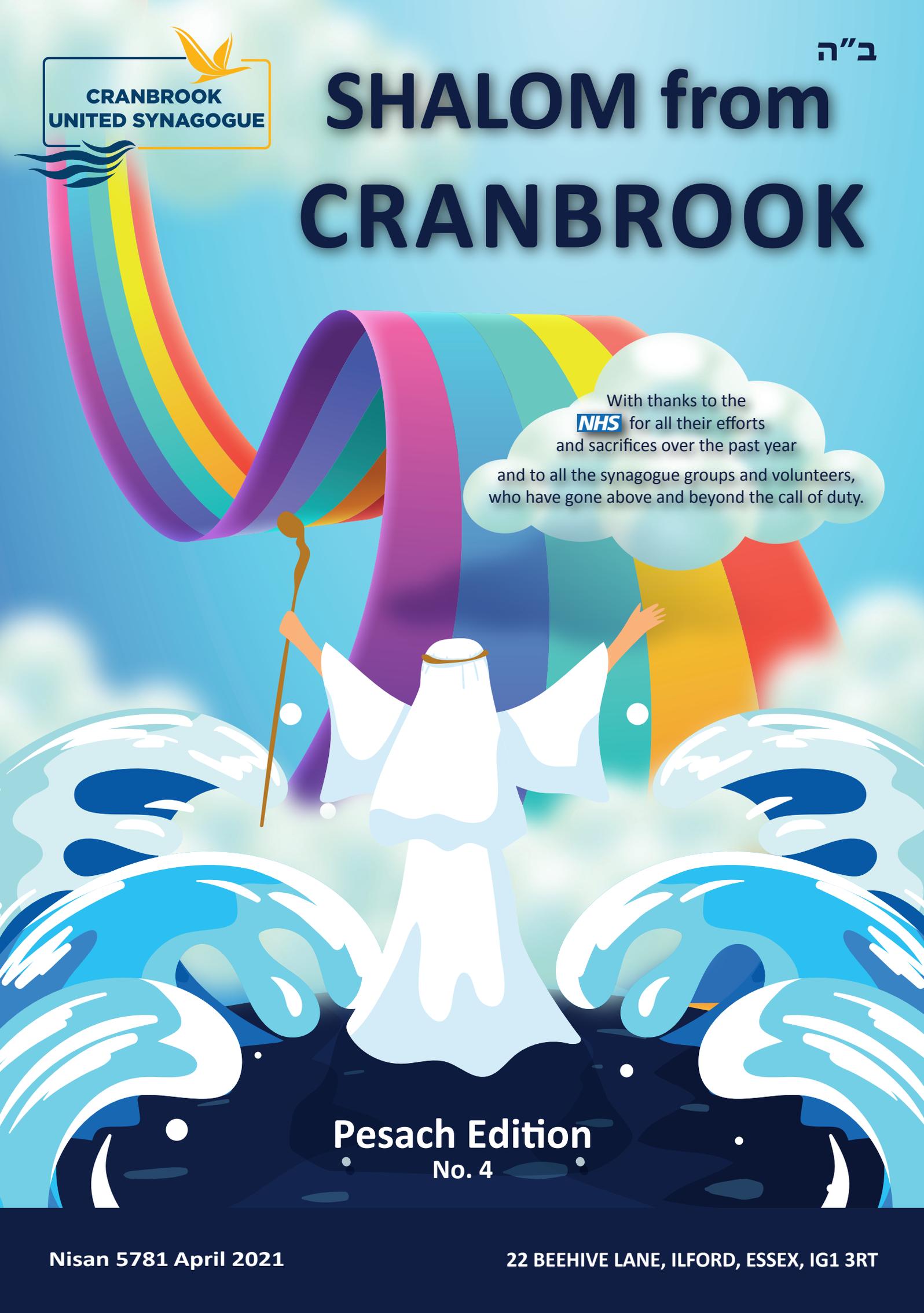




CRANBROOK
UNITED SYNAGOGUE

SHALOM from CRANBROOK



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Pesach Edition
No. 4



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PESACH 5781



Passover is here again - and we are still in lockdown!

Last year, I intended, as with many of my friends, to spend Pesach 'away' - I had booked my place at an hotel and was ready to close my flat and enjoy a relaxing time with someone else doing the cooking and the Seder Services! Instead, my sister and I did some very last minute shopping, thanks to help from our shul volunteers, and spent Pesach together - reading the Seder

Services ourselves and celebrating the festival in style! Fortunately, I still had all my Pesach equipment, and was able to cook - although I had to forgo the gefilte fish and make do with boiled salmon as the fish course! This time, however, we are preparing to celebrate Passover at home and will begin to collect matzo, wine etc as soon as it becomes available in the shops.

I have not been able to attend shul since last March, but I have read the Shabbat Service at home, and have received telephone calls from volunteers. Our chairmen and executive have continued to Zoom meetings, quizzes, lunches and drinks and members of the Welfare Committee have been of tremendous assistance to those of our members who have needed help. I should like to thank Lorraine Silver who has now stood down as Welfare Committee Chair for all her help, and send my best wishes to Mervyn Lyndon who has taken on that difficult job.

Once again, our readers have come up trumps and we have some excellent articles for you to read. Unfortunately, we have been unable to go on holiday because of the lockdown, but the good news is that following the agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, we hope soon to be able to visit those countries and meet our Jewish "cousins"! That would really be something to write home about!

I would like to thank Colin Emden, our publisher, and all those involved in the production and distribution of our magazine. I would also like to thank all our contributors who over the years have sent us such interesting and varied articles. Long may it continue.

With best wishes to you and your families for a Happy and Kosher Pesach.

Philippa Stanton
Editor



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THE CHIEF RABBI'S PESACH MESSAGE

בס"ד

Office of The
CHIEF RABBI

'You will see, you will see, how good it will be next year'

The Chief Rabbi's Pesach Message 5781



Why, at every Seder, do we enthusiastically sing, "leshana haba'ah biyrushalayim" – next year in Jerusalem? Although we have made the same declaration every year, it has never come true – at least not in the messianic sense in which it is intended – so why not simply say "In the future, we will be in Jerusalem"?

Any study of Jewish history is a study of hope, often despite apparently impossible odds. It is therefore fitting that the epic story of the inception of the Israelites as a nation, the Exodus from Egypt, stands among the greatest illustrations of optimism and forbearance of all time.

It was a truly extraordinary miracle. The chasm in status between the Egyptian overlords and the Hebrew slaves could hardly have been greater. The most sophisticated and powerful civilisation on the planet controlled and persecuted a tiny nation of slaves, who were denied every basic human dignity and any capacity for resistance.

What hope was there for salvation? On what basis could the people summon the strength to go on despite everything? The answer is that they knew of the promise that Hashem had made to their ancestor, Abraham, that they would be strangers in a land where they would be oppressed and enslaved, but He would ultimately redeem them and they would return home to the Promised Land. Despite everything, they chose hope over despair. They chose to believe that salvation would eventually come.

