

## **Iby Knill** **by Thomas Mead 10Z**

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September I was privileged to listen to a captivating talk by one of the survivors of the Holocaust, "The Woman without a number"- Iby Knill.

One of the first things that struck me about Iby was her tremendous courage and strength of character. It took her 60 years to revisit the horrific sights that she had witnessed as a young woman, fulfilling a promise to a twin she had met in Lippstadt to "remember what you have seen here and tell the world about it because we will not be able to do so". Although Iby questioned why she had survived such an atrocity when so many millions of others did not, I think she was destined to relate her experiences to young people like myself.

The experiences that Iby has had can teach us all to be more compassionate people. She told us that "we had to learn from history, if we don't future generations will make the same mistakes". Iby was especially keen to impress upon us the fact that we had a moral obligation to be an up-stander in life and to fight for the rights of those not in a position to do so for themselves. She compared the plight of the Jews in the 1930s/40s to the refugees of today.

Iby gave a thought provoking response to a question by one of my peers regarding Oskar Groening, "the Auschwitz bookkeeper" saying that she felt that he did not merit a custodial sentence at his age, but should be able to continue to educate pupils in Germany about the Holocaust. It seemed more important to her not to punish one individual for the crimes of a nation but rather to look to the future and teach the next generation about their actions. I wonder how many of us would be so generous in the same position?

We can all learn many lessons from Iby, both about history and about being a better citizen. Each one of us can and should strive to make a positive difference to our world.

In the words of Albert Einstein "education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt in school". Some of the most valuable lessons in life are not necessarily those learnt in the classroom. For me this extra curricular activity was one such experience that I shall never forget.

Thank You Iby