

The son of a Nazi, a Polish survivor... and their journey together to a death camp

JUST over four years ago an amazing thing happened in Bournemouth.

Mark Goldfinger, who was a boy of just nine when German tanks rolled into his home town of Rabka in Poland at the start of World War Two, met Werner Oder, a minister at Tuckton Christian Fellowship.

The incredible part was that Werner's father, Wilhelm, was involved in setting up a Nazi SS extermination training school in Rabka.

Now, after an emotional journey through the past, they plan to take a trip together to Rabka in August, where they will be involved in a conference aimed at helping people, in particular the young, understand the horrors of the Holocaust.

Werner told the Daily Echo: "I always felt as a Christian that I wanted to go to Rabka to do some kind of reconciliation while there was still time.

"It's such a unique window of opportunity in history that cannot be repeated."

Mark has just returned from

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Israel, where he marked his sister Lucia's 90th birthday. She gave written evidence in Wilhelm Oder's trial and almost certainly met him during the Second World War.

Mark, now 80, said he represented the children of Rabka, while his sister represented the older people and Werner the perpetrators.

Rabka's school trained the Einsatzgruppen death squads – on live people.

Mark said: "We were living very close to this school. I could hear the screaming sometimes and certainly firing of rifles. People just don't seem to have learnt or understood. Rabka was the cradle of the German fascist hate campaign against Jews and gypsies and it was just horrendous."

He said that members of the SS were brought in from far and wide to witness "demonstration" executions.

Mark and some of his family escaped Rabka the night before the Nazis rounded everyone up to be either killed or transported to concentration camps – they were tipped off by the wife of an SS member.

They got split up. Mark – or Marek – lived in the Krakow ghetto and later spent time at Plaszow concentration camp and then Buchenwald,



HORRIFIC PAST: Wilhelm Oder in his Nazi uniform with his secretary Kathe in about 1942

where he was liberated on April 11, 1945.

The Russians captured Oder in early 1945 – he had been responsible for ordering the execution of many Jews.

He was actually Austrian and came from Linz, the same town as Adolf Hitler.

He was sentenced at a tribunal in Austria after the war and was released from prison in 1953. He died in the late 1960s.

Werner said: "I've caused the conference to be organised because we want to teach the

next generation.

"In the words of Simon Wiesenthal, the new generation must hear what the old generation refused to tell them.

"When we don't tell them, we miss the chance to say that these things must never happen again.

"It's a great way to use the memories of the past to build a future for the new generation.

"We have a responsibility to teach them."

Mark added: "They need to hear it from the people who were involved in one way or another."



CHANCE MEETING: Mark Goldfinger, left, and Werner Oder who are going to a Holocaust conference in Rabka Picture: Hattie Miles HD 12189510

Opposition to polo club plan mounts

PEOPLE in East Dorset have joined the chorus of objections against a proposed polo club at Lytchett Matravers.

Owners of Lytchett Heath Farm, in Huntick Road, want to turn the farm into stables and stores and build a pavilion.

But neighbours are worried about increased traffic and noise from weekend matches impacting on their quality of life.

The 58-hectare site in green belt to the east of

the village is mainly in the Purbeck District council area, with a small part falling into East Dorset District Council land.

David Sutcliffe, from Wimborne Road, said: "I moved to my present residence to enjoy quiet surroundings and enjoy the countryside. The traffic was acceptable at that time but the proposed entry is on a dangerous bend where there have been accidents in the past.

"This would only make it even more haz-

ardous."

Others echo Purbeck residents' concerns about a proposed PA system adding to the noise of whistles and bells used in the game, but estate owners say the club would mostly be used to teach youngsters to play and any speakers would be directed away from nearby houses.

East Dorset council is due to decide on the application by April 19.

The NEWS in brief

Lifeboat is launched twice

CHRISTCHURCH: Mudeford inshore lifeboat was launched twice in eight hours to assist a stricken yacht in Christchurch harbour.

Following reports that the 18-ft vessel had ran aground at 2.10pm on Friday, the RNLI crew and Southbourne coast-guard were tasked.

The lifeboat laid out an anchor for the boat but two elderly men on board opted to stay and wait for high water.

At 10.17pm, Portland coast-guard received a 999 call reporting that the yacht had run aground again and needed assistance.

Mudeford inshore lifeboat was launched again. After getting the yacht off the mud, the crew safely escorted the sailors in the day to a mooring near Tuckton bridge.

New watersports centre opens

POOLE: The sun shone on the opening of Poole's Rockley Watersports centre yesterday.

Families were able to take to the water to try their hand at sailing or just take the more leisurely option of pedalos and kayaks.

There was also a climbing wall and body zorbs for energetic folk to try out as the Poole Park centre opened for summer.

Charity plant fair

LULWORTH: Lulworth Castle hosted its first charity plant fair of the year in support of the Dorset Blind Association yesterday.

More than 16 nurseries and garden-related stands were open to the public, with dazzling arrays of ferns, flowers and herbs.

Library boost

BLACKMORE VALE: The library at Sturminster Newton High School has received a £5,000 boost from a fund administered by residents of a housing association.

The school has bought new furniture with the amount donated by the Signpost Residents Community Fund to the learning resources centre.

Fund chairman Mike Underwood said his committee had been pleased to see the difference the funding had made.

To apply, call 01258 484748.