This places Pesach 5781 into valuable context for us. This time last year, we were coming to terms with the fact that we could not celebrate Pesach with extended friends and family as we usually do. It was agonising for so many, particularly those who were vulnerable or lonely. We took comfort in our belief that this was a 'one-off' and next year would be different. How then should we respond in the face of yet another Pesach when so many are separated from their loved ones, having not yet banished Coronavirus from our midst?

Let us approach this Pesach with the same degree of hope and optimism as ever. Real progress is being made and we are blessed by the extraordinary miracle that is the vaccine. Britain and Israel have led the world in administering its roll out and, Be'ezrat Hashem, we will soon return to a more regular rhythm of life.

I am inspired by the beautiful words of Ehud Manor, the Israeli songwriter, who wrote his famous song 'Bashana Haba'a', at a time when the State of Israel seemed to be surviving from one war to the next:

'Od tireh, od tireh, kama tov yihye, bashana, bashana haba'a' – 'You will see, you will see, how good it will be next year!'

Valerie and I extend to you all our warmest and best wishes for a healthy, fulfilling and kosher Pesach.



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
March 2021 • Nisan 5781



PESACH - A TIME OF FREEDOM

By Rabbi Steven Dansky

Dear Friends

As many of our friends and relatives either have had vaccinations or are about to have them, it feels like finally there is some light over what has been an incredibly dark and difficult year for everyone. After a year of being alone, of suffering, of illness and pain, we are finally getting back into a space where once again we will be able to see friends and family once again, where we will once again be able to attend Shul in the future. It seems completely appropriate that this is occurring just before Pesach, the time of our freedom, that we are about to be let free once again.

It is fascinating to note that in the first book of Exodus, we are introduced to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. One would imagine that a King has all the liberties that he needs. He has all the power, and he holds the Jewish people in the palm of his hands.

And yet... we can't help but see Pharaoh as a misguided and sad character towards the end of the story. It is his actions that causes mass destruction over Egypt through the plagues that strike his people and decimate his crops, his people and ultimately his credibility to be a leader. Even his advisors tell him "let the people go, Egypt as a country is destroyed forever if you don't". His refusal to let his slaves go causes the death of the firstborn of all Egypt. His stubbornness and pride are the source of his downfall.

I think that this shows us something absolutely remarkable about the nature of slavery and freedom. An individual can have all the civil liberties accorded to him. He can have the ability to go wherever he likes and do whatever he wants. He can have unlimited wealth, and buy mansions all over the world. However if his mind refuses to accept the realities of the world around him, he becomes enslaved to them. Pharaoh could have gone anywhere, he could have bought anything, but he was enslaved to a vision of how things were meant to be, and that vision effectively enslaved him to the extent that he could not get out of it, even if it meant that his country would go down with him. Although he enslaved the Jewish people, Pharaoh was the true slave.

Freedom therefore might mean something completely different than the ability to do what we like. Freedom means the ability to be free from preconceptions. It means the ability to see reality, and be able to bow towards its requirements rather than stand against the insanity of standing against it. True freedom is to be able to choose, rather than having choice hoisted upon one; to decide rather than not seeing two options stand directly in the way.

May we all have the strength to be free, to see the world as it is and to lose our preconceptions of how things should be, rather than as they are. If we can achieve this, if we can look at the world with both eyes open, and with our minds truly open, we can truly be free.

I wish you all only health, happiness, this Pesach. May we all one day join together again in our beloved Shul, and may we be able to look at the future squarely in the eye, free to see our lives anew.

With warm wishes
Rabbi Steven Dansky



CO-CHAIRS PESACH MESSAGE

When we last wrote for the shul magazine, Rosh Hashanah September 2020 edition, who would have thought that at the time of writing this (January 2021) we would still be suffering from this most awful pandemic.

Pesach 2020 was effectively cancelled and as this year Pesach is in early 2021, Motzei Shabbat March 27, it seems that unfortunately history may repeat itself with having very few people around the table (possibly maximum rule of six).

For many months now (since the outbreak) we have been guided by the United Synagogue, who in turn have been guided by the Government Guidelines. All of the decisions that we have had to make, some good, some bad, have been in the best interests and protection of our members and their families.

Our services have really been hard hit. Our morning and evening services are now taking place on Zoom. Sadly, there can be no service on Shabbat and also any member who has unfortunately lost a loved one is unable to mourn properly, although the Shiva can take place virtually via Zoom.

The Yomin Noraim were very different this year. The shul can hold approx. 700 plus, but due to the strict social distancing rules we could only accommodate 55 men and 18 women. It was very depressing, but we embraced it as best we could. Our thanks go to Rabbi Dansky and Reverend Newman for officiating in very difficult circumstances.

We had to cancel not only the Simchat Torah lunch but also the annual honouring of the Chatanim and Eshet Chayil.

Unfortunately, after a lot of soul-searching, we made the decision to suspend our children's service for the time being and we were continually being asked when the children's service would be recommencing. We were hoping to restart just after Chanukah but as the Government put the area into Tier 4, and with the rate of infection increasing, we took the painful decision to put everything on hold. As soon as we are allowed, we will bring the children back as they are the lifeblood of the shul and it will be with a whole new exciting programme. Please watch this space.

Since last March we have had many members of the community volunteering their services to our most vulnerable and needy. Some of these services have been 'Being a Buddy' (regular telephone contact) to our elderly members assisting with and delivering their shopping. Thank goodness the local pharmacies were making deliveries to them. We have provided, with the help of the United Synagogue Chesed Department, hundreds of food boxes and supplies. There have also been weekly online ways for our members to meet and chat such as the Men's Virtual Hour and the Ladies Tea and Chat. All of these things have helped to stave off loneliness and kept our community in contact with each other. The shul's Welfare Committee also provides a Seudah (Meal of Condolence) for close family members who have just lost a loved one. All the volunteers are led by a dedicated team of Honorary Officers, to whom we are eternally grateful.

We still need volunteers and if you can spare a few hours per week please let Estelle know and contact her in the shul office on: 020 8629 2780 Ext. 1.

There are so many people that we wish to thank for keeping some of the shul activities going but it would not be fair to mention them by name - but they know who they are and we have shown our appreciation to them.

We very much look forward to seeing you all in shul again, when life returns to normal.

DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES WE WANT YOU TO BE WELL, BE SAFE, KEEP WASHING YOUR HANDS, WEARING A MASK AND BE VERY VIGILANT. PLEASE DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR UNLESS YOU KNOW WHO IT IS. IF YOU DON'T, THEN ASK FOR ID. HONEST TRADESMEN AND COURIERS WILL ALWAYS CARRY ID.

We want to wish you all with your extended family CHAG KASHER L'PESACH, for a fulfilling and safe Pesach.

