

# Scots on the hunt for Clues.... Steven Anson's father fled Leutershausen in 1932

BY WOLFGANG GREBENHOF 17th April 2023 Published with permission of Fränkische Landeszeitung Translated from the German article.

Steven Anson's father, Martin Ansbacher, fled Leutershausen in 1932 to escape anti-Semitic attacks. Yesterday Steven Anson returned a second time to his family's roots, almost exactly at the spot that his parents had to leave 90 years ago.

The Ansbacher home was located in, what is now known as The Town Hall (Rathaus). Steven Anson's great-grandfather, Heinrich Ansbacher, born in Jochberg, had founded the shop.

His grandfather Gustav, and his father Martin, continued to run the shop. Martin Ansbacher suffered hostility towards the Jews; he had already suffered this in his youth, in the 1920s. Some years after, the house was smeared with swastikas and had the windows smashed. The Ansbachers turned their backs on Middle Franconia in 1932 and moved to Landshut. But also in the Lower Bavarian city on the banks of River Isar the Jewish family were not safe from the Nazis for long. In 1938 they

became victim of the riots.

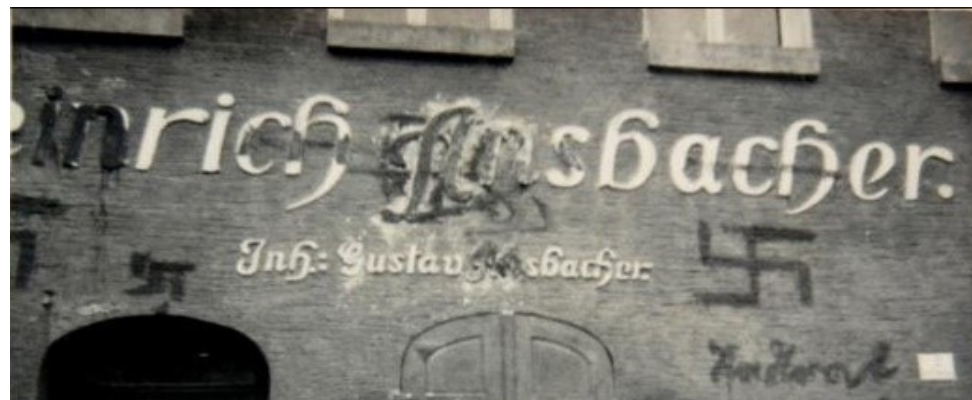
Martin Ansbacher was imprisoned in the Dachau Concentration Camp, (After Reichspogromnacht) but in early May 1939 he managed to escape to Scotland. There he changed his surname to Anson and built a new life for himself in Glasgow after the war.

His sons Steven and the now deceased Howard, who last lived in Canada, visited their father's birthplace in 2017. They were welcomed by the then Deputy Mayor Manfred Schmaus, who is still in contact with Steven Anson and his wife Hilary. So the Anson's were also able to visit on their current trip to Augsburg and made a detour to Leutershausen.

For him, it felt "pretty incredible" and "very emotional", to visit the place that his ancestors had to leave under such circumstances, said the 75-year-old at the reception in the town hall meeting room. But it is important to keep telling the big



Photo in the City Hall : Steven Anson with kilt and his wife Hilary were welcomed by Mayor Markus Liebich (second from right) and Councillor Manfred Schmaus (left). Photo: Wolfgang Grebenhof



Early on, hostility towards Jews in Leutershausen erupted in attacks: The Ansbacher family's textile shop in what is now the middle wing of the town hall was smeared and defaced with graffiti and swastikas. This photo is also on display in the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Photo: Schmaus Archive

and small stories of the persecution of the Jews "so that people learn from it".

**Steven and Hilary Anson are 2<sup>nd</sup> generation witnesses in their Scottish homeland.**

They tell school classes about what their relatives endured by the Nazis, and they have information on a website that also includes extensive memoirs By Martin Ansbacher ([www.gatheringthevoices.com](http://www.gatheringthevoices.com)) The decisive factor is to teach history "on a personal level" - not with mere numbers, but with vivid anecdotes that bring stories to life.

Helping a Jewish woman cost a Non-Jewish lady her job explained Michael Feller about his grandmother actions in 1939 - a friend of the Anson's from Augsburg, who accompanied the couple yesterday. His grandmother was friends with Steven Anson's grandmother Ida Einstein. In 1939, Anna Feller was caught helping the Jewish woman carry a heavy suitcase. She got into

trouble with the Gestapo and lost her job with the German Red Cross, says Feller: "An absurd story", which is featured in the documentary film "The Silence Cries" (German Title) or "It was All Legal" English Title..

Steven Anson thanked Mayor Markus Liebich and Manfred Schmaus for their welcome in Leutershausen with a family photo from 1946 and presented a "friendship certificate".

Stefan Diezinger and Dr Laura Gebauer then guided the guests through the town and the construction site of the new Aviation Pioneer Museum.

The historian also pointed out the scientific reappraisal of Leutershausen's Nazi past, which is well underway and for which local historian Karlheinz Seyerlein has created valuable foundations with his archival work. The Scotsman with Franconian roots assured that he would gladly try to contribute to this.

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