

The following information was supplied by Ivan's daughter Viv.

Ivan's father Simon arrived in England at the turn of the last century. He came from the Pale of Jewish Settlement, Russia, from a small shtetl near Kiev. He went to Birmingham to find a relative who was not welcoming. On his arrival he could not speak English and the immigration officials were unable to spell his name of Zaslovsky. So, he gave them the name of Lieberman which he had heard on his journey.

He became a pedlar selling his wares from a cart in the small market towns of the Midlands. He eventually settled in Tamworth, Staffordshire, where he opened a small drapery store in the high street and called the shop 'Lieberman's. He became a naturalised British citizen on 3 July 1925. *'The shop with the original name was still there when my Mother and I visited in the 1970's or 1980s, I don't remember exactly the year. I think they were the only Jewish family in Tamworth. He was called the old Jew; I think quite affectionately. In contrast to an incident I remember because I was staying with them. After the war someone wrote, "Dirty Jews", on their gate. Grandpa was distraught it was terrible given he had lost his only son to the war.'*

Ivan's mother was called Minnie and it is believed that it was an arranged marriage. Ivan had two sisters, Pauline, who was a nurse during the war and Elizabeth/ Betty who was a WAAF.

*'I don't know much about Ivan's growing up, but I am pretty sure he went to the local school and had piano lessons and my grandmother kept a kosher house. My mother told me that Ivan had wanted to study architecture but that his father expected him to join the business. In addition to the shop in Tamworth they opened two more in Birmingham, but one was bombed in 1940'. Ivan and Cora had hoped that after the war she could continue running the business and he would study architecture.*

Before the war Ivan had travelled to Europe, he loved reading and music. He bought a Bluthner grand piano and judging by the books of music Schubert, Chopin, Mozart he was a good pianist. The piano is now with Ivan's daughter in Australia.

Ivan and Cora married in August 1938 and went on honeymoon to Guernsey. They moved into 35 Yardley Wood Road, Moseley, Birmingham which Ivan's father had helped them buy. Within three months of being married they decided that given the situation for Jews in Germany that they would foster a Jewish refugee. They signed the papers to take Walter Schott a young boy who came to live with them and go to school. Walter's parents were returned to Germany after trying to escape on the SS Havana, Cuba and they were then helped to get to England. The 1939 Register shows him living with Ivan and Cora and that his surname was originally Seligmann, he is sixteen years old and looking for work. Walter remained with Ivan and Cora and when war broke out, they found him a job with a farmer which helped him escape internment. His parents were not so lucky and were interned for the rest of the war.

Their daughter Vivienne was born in October 1939 in Tamworth, and her cousin Richard was born three weeks later in the same hospital. By 1940 when the bombing was becoming dangerous Vivienne went to live with her grandparents in Tamworth. Vivienne often went with her mother to visit her father whenever he had short leaves from training. Vivienne recalls memories of blacked out railway stations and journeys at night and of the sounds of the warning sirens.

Ivan joined the local defence volunteers in 1939 and enlisted into the RAF in 1941 after being given time to teach Cora how to run the business. He was posted to Maison Blanche airbase, Algeria in November 1942 and was killed 15 January 1943.