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SAMUEL BECHER

Holocaust Refugee, Violinist, and a Mystery:

Samuel Becher's stone tells us that he was born in Stryj, a small Jewish town in Poland, in 1903, and that he died in 1965.



The next line hints at the fate of his neighbours:

His heart was broken when his Dear ones died in the Holocaust In 1943

The fate of Stryj is well documented in "The Book of Stryj", written by the surviving residents of Stryj in Israel, 1962. In it there is a description of the events that lasted from July 1941 to August 1943, when the Stryj ghetto and labour camps were liquidated. Stryj was liberated by the Red Army on August 8th, 1944. Several Jews emerged from hiding but it is not known whether Samuel was among them. A Dr. N. Becher is listed as having died during the pogroms in Stryj - could he be a relative? The sculpture of the violin on the stone is extraordinary: not only is it beautifully made, but is it very unusual to find an ornament like this on a stone - there must have been a great deal of discussion between the stonemason

and the burial board! How and when Samuel left Stryj and his route to England, are unknown. His next record is when he gained British Naturalisation in May 1952 whilst living in High Wycombe. In the 1965 Probate Register, he is described as a Polish musician who lived at an address in Winton, and probate was granted to Alice Laura Giovanna Clinkard. She is likely the 'Alice' on the stone, and she paid for its styling and erection.

How did Samuel get from Stryj to High Wycombe?

Where did he learn to play the violin, and with whom?

The "Book of Stryj" can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/sbecher>