Malcolm Nathan & Mike Callaghan

PESACH MESSAGE PRESIDENT MARIE VAN DER ZYL



This time last year I wrote in my Pesach message about the pandemic which had suddenly overtaken all of us and which was already taking a heavy toll on the Jewish community. I am very sad that one year later this terrible virus is still claiming lives in our community and affecting the way we live.

Once again, Seder Night will not be the packed, joyous family event we all love. We will, for the second time, be holding intimate events with our closest family and then only if we are lucky enough to live in the same house or bubble. My thoughts are with all of you who are alone at this time or unable to see your nearest and dearest. This past year has taken a toll on all of us but I have seen great acts of generosity and kindness. In some ways, this terrible situation has brought out the best in people – from the small things, like a grandchild baking for her grandparents who are shielding, to those such as Captain Tom, whose fundraising made millions for the NHS, before his sad passing earlier this year.

Now, with millions already vaccinated and infection rates falling, we have a sacred duty to ensure that lives are saved. Every death in our community has been a tragedy for someone's family. We must ensure that we do everything to save lives. This is the most fundamental imperative of Judaism.

Over this year, the way the Board of Deputies operates has changed, with home working for our staff and Zoom for our plenary meetings. Our online BoDCast events have engaged thousands of people from across the country and across the world and our achievements have continued to grow.

We continue to work with all parts of the Jewish community to ensure that they have access to the best available information about the Coronavirus pandemic and make decisions about when to open and when to close facilities. This has included working with the Cabinet Office to get guidance translated into Yiddish for sections of the Charedi community who do not have English as a first language.

We have been working tirelessly to ensure that the Labour Party, under its new leader Sir Keir Starmer, acts firmly and decisively to excise the antisemitism which had flourished under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn. On this, good progress has been made but we need to see even more.

We have also worked hard this year on ensuring that Jews do not face hatred online, by coming up with proposals to ensure that new Online Harms legislation protects us all from abuse social media platforms. Online is the new frontline in the fight against antisemitism – and not just antisemitism, but misogyny, anti-Muslim hatred, homophobia and racism and bigotry against other religions, ethnicities and minority groups. We are working hard to ensure we are better protected. In the meantime, we have acted to stop antisemites selling their poison online by working with Amazon to ensure Holocaust denial works are removed from its platform.

We may be the Board of Deputies of British Jews but some of our most important and successful work has been in support of a group which are neither British nor Jewish. The Chinese Uyghur Muslims are subject to terrible persecution, and I was not the only one to see echoes of the Holocaust in their treatment by the Chinese authorities. I wrote to the Chinese Ambassador following a harrowing interview on the Andrew Marr Show and as an organisation we worked tirelessly to persuade MPs to support the Genocide Amendment to the Trade Bill, which would allow Uyghurs to get around the broken UN system and be able to take their call for justice in a British court.

In a year in which the world mourned the racist murder of George Floyd in the USA, we felt a responsibility to ensure that our community was one in which Black Jews and Jews of Colour do not feel alienated. To this end we set up the Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community with Stephen Bush as Chair. We hope that the recommendations that the Commission makes will make our community a model of inclusivity in the coming years.

Despite the tragedy in the world there have been some beacons of light in the past 12 months. I have seen our community come together like never before. Despite the physical distance, we have been looking after each other and this has been so necessary and heartwarming. We have also seen remarkable progress in Israel's relations with its Middle East neighbours. The Abraham Accords were signed between Israel the UAE and Bahrain. We also saw an agreement with Morocco. One of the highlights of my years was lighting the Chanukah candles in an online event with the ambassadors of the UAE and Bahrain – something I never thought I would see.

We have been enduring difficult times. It is my earnest wish that we all stay safe and look forward, as we always do at this time, to better days ahead.

Pesach Sameach to you and your families from everyone at the Board of Deputies

Marie van der Zyl

MARIEVANDERZYL

President -Board of Deputies of British Jews

March 2021
Nissan 5781



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Message from the President of the United Synagogue

At my Seder table I like to read this stirring passage from Rabbi Sacks' *Haggadah* (pp 2-3). His recent passing makes it even more poignant:

“On the 28th November 1947, member countries voted on the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. The plan proposed creating two states, a Jewish and Arab state side by side. If the plan gained two-thirds of the votes, it would herald the creation of the first Jewish State since biblical times and with it, the realisation of the Zionist dream. But this was by no means a sure verdict. It took much lobbying and convincing on the part of the Zionist movement to persuade other nations to vote for the plan.

In his speech to the United Nations, David Ben-Gurion argued the case for the creation of the State of Israel by referring to Pesach and the story told in the Haggadah:

“Three hundred years ago a ship called the *Mayflower* set sail to the New World. This was a great event in the history of England. Yet I wonder if there is one Englishman who knows at what time the ship set sail? Do the English know how many people embarked on this voyage? What quality of bread did they eat? Yet more than three thousand three hundred years ago, before the *Mayflower* set sail, the Jews left Egypt.

Every Jew in the world, even in America or Soviet Russia, knows on exactly what date they left – the fifteenth of the month of Nissan. Everyone knows what kind of bread they ate. Even today the Jews worldwide eat matzah on the fifteenth of Nissan. They retell the story of the Exodus and all the troubles Jews have endured since being exiled. They conclude this evening with two statements: This year, slaves. Next year, free people. This year here. Next year in Jerusalem, in Zion, in Eretz Yisrael. That is the nature of the Jews.”

Why is seder night the most observed of all Jewish traditions? Ordinarily, it ticks many of the boxes we Jews want from a good evening: time with our family and friends, great food and drink and wonderful songs and stories. But this isn't the secret of seder night's success.

The answer is this. On seder night we don't just tell a story from long ago: we act it out as though it's happening right now. On seder night we don't just enjoy hors d'oeuvres: we eat foods which remind us of the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom. On seder night we don't just sing songs: we chant the same words that our ancestors have said for centuries.

Seder night is, in modern parlance, an immersive theatrical experience. The Exodus from Egypt and the yearning for Israel, for a country we could call our own, was and must remain a lived experience. But unlike a regular trip to the theatre, our dining room stages take on cosmic significance: every seder night we participate in establishes another indelible link in the long unbroken chain of Jewish tradition.

Seder night forges collective memory. Seder night creates history.

That is what we will be doing this year, even if the pandemic means once again that we are facing another highly disrupted Pesach. We may not be able to spend it with our loved ones. We may not be able to enjoy it as we are used to. But by having our two seder nights, even in these difficult circumstances, we can still create history. *Chag kasher v'sameach*.



