In 1938 a 29-year-old man called Nicholas Winton was living and working in London. One day he received a telephone call from a friend in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Winton’s friend worked for the British embassy, and he was helping to organize refugee camps for many families from Czechoslovakia. These families were in danger because they were Jewish.

Germany occupied part of Czechoslovakia and Winton and his friend knew it could soon occupy the rest of the country. Germany’s leader, Adolf Hitler, hated Jews.

Winton came from a Jewish family himself. He decided to go to Prague. He wanted to help those families before it was too late. There were a lot of children in the refugee camps, and he decided to organize special trains to take them to Britain, with the help of the British embassy.

Winton returned to London and started to raise (collect) money for their journey. He also had to find families in Britain to look after/to take care of the children.
In March 1939 Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia.

That year, eight large groups of children (669 children in total) left Prague. Most of them were Jewish. They left by train in seven groups. It was a long journey. The trains travelled from Czechoslovakia through Germany, and then to Holland. Then the children travelled by boat to England. On September 3rd 1939, there was an eighth train at Prague station. It was ready to take children to England. Unfortunately, it NEVER left Prague: that day the Second World war started. The Germans closed the borders. Tragically the train, and the 250 children on it, disappeared. For the rest of his life Winton was so sorry that the train didn’t leave Prague one day earlier.

The 669 children started a new life in England. They lived with British families. In Czechoslovakia Hitler sent Jews and many other people to concentration camps. Most of the families of Winton’s children died.

For years, Nicholas Winton NEVER talked about his work. He didn’t even tell his wife! 50 years later, in 1988, his wife found hidden documents, letters and photos and Winton finally told his story.
In September 2009, a special train left Prague station. On the train there were 22 of the original children, with their children and grandchildren. The train followed the same route as in 1939, from Prague to London. At London Liverpool Street Station, after 70 years, they finally met 100-year-old Sir Nicholas Winton, the man who saved their lives!!