships between the more than two hundred Kinder who lived there and the local community in Abergele.[259] There are many other voices that could not be included in this study, namely the birth parents and foster parents of these Kinder, as they have all passed away. And while it is not possible to include those particular people, another facet of the Welsh Kinder experience that could be studied in the future is the legacy it has left within the foster families and their descendants, as well as the communities around Wales. As Andrea Hammel observes in the conclusion of *Finding Refuge*, refugees coming to the UK and Wales is not just a part of history, but an ongoing occurrence in today's world.[260] There could be many comparisons to be drawn between the Kinder who came to Wales in the 1930s, and the refugees settling in Wales currently.

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[257] Green, Ben, para. 6 of 6.
[258] Collins, 2022.
[259] Andrew Hesketh, *Escape to Gwrych Castle: A Jewish Refugee Story* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2023).
[260] Hammel, *Finding Refuge*, pp. 231-39.

As discussed in the Introduction of this thesis, the concept of Welsh hospitality and the welcoming nature of Wales is often debated and has sometimes been contested, yet the four Kinder interviewed for this project were certainly able to find their own Welsh welcomes, whether in the form of a caring foster parent, a kind housekeeper, or a welcoming community. While small in scope, this thesis was able to thoroughly examine the oral histories of four Kinder who spent time in Wales, as well as four Second Generation Kinder. Their thoughts and feelings about their own identities and legacies, as well as the identities of their children prove that there was a distinct Welsh Kinder experience, well-documented through the stories of Henry, Bea, Ellen and Renate.

The Welsh word *hiraeth* has no direct translation into English, but means a general heartache or longing for home, and especially a home that no longer exists. 'It combines elements of homesickness, nostalgia and longing. Interlaced, however, is the subtle acknowledgment of an irretrievable loss – a unique blend of place, time and people that can never be recreated'.[261] And *hiraeth* specifically pertains to a longing for a Wales of the past, as Russell Davies observes: 'For generations, people went away from home because that was the only way to keep the home going. Emigration and exile, the journey to and from home, are the very heartbeat of Welsh culture'.[262] This word has a special meaning to anyone from Wales, and as these Kinder called Wales home for at least a short while, it is a word that might strike a chord for them. While they might long for a past that is irretrievable, through their experiences in Wales and beyond, they have created new identities and legacies that they have carefully passed on to their children and all the generations to come.

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[261] Lily Crossley-Baxter, *The untranslatable word that connects Wales* (2021), <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20210214-the-welsh-word-you-cant-translate> [accessed 3 April 2024].
[262] Russell Davies, 'Hiraeth and Heartbreak – Wales and the World: Curiosity, Boldness and Zest', in *People, Places and Passions*, 1st edn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), pp. 169-288 (p. 170).

Appendix

1. Consent Form:

Oral Histories of the Kindertransport Experience in Wales

Informed consent and copyright permission for oral history interviews, images, and personal documents:

Participant's name:____

Mailing address:____

____

Phone:___________________________ Email:____

I voluntarily agree to be interviewed for this project to document the experiences of Kinder in Wales and their families' stories. I understand that the following items may be created as part of my interview:

- an audio and/or video recording
- an edited transcript, index, or summary
- a photograph of me
- copies of any personal documents or additional photos that I wish to share
- photographs of any personal items that I wish to share

I understand that my interview (and other items above) may be distributed to the public, including formats such as print, public programming, and the internet, and may be eventually made publicly available via an archive. I grant to the interviewer, a nonexclusive license to publish and use all or any portion of the interview. By granting the above nonexclusive license, I do not give up any copyrights that I may hold in the interview nor obligate to use the rights granted.

Please initial:

_____I agree to have my full interview placed on the internet and deposited in an archive
_____I DO NOT agree to have my full interview placed on the internet and deposited in an archive

I understand that I will have the opportunity to review my interview and identify any parts I would like to close.

In return, the interviewer promises to send one copy of the interview recording and related items to my address above.

Any exceptions to this agreement or requested closed portions of the interview must be listed below:

Permission granted:

____ _____________
Participant's signature date

____ _____________
Interviewer's signature date

Please contact me with any questions:
Anne Cardenas

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