Michael Goldstein
President, United Synagogue

Treasurer: Maxwell Nisner

Trustees: Andrew Eder, Claire Lemer, Fleurise Lewis, Nicola Rosenfelder, Barry Shaw, Saul Taylor, Jacqui Zinkin

Chief Executive: Steven Wilson



TheUS

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES

By Rebbetzin Siobhan Dansky

As I write this, we are in lockdown 3.0 and both of my children are home-schooling. Maya, my thirteen year old, is fully capable of making sure she has the right books with her, that she is logged into her lessons on time and that she does her homework. As for Talia, my six year old, I need to help her to get organised. My laptop has several Post-It notes stuck to it with her various lesson timetables for each day of the week, as well as the different Zoom login codes for the different teachers. I need to ensure that she has the right worksheets and stationery for each lesson, that she is logged in on time, and then help her with her homework tasks when the lessons end. Whilst the teachers do not expect the parents to sit with their children and monitor them during lesson time, it is necessary for me to be in the vicinity so that I can hear the general topics they are working on and know what work she needs to do by herself. It's not all bad - last week I overheard a Jewish Studies lesson about the Ten Plagues, and Talia asked such a brilliant question that her teacher was taken aback, and I want to write about it here.

She asked that if Hashem knows everything, then surely He knew that after each plague when Moshe asked Pharaoh to let the Bnei Yisrael go, Pharaoh would say no. So why did Hashem keep bringing more and more plagues when Pharaoh was not going to change his mind? Great question, right?

For those women who come to my Ladies Who Lunch and Learn sessions, you will have a few answers up your sleeves that we have discussed together. But on a very simple level, I think the answer is that no matter who we are, how we have lived our lives to date, and what decisions we might make in the future, Hashem always wants to allow us the chance to make the right choice - to choose well and do the right thing.

I have lost count of how many times I have spoken to people about taking on an extra mitzva, thinking about keeping a new level of Shabbat or kashrut, or coming to shul more often, only to be told, "But I am not that kind of Jew - this is how I have always lived and I am not going to change now". "I'm not religious". "That's not who I am". If there is one universal lesson that we can take from this pandemic, it's that no-one can ever say again that we are incapable of change. All of us, all around

the world, have had to make lifestyle changes. We have had to isolate; wear masks; sanitise our hands frequently; give up our holidays and travel; learn to use Zoom; accept that we have been unable to see our families and friends for extended periods of time; home-school our children; and our shul community has, for the most part, become a virtual one. Some of the changes we have made have been easier than others. Some changes have actually improved our frequency of communication and broadened our horizons. Some changes have been extremely difficult, or even painful, to adopt and we will not be sorry to see the back of them when the time comes (please G-d, speedily). But we have all changed. We have all proven to ourselves that, if we must, we can change and we can stick to those changes.

Pesach is the time when we talk about the birth of the Jewish People as a nation and think about our relationship with G-d. It's the beginning of the period of time that takes us to Shavuot, when we accepted the Torah and committed to making it part of our lives. This is the time of year when we think about our Jewish identity, how we live as Jews today, and the lessons we are giving to our children and grandchildren to ensure that there are many more Seder nights for generations to come. So this is the time to ask ourselves - what change can I adopt in my Jewish life to strengthen my identity? What example should I be setting for my children and grandchildren that I am not doing at the moment? When we are able to come to shul together again in person, how can I increase the number of times I go to shul and support my community?

This year, we have all proven to ourselves that we can make significant, long-lasting changes in our lives if the reason is important enough to us. This year, I hope and pray that we are able to celebrate Seder night with friends and family, even if only in limited numbers. As I write this, I don't know what the rules are going to be. But whether we are in company or alone, I challenge you to think about these questions on Seder night. Make a commitment to take on something new in your Jewish life, however small. Take one step forward on your Jewish journey. May we all be blessed to see the back of this modern day plague, to suffer no more sadness and loss, and to be back together - in person - in only good health, safety and happiness.

REVEREND GARY NEWMAN HONOURED



We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to our Community Welfare Minister, Reverend Gary Newman, on being awarded a Twenty Year Service Certificate for his essential work in the local hospitals for BHRUT (Barking, Havering, Redbridge University Trust).

Reverend Newman has been honoured for his work as Jewish Hospital Chaplain to local hospitals - King George Hospital in Goodmayes and Queens Hospital in Romford. As well as acting as our Pastoral Minister at Cranbrook United Synagogue, Reverend Newman visits hospital patients on a weekly basis, providing them and their families with support, including for bereavements, while also helping hospital staff. He is often on-call for emergencies, and was delighted to receive his special certificate from the BHR University Hospital Trust.

"I look at my role as a calling, not a job, getting tremendous satisfaction from knowing that I could give comfort to patients, their families and to staff as well as to the volunteer hospital visitors provided by the League of Jewish Women," he said. "While so much in the world has changed over the last 20 years, the need to give support and comfort to people in distress is ongoing."

Michelle Minsky of United Synagogue Chesed said he was "one of the stalwarts of the Jewish Visiting service", adding: "It's amazing that he has been doing this role with such a good heart for so long and hopefully for many more years to come."

LINDA DIAMOND MBE



Linda joined JLGB at the age of twelve, first at Chigwell Company then moved to Brass Band, which is now called Redbridge Band. Like her peers, Linda enjoyed many activities that JLGB provided, including playing the clarinet as part of the marching band. She annually attends the AJEX parade and various camps.

As the years went by Linda took on more responsibilities as a youth leader.

In 1986 Linda took over the running of Brass Band jointly with Barry Graham. They built the group up to become one of the most successful throughout the country with numbers exceeding sixty plus children.

Barry moved to the USA a few years later so Linda took over as the leader, though over the years she has had superb assistance from dedicated volunteers, especially Debz Roos and the current JLGB CEO, Neil Martin OBE.

Running a JLGB unit is not just about turning up on a Monday evening. The preparation goes on throughout every week. Linda has been doing this for over thirty years and she certainly does

not do it for the recognition; the enjoyment of the members always come first.

Linda's children Joshua, Alex and Emily grew up as part of the JLGB family and are now JLGB leaders themselves.

Children who attended the Band under Linda's guidance are now bringing their own children and will, hopefully, follow in Linda's footsteps as the next generation of youth leaders. Who knows, one or more of them may receive an MBE like Linda did in the Queen's 2021 New Year's Honours List.

Claire Barzilai

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THE BOOK

By Henry Fenton

On 31 January 1955 the Egyptian authorities hanged two Jews in Cairo. They were Dr Moshe Marzouk and Samuel (Shmuel) Azar. Both had been found guilty of being spies for Israel. Marzouk, a surgeon at the Jewish Hospital in Cairo, was the first to be led to the gallows, his legs in shackles. He was followed half an hour later by Azar, a teacher. Both men were in their twenties. Eight other Jews had been charged with spying and given long prison sentences. Two more had committed suicide.

In Ramle, the Israeli town with the largest concentration of immigrants from Egypt, flags were flown draped in black. In several towns, streets were named after the two executed men, and hundreds of boys born soon afterwards were called Moshe and Shmuel. In Beersheba, immigrants from Egypt paid their respects to Azar's sister.

