I am here to tell you the story about a lady I knew who was rescued from Nazi Germany. She travelled to England by the Kinder Transport.

**Set the scene**

Her name was Sarah- she had a very difficult early life but was lucky as she survived. She came to England and met my mother’s favourite cousin and married him. They had 2 children, 4 grandchildren and now there are 4 great grandchildren. So that is 10 people who wouldn’t have existed if this story hadn’t happened.

Sarah was born in Hamburg in 1924. She was the 4th child. 5 years later she had a baby sister Yetty.

Her parents were originally from Poland but they met in Vienna, Austria so she was not considered as German even though she was born there. She existed only on her parent’s passport as a non-German Jew. She said that they were stateless.

Her mother , Chaje , was a Sheitel which is a Jewish wig seller. Jewish married women wear a wig to cover their hair (and very religious women shaved their heads) - similar to Muslim women who cover their hair.

The father , Reuben, was a business man.

**Photo 1** This photograph shows the family around 1930. You can see they look prosperous.

**Photo 2** - Sarah

In the 1930’s they had the opportunity to go to America with the family but the father didn’t want to leave his business ( and also possibly his mistress!). Later, in 1938, he realised how bad things were and applied for a visa but by the time they arrived war had broken out and it was too late. A lot had happened for Jewish people in that time.

**Photo 3** If you look at this picture from about 1935 you can see how different the family look. Much poorer.

**Photo 4**

Hitler came to power in 1933 and after that things changed a lot in Germany for Jewish people. Sarah once saw Hitler being driven by a chauffeur. He smiled and waved at her. She never forgot it. **( show video of Hitler then video of persecution)**

At first the children went to a Jewish school but by 1934 going to school became very difficult because the children were attacked by Nazis on the way to and from school. A neighbour used to escort the children through a park, door to door to try to keep them safe. Eventually the Jewish school was forced to close and for a while they went to the local school. Also they were not allowed to go to certain shops, the cinema or other public spaces.

In 1937 Rebeun was no longer allowed to run his business and was forced to work in a labour camp. He was away all week and came home at the weekends. He was not paid much money.

In October 1938 all non German born Jewish people had to leave.

**Being deported**

Yetty remembered the police coming to the house for the family. Chaje lit the candles and said a special prayer. They were only allowed a very small suitcase each and had to leave everything else behind. Sarah was at school so did not know what was happening at home. When she got home there was a police notice on the door ordering all residents to report to the police. She was terrified. She didn’t know what to do or where my family was. She ran back to school to ask her teacher what to do. She was so scared. The teacher told her not to go to the police station. She said she would hide her but she was too scared so she went to the police station. When she got there she was handed over to her family and put in a cell in the cellars.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qHApz0Dk6k> (man tried to rescue Jews)

**Slide 7**

The next day they were taken to the train station in black Maria’s which were cars used to transport criminals. She was very ashamed to be in that car and confused as she didn’t know what the family had done wrong. They were put on trains and deported to Poland to Zbaszyn (said Spongeen). They were squashed and we didn’t have any food or drink. What happened there was awful. So bad that it managed to get reported in England.

**Slide 8**

The Polish did not want them and the Germans wanted them to leave. Because there had been trouble with so many Jewish people arriving the train was not allowed to cross the border . They were forced off the train in Germany and marched at gun point into Poland. The polish also had guns pointing at them . There was gunshot and confusion and it was terrifying with everyone thinking they were about to die. They were herded into stables and slept on straw.

They managed to find temporary accommodation in a flat sharing it with relatives who had been expelled from Vienna, Austria. They had no money, no water and 1 bed in a flat with several families. The family was virtually penniless and the flat was small and very crowded. The room they lived in was virtually empty the only appliance being a small stove with 2 burners. There was no water supply in the room, a water pump and toilets were outside and it was freezing. Chaje had a bed and all the children had to sleep on the floor. Max hated it as there was no privacy. He decided to stay with the Chalutzim (an ultra orthodox group) as there was more room in their accommodation. Max regularly stole coal from them and gave this to Sarah and Yetty so that they could heat their flat.

Next they moved to Plotok Zloty where the family came from originally. At some point all Jews were forcibly removed from Potok Zloty and placed in the ghetto which had been created in Buczac. Whilst there Sarah’s parents applied for visas for the children to go to England. They wrote to the family. You needed a sponsor to guarantee £50 per child. They wanted them all to go but the English would not take you if you were over 17 so the older sisters and brother could not come. Sarah who was 13 and her sister Yetty who was 8 were given visas.

**Kindertransport**

**Slide 9 ( Otwotck)**

Yetty and Sarah were sent to a holding camp in Otwotck near Warsaw. When they got the train their mother had to say goodbye quickly. The father was away looking for a new flat so he was not there to say good bye. Their mother, Chaje made Sarah promise never to leave her sister, it was almost as if she knew that they would never see each other again and that this was their last goodbye. Yetty felt that she wouldn’t see her mother again when they parted and I am sure Sarah feared the same. If anyone cried they had to get off the train and were not allowed to go. The children had no idea what was going to happen. The train journey was very long and they had very little food and water. The conditions on the train were bad and when the train stopped at a station the Red Cross were giving food and water to people on the train. Sarah asked one of these women for water for Yetty who was thirsty and they refused her request, saying ‘the water is not for you.’

They stayed at the transit camp for several weeks. It was very religious. When they arrived a photo was taken.

In order for children to leave the camp and be transported out of Poland, they had to have sponsors that would agree to take them in and pay £50, which was a great deal of money in those days.. There was a big publicity campaign in England which tried to encourage Jewish and other British residents to take in children. As part of the publicity photos of children were placed in newspapers to encourage people to volunteer. Sarah was such an extraordinarily pretty girl that her picture was used in these advertisements to try and encourage involvement (at a later date Sarah visited the offices of one of these publicity promoting newspapers in London and actually saw the photo they had taken in Otwotck still on the wall and it was later sent to her.)

They stayed several weeks at the transit camp, Yetty said it seemed like they were there ‘ages’. She recalls sitting at long tables to eat and the atmosphere was very religious, prayers were said before all meals. Facilities were poor, ‘we had to wash things in a little basin’ and ‘it wasn’t clean’. ‘They cut our hair very short in the camp – I had plaits prior to that’.

**Slide 10 – the ship**

Eventually half the number of children went to Gydinia***,*** the local port, including Sarah and Yetty and from there they set sail for England. Before they left each child was given a siddur and it wasn’t until more than 50 years later she opened the siddur to find that in the back there was a letter in Hebrew explaining the plight of the Jewish people in Poland and pleading with people outside the country to help them. This was written by the Rabbi Schneerson, who became a famous and influential religious figure in the work post war. When the children traveled to the port the roads were filled with Polish soldiers who had been called up. As each child was embarking they were checked for head lice; any child found to have these was not allowed on to the boat and was returned to the transit camp.

Sarah reached England on 31st August 1939. Poland was invaded by the Germans on 1st September 1939 so the boat couldn’t return and the rest of the children could not be rescued.

Slide 11 and 12

Then final film