

# When Halina was 13...



HALINA ROBINSON

When Halina was 13, she officially became 16! It was 1942 in the Warsaw Ghetto and those under 16 and over 55 were to be liquidated. Soon after, she literally jumped over the ghetto wall and, with the help of Loda Komarnicka, was able to smuggle her aunt and grandmother through the sewers of Warsaw, out of the ghetto to the Aryan side. Loda was later executed by the Nazis for helping Jews.

For the next 2 years, young Halina was in hiding, in 13 different locations and with 4 sets of false documents. She suspects that more than 100 courageous non – Jews were involved in arranging her transport, accommodation and false documents. Because of the secrecy involved, she only knows a few names.

One is Truchanowicz, the family who hid her in their busy 3-room apartment. For 7 or 8 hours every day, she sat curled up in an armchair, which faced the wall, while the family simply pretended she wasn't there. Another was Maria Jiruska, who hid her in a cellar, while people Halina couldn't see in the pitch black, brought food, water and toilet cans twice each day.

Halina remains eternally grateful to those who had the courage to care for her. "They saved my life," she says, "and, more importantly, my belief in inherent human decency."

*Courage to care*