The executions were cruel, but the two executed men were in fact not innocent of spying. Together with those who had been imprisoned, and the two who had committed suicide, they were part of an Israeli sabotage team that had been set up in the summer of 1954. One of those who committed suicide was an Israeli Intelligence Officer, Max Bennett. The aim of the operation - which was evolved in the Ministry of Defence where Pinhas Lavon was Minister, and with the active participation of the chief of Israeli Intelligence, Benjamin Gibli - had been to give the impression that anti-British saboteurs were in action in Egypt and, by this means, to persuade Britain to delay its proposed withdrawal from Egypt, a withdrawal that Israel regarded as detrimental to its interests.

The sabotage actions were carried out in July 1954. The historian Shabti Teveth, who later examined this episode in detail, has written "These efforts bore no political fruit, achieving nothing beyond two hangings, two suicides, the extended incarceration of three young men and a young woman; and ignominy heaped upon Israel and its intelligence service."

The actual orders to act were transmitted over the radio by Israeli Military Intelligence in the form of cooking recipes for housewives. The acts of sabotage themselves were small and of no political (and hardly any physical) consequences; a parcel office mailbox set on fire at the central post office in Alexandria, and two small explosive charge set off in American libraries in Cairo and Alexandria on July 14th, and four small explosive charges set off in cinemas in Cairo and Alexandria nine days later.

During their incarceration in Cairo prison, one of the accused awaiting execution, wrote a goodbye message to his family (in Israel) on the inside cover of a book. This book had then been smuggled out of prison and handed to me by an Egyptian Jewish lady, who made me promise that if ever the opportunity arose, I should take the book to Israel and hand it over to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem.

When eventually my squadron was withdrawn from Egypt and transferred to Cyprus, I did have an opportunity to fly to Israel. On arrival, I made my way to Jerusalem and handed the book to an official of the Jewish Agency, who assured me that the book would be handed over to the family.

I had kept my promise.

I would like to thank Sir Martin Gilbert for giving me his permission to quote items from his book "Israel - a History".

This article was requested by Martin Sugarman - AJEX archivist - and is now in the archives of the AJEX Museum in Hendon. It was originally published in the JACS Journal.

While this tragic affair was unfolding, I was serving in the RAF and stationed in Egypt.

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

By Ruth Lyndon

“Why don’t you write a book review for the magazine,” I was asked, “you read loads of books”. It’s true, I do read voraciously and because of the pandemic last year limiting activities, I was probably reading almost two books a week. (Waterstone’s and Amazon’s share prices went up because of me!), but then I thought how on earth can I pick out only one or two books out of that lot and write about them? So, I have picked out some of the best series of books that I read.

Apart from when I pick up the third book in a trilogy (so annoying!), I try to read a series of books in the order they were written. I started the first lockdown with **Bernard Cornwell’s Last Kingdom** series. They are set in the time of King Alfred and follows one man who supports the king in his aim of uniting all the Saxon kingdoms into one “Englaland” (not a misprint) as he calls it, as well as fighting against the invading Vikings. There is some historical fact behind the stories but, obviously much of it is fiction. Lots of battles but not too much descriptive gore. I have always loved history so really enjoyed them.

I also finished reading the **Seven Sisters** series by Lucinda Riley. The stories are about six sisters, one book per sister, who were adopted from all over the world by a very wealthy man and raised as a family. When he dies he leaves clues for them to find their individual identities and the books are about their quests to do this. The books travel backwards and forwards through many different cultures and countries and I learnt a lot about politics and cultural attitudes in the 20th century. Lucinda Riley has written many other books but although they are all different, they are usually in the style of two or three time-lines at the same time. It makes for interesting reading.

Alexander McCall Smith is famous for his No 1 Ladies Detective Agency series. For some reason, I didn’t take to that series but I do like the books in his **44 Scotland Street** series. They are set in his native Edinburgh and have wonderful descriptions about the city. The books are about the lives of the residents of a block of flats at that address and their day-to-day activities and interactions. One of the characters is a small boy and it is fun to see the world through his eyes. Another character is a dog who, apparently, also has hopes and aspirations. There is not a lot of action in the books but their thoughts and conversations are often thought provoking and amusing. But the books are quite light to read, not at all ‘heavy’. He has actually written over eighty books and some of his stand-alone books are also good. **My Italian Bulldozer** is hilarious and **The Second Worst Restaurant in France** is also very amusing.

And where would we be without crime-busting books? One of my favourite authors is **Peter Robinson**, who writes about DCI Alan Banks. It’s set in the Yorkshire Dales and the series starts in the 1980’s and gradually comes up to present time. The crimes are all different, usually murders, but not overly gory, (you can see I’m a bit squeamish!). Banks is an opera-loving man, but

nothing like Morse. He has a family and decides to quit the Met’s Serious Crime Squad for, hopefully, a quieter rural life. The descriptions of the countryside are wonderful, reminiscent of the Herriot novels and the people are as quirky. Good books to get your teeth into and follow the plot.

Another “detective” series is by **Ellie Griffiths**. I read **The Lantern Men** and so enjoyed it that I started to read the series about Dr Ruth Gallagher, a forensic archaeologist, from the beginning. She is a single, slightly overweight, forty-something scientist who is asked to help with a crime scene and then finds herself almost part of the Norfolk police force with her specialist knowledge. There is crime, romance and a touch of the spiritual with one character who is a practising Druid. The series is set mostly on the north Norfolk coast and beautifully pictured. Another page turner.

Another author I would heartily recommend is **Natalie Haynes**. The first book I read was **A Thousand Ships**. She tells the story of the fall of Troy through female characters caught up in the siege. There are queens, princesses, common folk and goddesses. There are over a dozen different storylines which jump around through time and location but an index at the beginning helps to keep all the strands in place. It sounds a bit complicated, but don’t let it put you off, it is a very good book. She also wrote **The Amber Fury**. It’s set in a Pupil Referral Unit which is where kids are sent who can’t work in mainstream schools for various reasons. The teacher uses Greek mythology to try and reach her disenchanted students with startling and unpredictable results. It’s written in another unusual technique, she uses two timelines, one before “something” happens and one after “it” happens, only the reader doesn’t know what “it” is and only finds out near the end. She is a very clever author and the suspense and tension builds slowly but relentlessly in both these books.

I could go on for ever talking about books! I haven’t even mentioned some of my other favourite authors: **Donna Leon** who writes about Commissario Guido Brunetti of the Venetian Police; **Jim Butcher** whose hero, Harry Dresden, is the world’s only Wizard Private Investigator. Set in Chicago, it is amusing and clever. Who knew that you can’t use magic around computers? (Harry Potter never seemed to have that problem!) **Ben Aronovitch’s** Rivers of London series, also about magic in the present day gives all London’s waterways human personas. **J D Robb** writes about the police in 2060 New York, where life is very different from today. **SJ Parris, Mark Billingham, Victoria Hislop**.... So many! But maybe to paraphrase the Rabbi, that’s an article for another day!

So, have you read a book which made you go “wow, that was amazing!” Share it with us and write a review of your favourite book or author for the next issue of the magazine. It can be a few words or a paragraph but enough to whet our appetite and who knows, find another author to read.



