

Good deeds recalled

British 'Schindler' honored

By Daniel M. Kimmel

There are days when you get up where you despair of the world. There's so much evil and just plain stupidity that you wonder if it's not time to start building another ark. And then you hear about Nicholas Winton, and your

50 pounds (not a small amount at the time) as a guarantee for each child.

Over the next year Winton, with little assistance, managed to get 669 children out of the country. The outbreak of war prevented his final effort, and the 250 children set to go on that last train perished. It's not at all surprising that Winton has been dubbed "the British Schindler." What is surprising is what happened next.

With the war raging, Winton's ability to act ended. So he took his files, put them in his attic, and forgot about it. Although active in charitable programs throughout his life, this effort drifted into his past. He made no effort to see what

became of the children in England (many of whose families, left behind, were murdered). He didn't even tell his wife about this past activity. It was something he had done and he moved on.

It wasn't until half a century later that his wife came across his files and asked him about them. He told her the story and, eventually, it became public. Not even the children, now parents



Nicholas Winton with some of the hundreds of people he helped save from the Nazis.

and grandparents themselves, knew who their benefactor was. It is the last portion of this film that will leave you in tears as "Winton's children," as they eventually called themselves, got to thank the man who saved their lives. Winton, who is still alive at 98, started receiving honors around the world, from the Czech Republic to the state of New York. He was even knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. And yet he doesn't see himself as having done anything extraordinary. He simply did what he could.

One hesitates to call a Holocaust related documentary a "feel good" movie. However watching how one decent man can make a difference – today, the children and grandchildren of "Winton's children" number in the thousands – makes you believe in "the power of good."

"Nicholas Winton: The Power of Good" is available through the National Center for Jewish Film for \$36. Public performance rights separately available. Call (781)

736-8600 or go to www.jewishfilm.org. (The video release includes additional video footage supplementing the original film as well as a study guide that can be printed out on your computer.)

Daniel M. Kimmel, a Boston-based film critic and author, reviews Jewish films for the Advocate. He lectures widely on a variety of film-related topics and can be reached at daniel.kimmel@rcn.com.

Movie Maven

faith in humanity is restored.

In 1938, Winton was a 29-year-old stock broker working for the London Stock Exchange. He was visiting Prague, Czechoslovakia where people at the British embassy were doing what they could for people trying to flee the impending war. No one, however, seemed to be focusing on the children. Winton took it upon himself to organize an effort to get Jewish children to England

Winton, with little assistance, managed to get 669 children out of the country.

where they could be safe. It involved finding families willing to take them in, dealing with government red tape, arranging for transportation and coming up with a deposit of