



## FODC Strawberry Tea

On Sunday June 10th 2012 from 1pm FODC are holding a Strawberry Tea and Scavenger Hunt. We are meeting at the Whitehall Community Building on Whitehall Road, Darwen (BB3 2LH) Turn at the side of entrance of Whitehall Park into Queens Road which leads up the side of the Park and into Whitehall Road.

Adults £2.50, Children £1.00 and £6.00 for Families.

The Scavenger Hunt will take part in the Cemetery, we advise everybody to wear sensible footwear.

**EVERYBODY WELCOME!!**

## Darwen's Link to Anne Frank

It started with a book I was reading. In it was a photograph of an elderly man playing the piano and the caption said, "Grandfather Rudolf at the piano in a pub in Darwin (sic), Lancashire 1943".

The book was, 'The Promise' by Eva Schloss and Barbara Powers. The book tells Eva's story and how she survived Auschwitz. Along with another book, Eva's Story by Eva Schloss and Evelyn Kent I have been able to piece together Rudolf's story and along the way discovered a link to Anne Frank. Rudolf and Helene Markovits lived a comfortable life in Vienna, Austria with their two daughters, Elfriede (known as Fritzi) and Sylvi. They were an ordinary Jewish family who eventually had to leave Austria when life became too difficult and harsh for Jews. Fritzi and her husband, Erich, moved to Holland with their children Heinz and Eva (of Eva's Story). In 1938 Sylvi and her husband Otto Grunwald moved to Darwen, Lancashire. Otto was an expert in a new process called Bakelite and persuaded the Government he could be of some use in the development of a new product called Perspex. Consequently he settled in Darwen and subsequently changed the family name to Greenwood.

In 1939 Otto and Sylvi were able to send for Rudolf and Helene. The whole family settled in Earnsdale Avenue. I believe that Helene was a dressmaker, Sylvi possibly ran a snack bar, Rudolf played the piano and Otto continued his work in plastics. Meanwhile in Holland Eva's family didn't fare as well. The family lived in Amsterdam and were contemporaries of Anne Frank and her family. Like the Frank family, Eva also had to go into hiding to escape Nazi arrest but was discovered and ended up in Auschwitz - Birkenau. Otto Frank was the only survivor of the Frank family and Eva's father and brother failed to survive. In Eva's book she talks of visiting Rudolf and Helene in England. A friend of mine who lived opposite the Greenwoods in Earnsdale Avenue remembers the day they moved in and also remembers Fritzi's visit.

Back in Amsterdam Otto Frank and Fritzi, Eva's mother, became close and in 1953 they married. They spent the rest of their lives telling the world the story of Anne Frank and her diary. Eva married and settled in North London, but didn't tell her family her story until 1986.

So there we have it - Rudolf and Helene Markovits' son-in-law was Otto Frank and so they were, posthumously, step-Grandparents to Anne Frank. Rudolf and Helen are buried in the Eastern Cemetery in Darwen. I have been informed that the family possibly left Darwen after Helene's death in 1963, but I don't know much more. Otto and Sylvi's sons, Tom and Jimmy have both died but Tom did have children, Caroline and Johnny.

I have located Rudolf's and Helene's grave and paid my respects to them.

What started with a photo ended up being a fascinating story and a snapshot of bygone times.

**By Helen Thomas**



*Grandfather Rudolf at the piano in a pub in Darwin, Lancashire, 1943*

Diamond Jubilee

# STRAWBERRY TEA

Fun for all

- Scavenger Hunt for children
- Short walks around the Cemetery
- £2.50 for adults, £1 for children, £6 for families

Organised by the Cemetery Friends

WHITEHALL CABIN, QUEEN'S RD  
SUNDAY, JUNE 10, FROM 1PM



## Batty turn out for Our Second Bat Walk

Around 100 children and adults turned out on a wonderful summer evening to learn and go on the lookout for the Bat population in the Whitehall area. Pat and Representatives from the East Lancs Bat Group gave an insight into the world of bats and then the bat hunters went out in groups to go "bat spotting"

The event was so well attended that another Bat event is planned for the Autumn. Look out for dates on line and publicity around.

