

INTERNEES

Friedelind Wagner (1918–1991)

Granddaughter of famous musician Richard Wagner, Friedelind was born in Bayreuth. As with all members of the family, she was a close friend of Adolf Hitler, but she began to be an outspoken critic of the policies of the Third Reich – the German Government.

She left Germany in 1939 and emigrated to England, where she began to write articles criticising Hitler for the *Daily Sketch* newspaper.



Along with 64,000 Germans in Britain, she was interned and came to the Isle of Man, where she met Jeanette Simon, an opera singer from Berlin. This was to become a lifelong friendship. The musical entertainment in the camp provided much relief from boredom. The summer weather provided ample opportunity for swimming in the sea and walking, but music was at the heart of their friendship.

In Germany, General Joseph Goebbels, the minister for propaganda for the Nazi Government, was furious and felt that the articles in the *Daily Sketch* written by Friedelind were written to encourage Italy to rise against Germany. While in the camp, Friedelind was punished for trying to smuggle letters past the censor. Was she friend, or was she foe?

MI5, the UK security section, was watching her activities very closely. They thought 'Mausi', her nickname from childhood, was her secret agent's name and, after three months, she was taken to Wandsworth Prison annexe.

The UK authorities thought that she would be better out of England and her visa to Argentina was granted, after the famous conductor, Toscanini, agreed to pay for her fare.