

Hana Kleiner



Hana was born in Hradec Kralove, Czechoslovakia in 1927. She lived with her father Arnost, mother Marketa and elder sister Sonja. The family were assimilated within the local community and Hana attended the local gymnasium from 1938.

After the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Hana's parents made the decision to send Sonja and Hana to the United Kingdom. They were able to find places on one of Nicholas Winton's *Kindertransports* from Prague. Sonja and Hana left Czechoslovakia in July 1939, arriving in London on August 2nd. Their train was the last one to leave Prague before the outbreak of war.

Sonja and Hana travelled to Boston in Lincolnshire and were met by Mr Hedley Mobbs, a Methodist who had formed a committee to help Jewish refugees. Sonja and Hana soon joined other refugees in a property rented by this local committee. They were accepted as pupils at Boston High School for Girls where they learned English and made rapid progress.

In May 1945, Hana received a letter from Czechoslovakia stating that her parents had not survived. She later found out that no one from the extended family, except 2 second cousins, had survived. In December 1945 Sonja returned to Hradec Kralove where she found that their parents had left some family possessions with some good friends. Most importantly, both parents had left a letter, saying goodbye, written 2 days before being included in a transport to Terezin concentration camp. Both perished in Auschwitz.

In 1945 Hana gained a place at the University of London to study chemistry and in 1950 she joined Winstones Ltd. Hana became chief chemist before retiring in 1987. Hana met her husband Cedric whilst volunteering in a charity shop during the 1990s. She found she could talk about being a refugee and losing her family for the first time, and found comfort in his positive response.

In 2016, Hana was invited to the re-naming of a street in her home town of Hradec Kralove, now in the Czech Republic. The street has been renamed 'Ulice Kleinerových, 'Kleiner Street,' in tribute to the Kleiner family members who perished in the Holocaust.