

Fleveritz said it was an official matter and the Mayor should take charge. He disappeared and we assumed he had gone off to get him.

On Praga Street, Steinhart suddenly stopped. Mrs Porwuit was walking up the street and he started talking to her. Soon he was moving on again and Mrs Porwuit was quickly pounced on and interrogated. She didn't reveal much. He'd asked about the clock tower that had stood on the street corner. It had been dismantled and taken by retreating Germans scattering grenades as they ran. She'd asked him about Mama Greenstein but he didn't know.

Steinhart reached the front of the Great Synagogue, now more a ruin than anything else.

It had been the most impressive building in the village, much to the annoyance of the Catholic Church which had successfully lobbied to have the main steeple reduced by 15 feet to make it lower than its own. The gold lettering that had once adorned its facade had long been stripped away but the Hebrew and Polish words could still be made out: "let mercy roll down like waters and justice like a mighty stream". They walked around the building and then entered through a side passage. There couldn't have been much to see but they were there for quite a while. It was being used for storage and what hadn't been taken was rotting away. Maybe they prayed.

People were now waiting for Fleveritz to come back with the Mayor. We gained a bit more intelligence from Mrs Kolchak who'd sometimes bought food from Steinhart's store. He was a quiet man. His wife mainly served in the shop. And they had two daughters as well as the son. He was in his late 40's and Yozef probably 8 or 9.

Someone said the Mayor was in Cracow. There was a growing sense of panic. Sleider had closed his butcher shop and rushed home.

Steinhart emerged from the Synagogue and carried on southward. Rembertow Street had been the location of the central market and would normally have been bustling with people. The quietness must have been startling for them. But he would surely have known how everything had changed. Now there were only Polish faces in these streets. Surely he didn't expect to come back and find things the same. Return to his home.

Go into his kitchen and prepare hot water on the stove. Surely he knew. So what was he doing? That was the baffling thing. Was he simply going home?

They were just a few roads away, in streets that would be very familiar to Yozef. He would have played football with other boys on the rough piece of ground by Poniatowski Avenue. In the winter, he would have sledged down the steep hill on Torun Road careful to miss the huge hole half way down that would scupper the less experienced or the careless. Now for both of them, memories would be enveloping.

Walking down the same streets that they had been marched out of on that cold spring night. Into the blackness.

Finally, they arrived in front of Sleider's house. Steinhart scrutinised the outside for a moment before, incredibly, taking out a key. It seemed to fit and he turned it but he couldn't open the door. He turned the key again and you could see the door give up some of its resistance yet still it remained closed. He started knocking, then banging.

There was an urgency, an aggressiveness in his manner that contrasted sharply with his careful, ponderous progress through the village. As if his mild demeanour had been corroded by the journey. Yozef looked as if he could fill the street with tears. Then suddenly, like a shock, the door opened and they were gone.

What happened to Steinhart and his son became another concluding fable straight out of the war. Lost in the haze of stories, some true, some less so. It turned out that Fleveritz's son Miklos had spent the war years working in a brothel somewhere in Soviet Asia. Soon no one was sure what really happened to them. Some said they were passing through on their way to Lublin and had caught the next bus out of town, others that they were communist agents. A few even disputed that they had actually got off the bus. No doubt their disappearance was a relief to many.

Their last sighting was the two of them standing in that doorway. Being welcomed in by Sleider. Apparently he had given them a tour of the house. One can only imagine their surprise at seeing the place almost exactly as they had left it. Then he took them out the back.

No more Jews returned to Kierscen. The seesaw of Polish history swung Russian and Red. A joke circulated the village that the engineer Levy had survived the war and was now Mayor of Tel Aviv.

Michael Mail



As reported in our last issue, Suburb resident Michael Mail won the Macallan/Scotland on Sunday newspaper award with the short story we are pleased to reproduce here. Michael was born in Glasgow in 1959. After Hutcheson's Grammar and law at Strathclyde University, he then studied in Jerusalem and Boston and now lives in Wordsworth Walk, works for a Jewish Charity and writes.

Ore Dresner is another local resident. This drawing, selected from among sketch pads full of haunting images, seemed to illustrate the Neighbours' Return. Perhaps this was because Ore's family background is not so different from that of the Steinharts. Ore's drawings will soon be seen in the Garden Suburb Gallery.

The Neighbours' Return is published in *Shorts*, an anthology of new Scottish writing from Polygon. Available in Joseph's in Temple Fortune.

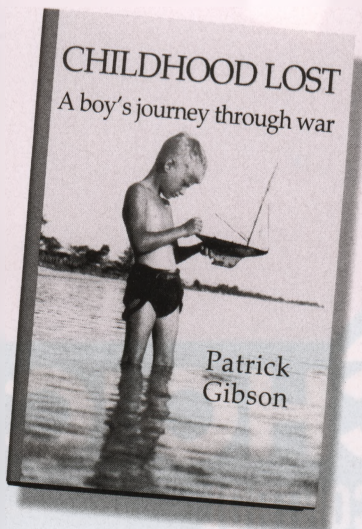
RICHARD WAKEFIELD

Childhood Lost

Another Suburb resident has produced a book of the story of his childhood.

This time though the book was prompted by the Imperial War Museum who asked Patrick Gibson, who lives in Vivian Way, to write down all he could remember of what he went through as a child during World War II in the Far East.

It is an astonishing tale, with Patrick almost casually recalling a crash landing in the rainforest and being shunted from one school to another all over the Far East never knowing whether or not his parents and brother had survived the Japanese onslaught.



Childhood Lost is at the Gallery at £15.50 or you can order from the author on 883 6095.

Valentines and our first photo exhibition at the Gallery

Whether it's that agonising first time or for the thousandth time, Valentines Day is the perfect excuse for a gift that says I love you.

Jan 29 is the date for the Garden Suburb Gallery's fourth

Valentine Show. This year it includes an exhibition of two private collections of Valentine pictures as well as cards, and ceramics and original pictures for the romantically inclined.

First photographic exhibition

Distinguished photographer and local resident David Koppel makes a living photographing celebrities. However he recently turned his cameras on to the still waters of the Norfolk Broads and the people who live and work on the Broads. It is these beautiful pictures that will be the subject of our next one man exhibition.

The photographs, which will be on show and for sale from Feb 16, were taken to illustrate Miles Hedley's book, entitled *Still Waters*, that takes the reader through the life of the broads and those who keep this unique part of the world what it is, from those who cut the reed for thatching to Lord Somerleyton, guardian of a watery estate.

The Gallery, at the Temple Fortune end of Hampstead Way, continues to show the work of local artists and those who paint the Suburb. We also have a wide selection of cards at no VAT prices as well as ceramics and silk scarves by Suburb artists.

Books about the Suburb and its architects are essential reading for Suburb residents and if you are walking take a copy of 'The Artisans Quarter' or the 'Suburb Tree Trail' with you to make your walk a lot more interesting.



DAVID KOPPEL



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