

## Kitchener camp, 1939

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Was your father or grandfather a Jewish refugee to Britain in 1939?

You may have heard about the *Kindertransport*, an organised rescue effort that took Jewish children from Germany to Britain in the late 1930s, thereby saving them from Nazi persecution. But have you ever heard about Kitchener camp? In this camp – located on the southeast coast of England, near Sandwich, Kent – some 4000 mostly Jewish men were given shelter, after they had been rescued from the area of Greater Germany, following their persecution during the November Pogrom (also known as *Kristallnacht*). The Kitchener camp rescue effort was, next to the *Kindertransport*, the most significant rescue of Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia in 1939, but only very few people have ever heard about these events.

With kind assistance from the [Association of Jewish Refugees](#), and under the expert guidance of Professor Clare Ungerson, author of *Four Thousand Lives: The Rescue of German Jewish Men to Britain, 1939*, a group of descendants met for the first time in summer 2017 in Sandwich, Kent. Many expressed the wish to do something more together, and many wanted to tell their fathers' stories.

The Kitchener camp and its refugees form an important part of (our) history and tell a story that is so far unheard of by many. At the moment many of the documents and photographs relating to Kitchener are sitting in families' cupboards, suitcases and attics. We would therefore like your help in collecting this important historical information about the refugees and Kitchener camp (also known as Richborough transit camp), which was in operation in Britain from January 1939 until after the outbreak of World War Two.

At [www.kitchenercamp.co.uk](http://www.kitchenercamp.co.uk) we are hoping to gather Kitchener camp [documents](#), [letters](#), and [photographs](#), as well as images of [objects](#) brought out of Germany, and [memories](#) and stories about the camp. With the website we aim to provide a place for Kitchener camp descendants from around the world to gather these important materials and thereby not only preserving the memory and documentation of Kitchener Camp, but also to have a full website with content in place by the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kitchener camp in January 2019, which will hopefully lead to talks or an exhibition on Kitchener camp.

Please help us to bring these documents and images together so that this story – our families' story – can be a significant part of that history from which we still so badly need to learn.

For more information about the project, please visit [www.kitchenercamp.co.uk](http://www.kitchenercamp.co.uk)

**The website is currently under construction: we aim to be up and running by the middle of October 2017**

## **Why now?**

January 2019 is the 80th anniversary of the opening of the camp. The aim is to hold an exhibition and talks on Kitchener camp and its refugees, and to further mark the anniversary by handing over this important database of documents and images to an appropriate institution.

The camp was also known as Richborough transit camp, and many families may not understand the significance of the photographs and documents they have at home. They may not understand what the camp was, where it was, nor the scope of what it achieved. But if your father or grandfather was a Jewish refugee to Britain in 1939, there is a strong possibility that he will have been in Kitchener camp. There were many boys from the Berlin ORT in Kitchener camp as well, and we would also like to hear their stories. There may also have been some women from the Domestic Service Visa programme in Kitchener around the outbreak of the war, and again, if this is part of your family's history, we would be very interested to hear about it.

Join us – the website is at [www.kitchenercamp.co.uk](http://www.kitchenercamp.co.uk)

Please help us spread the word.