



# Family history of distinguished radio presenter

By Geoffrey Davies

**It is wartime. Two young German emigres, both serving in the British Army, are lying in bed together in a hotel in St. Ives. "Do you like Winnie the Pooh?" he asks her. Somewhat bemused, Susan Cohn answers that she does. With her positive answer, Fritz Lustig asks his follow-up. "Will you marry me?" "Yes."**

This connection to the stories by AA Milne is why the couple's first son is called Robin. Probably best known as the former presenter of BBC R4's *The World Tonight*, Robin Lustig has written the story of his family around his father Fritz who arrived in England with a clock, a copy of *Winnie the Pooh* in German and the musical instrument that gives this book its title: *And the Cello Came Too*.

"I was very lucky that my father, my mother and my uncle all left autobiographies," says Lustig, who lives in Muswell Hill. "But beyond that I researched my family of distinguished rabbis, Hebrew scholars and even journalists, going as far back as 1380.

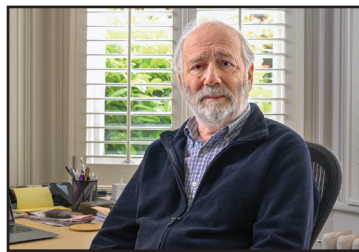
"My grandparents had a secular marriage in 1903 and did not consider themselves as Jewish. Indeed, soon after the First World War my grandfather told the authorities he had left the Jewish community and would no longer pay a tax collected for all religious communities." Escaping Germany after Kristallnacht, Fritz Lustig arrived in England, not for the first time, having been on a school exchange in Letchworth in 1936. Indeed, it was this connection that eased his passage.

Following a brief period of internment, a recommendation from English composer Vaughan Williams of his being a "distinguished" orchestral player led to him being a part of the Pioneer Corps Orchestra, whose standards Fritz felt "left a lot to be desired".

Later he became a listener at Trent Park, recording the indiscrete conversations of German POWs, who were otherwise being interrogated. He never spoke of this until 30 years later when the story was published

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Former Radio 4 presenter Robin Lustig at home in Muswell Hill. Photo Geoffrey Davies

and his work was recorded in "generous obituaries" on his death in 2017.

But as well as the family history, including his uncle in America, Robin Lustig writes interesting chapters – some as drama script – about life in pre-war Berlin, the fake peer who dined with German Generals at the Ritz and a Nazi mass-murderer.

This is Robin Lustig's second book – his first was about his experience as a Reuters correspondent – and he thinks it is his last. "I feel I have mined my family history," he says. But it has not ended his interest in the Nazis and German immigration. "I found out only recently that ten times as many German refugees were refused entry to Britain as actually came. And for all the significance of the Kindertransport, all those children came unaccompanied, their parents being sent to the camps." Robin Lustig will be talking about his book at U3A, Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church, North Square, NW11 7AG at 4pm on Thursday 11 June, at Waterstones in Crouch End at 7pm on Thursday 25 June and at Fellowship House, 136a Wilfield Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb NW11 6YD at 2.30pm on Tuesday 30 June.

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Royal entrance: Garden Party guests get their first glimpse of King Charles, Queen Camilla, Princess Anne, Prince Edward and Sophie, Duchess of Edinburgh. Photo Caroline Broome

# The day we took tea at a Royal Garden Party

*It's not every day you get invited to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace but this year Caroline and David Broome, of Church Lane, N2, were asked to represent the London Gardens Society. Prince Edward, now the Duke of Edinburgh, is the Patron of the LGS, and David is Membership Secretary. The couple are both LGS judges. Here, Caroline remembers the special day.*

**On the day of the party, the weather was cold but dry. Everybody was in their finery, lots of lovely hats and flowery dresses. Guests started to assemble outside the Palace gates from about 1pm, so by the time we were admitted at 3pm, there was quite a crowd.**

Once inside the Palace garden gate, everybody surged towards the tea tents. Miniature strawberry tarts, cheesecakes and chocolate brownies, and dainty sandwiches, were served on small, white china plates with an indentation for your teacup. Service was very well organised and queues moved quickly. We were not alone in going back for seconds!

It was soon time for the Royals to emerge from the Palace, to walk among the guests. It was exciting to see King Charles and Queen Camilla, Princess Anne, and Edward and Sophie. A pre-selected list of guests were presented to King Charles, while the crowds were kept back by the royal bodyguards, to maintain the wide pathway for his walkabout.

On the other side, the minor Royals also chatted with guests, and you could ask one of the guards to be introduced to them if you wished. We could not get over to the other side, so contented ourselves with photos. Once the Royals had finished their walkabout, and entered the Royal tent, we explored the gardens, a misnomer if ever there was one. With a large lake, extensive flowerbeds and lawns, it's more park than garden. Alongside the predictable immaculate lawns, precision-cut edges, swathes of perfect

hostas and a densely planted rose garden, you could see Charles's influence coming through. Areas of lawn were 'rewilded', with curved paths mown through the meadows, and a long border was planted

with more contemporary exotic perennials.

All too soon it was time to leave. As we exited the Palace, we reflected on what a special privilege it had been to experience this day.



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