ANNUAL AJEX CEREMONY AND REMEMBRANCE SERVICE, NOVEMBER 2020

It was a crisp November afternoon at the Cenotaph for the 86th AJEX Ceremony commemorating Jewish service men and women who served the Crown, a number paying the ultimate sacrifice.

The event occurs every year the week after Remembrance Sunday and has been a major event for the Jewish Community since the 1930s, following the permission of King George V.

But this year was different; due to COVID-19 only a handful of personnel were gathered to say prayers, lay wreaths, and observe two minutes silence.



We were sitting comfortably in our homes joining in this ceremony online. Last year two thousand people were physically in attendance; this year in fact nearer, or more than ten thousand people tuned in and joined in this online event. A great credit to Richard Belfield, TV producer/director. I was impressed with his linking in footage of past years with the current service. The black and white film from the 1930s was particularly interesting, with many thousands marching. I even noticed some Boer War veterans!

The film and historic footage were narrated by newsreader and TV presenter Natasha Kaplinsky.

Mike Bluestone, AJEX National Chairman opened the event with a pre-recorded message.

Other participants included the Chief Rabbi, Marie Van der Zyl, President of the Board of Deputies, AJEX Chaplain Rabbi Major Reuben Livingstone, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg Government Representatives and The Venerable Martyn Gough QHC, Chaplain of The Fleet and this year's Reviewing Officer.



Buglers from the Rifle Regiment played the Last Post and Reveille. Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade also took part in the ceremony.

Adon Olam was sung by school children from Nancy Reuben Primary School. (pre-recorded).



As usual the ceremony concluded with the National Anthem, with the hope in the words of Mike Bluestone " May we all be able to meet again to parade next year at the Cenotaph to continue to remember the contribution of our community to HM Armed Forces".

Bernard Chaplin



PESACH

By Rabbi Steven Dansky

The purpose of reading through the Haggadah, drinking the four cups of wine, and eating the Matzah is to provide an indelible message to our children and families which comes from our heart, something which is going to be meaningful to them, something that is going to make an impression. But how do we go about doing that?

The answer comes from the Torah itself. The Torah tells us: And you shall tell your child on that day saying: Because of this or “Ze” in Hebrew, G-d did this for me when I came out of Egypt.

Let’s take this sentence and deconstruct it, and it will give us some insight as to how to make this message something real.

“Ze” is a word which always refers not to something specific, rather than something abstract or imaginary. When G-d says that this is the new month, he actually shows Moshe the moon in its first moment. He leaves nothing to the imagination. It is absolutely clear to what we are referring, something definite, something concrete. In fact, the Haggadah uses this word to apply to examining the Matzah and the Marror which are placed in front of us.

So, what is the “Ze” that we need to be examining? What should we be looking at?

I believe that we are supposed to be looking at our own life experiences here. There have been moments when we have felt like that we have been completely out of our depths, moments when we have felt completely without hope. Moments when we have felt that we have been pushed backwards into a one way street going the wrong way, and there is no way of getting out of the way of the upcoming traffic. Moments when we have felt trapped, moments when we have felt stuck in situations which are not of our making. Moments of pain, moments of fear, moments when we felt that we were imprisoned whether it be physically or psychologically, and there is literally no way out. And yet, we find that no matter how difficult the circumstances, how painful the experience, we find ourselves freed from it. While I am not saying

that these experiences don’t leave their marks on us, and that we still may feel the aftershock of those traumatic and difficult times in our lives, we are able somehow to weather those moments, to bear through the storm that surrounds ourselves, and find ourselves on the other side. Those moments are the Ze - the specifics of our lives when we have felt enslaved.

The second point is - “ G-d has done this for me” - this exodus that I have personally experienced has happened because G-d has a personal relationship with me. The fact that I am still standing today, no matter if I limp, but that I am still standing today is a result of G-d’s personal relationship and love that HE has to me.

Betzeisi Mimizrayim: When I left Egypt - I need to see the exodus from Egypt which happened so many thousands of years ago not as history, but rather as a prototype of what has happened not only on a national level again and again for the Jewish people, but for ME. I need to see my life mirrored through the lives of the Jews who lived before me who cried through their enslavement, and who were filled with joy in their emancipation. Their enslavement in Egypt mirrors my personal experiences of confinement in a job that I didn’t want, or a disease that I couldn’t control, or in a financial obligation that I couldn’t seem to meet. Their emancipation from Egypt mirrors my personal experience of finding that new job, of being told that thank G-d I am in remission, or that there was a way of getting out of that debt. That feeling of finally being able to breath is the same feeling that the Jews experienced on the night that they were finally able to go free.

If we see the exodus in this light, in a personal, and a national light, then these words that we read on the first and second nights are not simply words of a story that happened so long ago, they are part of a continuing narrative of my life. It is not HIS story, it is MY STORY. In the centre stage of that life is a G-d who cares about me, and who sees value in me, who sees potential in where I will be going, and in my future is the promised land of milk and honey, a place where I will be able to show my appreciation to the One who provides me with the freedom to take that breath as a free human being.

For more than 225 years, Norwood has been providing a lifeline to children and families facing challenges due to learning difficulties, mental health or wellbeing issues as well as lifelong support for people of any age with learning disabilities or autism. We are dedicated to enabling each and every one to live fulfilling and active lives, taking their rightful place as valued members of society.

As part of our work to ensure that this is the case, we have recently reviewed how we can make sure that everyone receives exactly the right support for their particular circumstances. To facilitate this, families will now be assessed by a team consisting of experts representing different disciplines who will make sure that each person is recommended the best support given their specific needs; whether this be counselling, specific therapies, peer support or parenting advice among many other possible services. And, wherever relevant, this team will also consider all members of the family unit so that the needs of parents, siblings and even grandparents are taken into account too. Wherever Norwood is not best placed to provide the support needed, we will signpost to organisations which are better able to help, always putting the individual at the centre of all our recommendations rather than basing these on the services we happen to provide.

Of course, for adults with learning disabilities or autism, we offer specialist accommodation, providing everything from 24/7 one-to-one care to independent living for those who are more able. Whatever the level of care, we become a second family, being there for them throughout their journey, even when their parents may no longer be around; our goal always being to enrich the lives of all those we support, enabling them to live their best life possible.

Beyond this vital frontline work, Norwood also advocates on behalf of the incredible people we support. We do this because we believe that, regardless of the challenges they face, everyone has the right to live the best life they possibly can.

As our strapline says, Norwood is all about 'taking on life together': together with our wonderful staff and volunteers, together with our inspirational service users and, of course, together with you and your community. For more information about our services or about how you can help Norwood take on life, please go to www.norwood.org.uk.

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FROM THE WARDENS' (VIRTUAL) BOX

When lockdown came just after Purim, who would have believed that we'd still have such problems today. (This is being written mid-January). Even when on holiday, I rarely missed a Shabbat Service and as for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur I am sure I haven't missed going since I was a very small child. Indeed, one of my special childhood memories was being taken on Yom Kippur to have something to eat at the home of one of our members who lived very near the (St. Anne's on Sea) shul where I always had a chunk of challah with thick white honey on it.

