

MICHAEL BANDEL

My Father, Michael, was born in 1928 in a small town in Eastern Czechoslovakia. The second of four children, he was 11 when the war broke out in 1939. His family were very religious and their lives revolved around religion. They were very poor like many in that region.

In the autumn of 1938 Sudetenland, northern Czechoslovakia, was taken over by Germany. They suffered continual harassment from the local police.

In 1942 when my father was just 14 his parents were arrested and sent to separate prisons. They were released after a few months and the family were re-united.

Jews were not allowed to ride bikes, buy meat eggs or milk, use public transport. And the children were not even allowed to go to school.

By 1943, they had to wear yellow stars sown onto their clothes. Life became almost impossible and there was scarcely any food. The locals became anti-semitic.

In April 1944 he and his father was taken by to Auschwitz. 5 days later they were sent to Mauthausen. After a further three weeks they were taken to Ebensee, a sub camp of Mauthausen.

My Grandfather did not survive. My grandmother survived as did one of my father's sisters.

My father came to England in 1946 to rebuild his life. He came with nothing. He married, had two children and spent a large proportion of his life helping others.

His mother and sister went to Israel to build lives there for themselves.

His is a story of tragedy and survival – triumph over adversity.