

### **Naomi Blake (by Anita Peleg)**

Naomi Blake (née Zisi Dum) was born in 1924 in Mukacevo, Czechoslovakia to a large Jewish family within a thriving Jewish population. This all changed under the German-backed Hungarian regime and by 1944 the Jews had all fled or been deported.

In April 1944 Naomi and her family were transported in the notorious cattle trains to Auschwitz concentration camp where many of her family members were selected for the gas chambers. She and her sister were chosen to work and sent to Brahnau concentration camp. There while working in a munitions factory, they learned how to sabotage the bombs that they were tasked to build. In a bid to flee the Russian armies, their Nazi captors forced the prisoners to march but Naomi managed to escape and finally make the long journey home. She returned to Mukacevo in July 1945 to find that her home was in ruins and 17 family members, including 10 young nieces and nephews had been murdered.

Her journey then took her to Palestine where she rebuilt her life and then finally to London where after attending the Hornsey School of Art, her career as a sculptor flourished. Today, her work promotes understanding between faiths and stands in many places of worship and public spaces such as Norwich Cathedral, St James Church, Muswell Hill, All Saints Church, East Finchley, New North London Synagogue, Leeds Synagogue, Great Ormond Street Hospital and Fitzroy Square.

Her story is told by her daughter Anita Peleg using audio testimony of Naomi, historical photos and photos of Naomi's sculpture that demonstrate the strength of the human spirit to survive against the odds and provide a positive legacy for the future