

Lilli Tauber And Emigrant Children In Brighton, UK



This is a photo of me with other emigrant children in England. The picture was taken in Brighton, a seaside resort, in 1939. It was during this trip to Brighton that I saw the sea and experienced low and high tide for the first time. Of course I had seen the ocean when we came to England from Holland by ship, but it was night back then and we immediately went to bed. And when we arrived in England, we were still asleep, so we didn't really take in our surroundings. I arrived in England with a Kindertransport in 1939. I didn't speak a single word of English. Three children of our convoy were dropped off at the train station in London and taken into a hostel from there. The hostel belonged to the Bnei Brit lodge, and there were mainly children from Germany there, so everyone just spoke German. In August school started in England, or rather, one day we were just told that we had to go to school. It was a regular school and children were submitted to classes appropriate to their age. I was the only emigrant in my class and didn't know a single word of English. It was horrible. First, everyone looked at me as if I was somehow spectacular. The teacher had probably explained to the other students who I was, but as I said, I didn't understand English. The teacher did her very best to teach me a little bit of English. One or two weeks later the war began [1st September 1939]. We were sent to live in the country, in Cockley Cley, with a certain Lady Roberts. She belonged to the English landed aristocracy and wasn't Jewish. She was about 50 or 60 years old, very nice and concerned for our well-being. She knew what was happening to Jews and had enough money to help a lot of them. She owned a large plot of land and employed many farm workers who also lived there. Mr. Harry Watts was Jewish and the owner of a barber shop in London. We all called him Uncle Harry. He was always there for us, emigrant children, and took care of us in a really touching way. He was a member of the Bnei Brit lodge. He took us on trips and I especially remember a trip to Brighton, a seaside resort. I wrote a letter to my parents in which I described in minute detail what I had seen, what the sea was like and where we stopped for a break. Uncle Harry bought clothes for us because we quickly grew out of our old clothes, and he also gave us pocket-money. Once he came with a truck and brought us all new boots. We all loved him dearly.