I believe it's very important during the pandemic to keep to the usual routine as far as possible, so I get up every Shabbat at the usual time, and wear my Shabbat clothes for the day. When I finish davening I call out to Lilian, "I'm home from shul." One good thing to come out of this trouble is that I have more time for the Sedra and can read all the commentaries in the Soncino Chumash, and discover many more insights into the weekly reading, but I won't pretend that it's the same as hearing the Rabbi leining.

I'm very grateful to Harold for covering those things I normally do for and in shul, and to our chairpersons and all those who have stepped in. The chairs, together with the executive have had to make some very difficult decisions but always with what we hope is the best for our community.

Talking of the community, although of course the situation is bad for everyone, it's an even greater shame for Cranbrook as I do feel our members were really starting to become one group after our merger. P.G. we will soon be able to get back together again.

I must pay tribute to our ministers and their wives for the sterling work they have been performing to look after our community and for the many sessions they have provided for the spiritual and cultural health and wellbeing of all. They are ably assisted by the Welfare Committee, who have been of tremendous assistance to those of our members who have

needed help. We thank Lorraine Silver who has now stood down as Welfare Committee Chair and welcome Mervyn Lyndon to that position.

Whether the shul is open or not, we now also Zoom Shacharit and Ma'ariv Services thanks to the efforts of Robin Abrahams, who also keeps the Cranbrook website up and running. For your information, although the shul is not open at the moment of writing, the Get Well list is recited each day, and the Yahrzeit list is read on each Shabbat. If the member with Yahrzeit attends the Zoom Service on the day of the Yahrzeit, the memorial prayer is said.

Of course our administrators have had extra burdens thrust upon them and they have risen to the challenge. I know Wally and Theresa worked really hard to clean and then keep clean the shul before each Service and I thank them and those members who have helped with that, as with the setting up of the anti-Covid security. I'm not going to thank everyone by name because I'm sure to leave out someone who is doing great work for the shul, but I'm sure I'll be forgiven if I do refer to the work done by Jeffrey Faber on our behalf.

Every bereaved member has been spoken to, and of course there have also been many stone- settings to arrange. But we would again like to offer our sincere condolences to all those who have lost family or friends through Covid or other causes.

Thanks to the efforts of the various committees we managed to produce the usual calendar for our members, and also the twice yearly shul magazine in which you are reading this message.

Finally, in the words of the Queen (and Dame Vera Lynne) let us hope and pray that "We'll meet again" very soon for normal prayers and activities in our shul.

Keep safe and keep well.
Kenneth Black (Warden)



Gary Green

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING



The following is a further excerpt from the diary of Maurice Conway, who was a crew member on a bomber during the Second World War.

420 Squadron (RCAF), Tholthorpe, Yorks - Raid 10

D Day

GOING TO WAR BACKWARDS 6/7 June 1944,

"D"Day! It's really begun. The crews that were flying during the night have been telling of the sights of the "Armada" of ships strung right across the English Channel from shore to shore. Maybe tonight I shall get a glimpse of it, for we are, or I should write, that I am operating tonight; my pilot is off sick and I'm going with another crew as their under, or belly, gunner. This is a new position that has been adapted in the Halifax. It's just a tin blister, armed with a .5 machine-gun. It is to counter the attack by fighters from below, these fighters, ME110, have cannons fitted to fire at an angle of 45 degrees, so they fire whilst flying underneath us, and we could not see them.

Being one of the senior aircrew on the squadron, not by age but by service, I can choose the crew I want to fly with. Tonight I am flying with F/Lt. Trickett, a Canadian, who, in my estimation is a good pilot. He is well liked and his crew think highly of him. I am writing this before going to supper and then to briefing.

To-day, as it is the 7th of June I have, an hour ago, arrived back at Tholthorpe.

Last night, at 22.20 hours, we took off to bomb a bridge. Countances Bridge to give it its correct name. A small bridge but of great importance. At briefing we were told that this bridge had to be destroyed. Our squadron, 420, had the sole task of destroying it. The "D" Day landings had established a beach head in this part of Normandy and it was being flooded with British troops. The great threat to their safety was the bridge. German Panzer divisions were making their way up from the South to reinforce the German troops, trying to protect the beaches and to push the Allied troops out. The tanks had to go via the bridge. It was to be a race against time.

The take-off was smooth, I was not allowed to be in the gun blister at take-off, it was deemed too dangerous. Flying with a different crew seemed strange at first, but they soon made me feel part of them. No idle chat on the intercom, everyone carried out their jobs like professionals once airborne. I got into the blister through wooden trap doors, and strapping myself in reported to the skipper all was well.

The course to the French coast was practically a straight run, and on crossing the Channel saw plenty of traffic going to and from. The night was quite clear with very good downward visibility. I test fired my gun - all is well. We slipped over the coast and I could see the gun flashes from the front line of the beach-head. Once passed there the flak guns opened up on us. Very heavy it was too!! The searchlights

sprung on their beams like tentacles of an octopus trying to find us, but this "octopus" had more than eight legs. This was the first time I had flown in this position in the bomber, and now at this time of writing in my diary I've realised that at the back of me were 14,000 pounds of high explosives in the bomb-bay, and one direct hit and it would have been curtains for me. (I must not think of it.) Spent most of the time on my knees looking out of this hole in the blister for fighters. I've really got a grandstand view of all below us.

The flak came up in pretty colours, almost like flaming balls, very fascinating, but deadly. Very soon came the cry T.I's ahead right on time. The run in began and it went like clockwork, we headed straight for the bridge, the aircraft shook and shuddered as we were hit by flak, but still we ploughed on, straight and level.

"Bombs gone" called the bomb aimer. I stuck my head further out and watched for the blowing up of the bridge, we had done it, the photo flash went off the same time. We turned steeply away from the target with the flak in hot pursuit, they had our height alright but the change of course fooled them.

The flight back was quiet after that, not long after crossing the English Coast we got a diversion call on the radio, our base was fog bound.

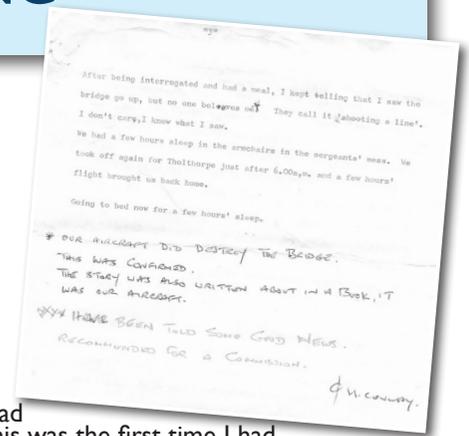
After being interrogated and had a meal, I kept telling that I saw the bridge go up, but no one believes me.* They call it 'shooting a line' - I don't care, I know what I saw. We had a few hours sleep in the armchairs in the sergeants' mess. We took off again for Tholthorpe just after 6.00 a.m. and a few hours' flight brought us back home.

Going to bed now for a few hours' sleep.

*Our aircraft did destroy the Bridge. This was confirmed. The story was also written about in a book - it was our aircraft.

I have been told some good news. Recommended for a Commission.

Maurice Conway 2001



MAURICE CONWAY

Awarded the Legion of Honour

We wish a hearty Mazal Tov to Maurice Conway, excerpts from whose diary are published in our shul magazine, who has been recognized by the French Embassy for his actions during D-Day.

Maurice received the Legion of Honour, the highest French Order of Merit, for "helping to liberate France" in the war.

During his time as a flying officer and air gunner in the Canadian 420 squadron, Maurice's aircraft destroyed a bridge which prevented opposition forces getting into the beachhead in Countances, France. This action was part of the June 1944 Normandy landings operation which began the liberation of German-occupied France.

Maurice normally flew Lancaster Bombers with the Canadian squadron, however on this occasion a Polish Squad was going to bomb the bridge but did not have an air gunner, so Maurice flew with the Polish crew.

TRIBUTE TO RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Chief Rabbi Emeritus Lord Sacks passed away November 7, 2020, aged 72, after being diagnosed with cancer in October 2020. He was Chief Rabbi from 1991 (at the age of 42) to 2013. He left a wife Elaine, whom he married in 1970 and three children, Joshua, Dina and Gila; three brothers and grandchildren.

Rabbi Lord Sacks was knighted in 2005 and made a Life Peer in 2009. He was a world renowned scholar and was a great spokesman for Israel and Judaism in particular.



He was a frequent visitor to Ilford Synagogue and conducted the induction of Rabbi Rapoport in 1988 and Rabbi Hyman in 2007. In 1988, Rabbi Lord Sacks together with Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld, Cantor Johnny Turgel and the Shabbaton Choir officiated at the annual United Synagogue Selichot Service.



Rabbi Sacks z"l is remembered fondly by the Ilford Community and he is sadly missed.

We wish Lady Elaine and the family Arichat Yamim and free from any more sorrow.

Malcolm Nathan

The recent, untimely passing of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory came as a terrible shock to the entire world. He brought so much Torah and understanding and love into his ministry par excellence. His leadership was of the highest standard.

I personally have some treasured memories of how he guided me and looked after me when I started with Newbury Park some twenty years ago. I was deeply honoured to have been inducted into the Office by Lord Sacks and I will never forget the closing words of his address at my induction. He said, "Reverend Gary, if you love your congregation, your congregation will love you". I have taken that message right through my career and as everybody knows, I love my congregation.

Thank G-d today we have in our current Chief Rabbi the same leadership and commitment; and each and every minister is indebted to the dedication of the Chief Rabbi, the Beth Din and all those wonderful people who ensure the harmonious running of the community.

Please G-d may the memory of Lord Sacks always be a blessing.
Reverend Gary Newman



RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, whose sudden death was recently announced, was well known to members of the three communities that now make up Cranbrook United Synagogue – Clayhall, Ilford and Newbury Park.

In 1995, Rabbi Sacks visited the three synagogues over Rosh Hashanah. He spent erev Rosh Hashanah at Newbury Park Shul and was greeted by a large congregation. He commented that Newbury Park was a “real shul” and that it was the first time he had been there. He promised to come to see us again, and we were delighted to welcome him back in November 1995 just after he published his book “Community of Faith”.



However, we had met Rabbi Sacks before. In 1991 he was in Israel during the Gulf War when we visited there with the Joint Israel Appeal (JIA) and we met him and Lord Jakobovitz z'l at a special dinner. We remember how happy the Israelis were that a large delegation of British supporters visited Israel at this dangerous time.

We met him again in 1995 with the JIA on a trip to Prague and Israel. The flight was a bumpy one and on arrival in Prague we were informed that we may not be able to land there because of the fog, but this suddenly cleared and we went down.

Rabbi Sacks gave a keynote speech on the 125th anniversary of the United Synagogue. He was at Newbury Park for the induction of Reverend Stuart Myers in 1988 and attended a NEROS Melava Malka at Sinclair House in December 1998, when he commented “Ilford is one of the friendliest communities in the country”. He also conducted the induction of Reverend Gary Newman on April 1, 2001 and on April 21, 2013 he attended Newbury Park Synagogue’s 40th Anniversary celebrations.



Lord Sacks was very interested in Jewish Continuity and Education and wrote several excellent books including “Will you have Jewish Grandchildren”. He also took a great interest in Israel and we met him on several occasions on our trips to Israel with the JIA (later the UJIA).

Our condolences go to Lady Sacks and their family.
Linda and Philippa Stanton

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WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT



When Lorraine Silver unexpectedly resigned as co-chair of the Welfare Committee last November my initial reaction was that she would be a hard act to follow and that I pitied whoever took on the role. Accordingly, I was somewhat taken aback when several days later I was unexpectedly asked to take on the responsibility. It was with some trepidation that I agreed, and I hope

that some four/five months later I have justified the faith shown in me.

So how to start this report?

Firstly, a big thank you to Lorraine for her dedicated and sterling work over the years with the Welfare Committee, initially at Newbury Park, then at Redbridge and most recently here at Cranbrook. A true Eshet Chayil and an inspiration to all of us involved in the welfare of our community.

In her Rosh Hashanah report Lorraine spoke about the tremendous efforts put in by our volunteers as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic - a situation that sadly at the time of writing this report has not diminished. Our host of telephone volunteers, co-ordinated by Iris Taylor with help from Estelle in the office, continue to keep in contact with the majority of our members over the age of seventy; Claire Barzilai has continued to co-ordinate the day-to-day shopping for members who have been unable to go out; and on a weekly basis essential food boxes are distributed by Reverend Newman.

In addition to this, from late January we have been able to distribute frozen soup and/or a limited number of frozen meals to vulnerable members upon discharge from hospital or following a bereavement. Regrettably we do have limitations as to how much we can distribute, but as the saying goes "every little helps".

The response from, and the time spent, by our volunteers who help with all the above has been humbling and from the large number of letters and/or emails of thanks received in the office, is greatly appreciated by those members whom we have been able to support.

Chanukah is traditionally an active time for the Welfare Committee, but due to Covid and the times we are currently living in some of our activities have by necessity been carried out by Zoom. Claire organised the distribution of doughnuts, chanukiahs and candles to our members in sheltered accommodation, whilst Zoom collective candle lightings - for Vi & John Rubens, Birchwood and Asher Houses as well as the 'Chaps who Chat' and the 'Ladies Tea and Chat' groups - were carried out by Rabbi Dansky and Reverend Newman.

My thanks to all of the above for organising these activities, thanks that are extended to the volunteers who assisted Claire in the distribution of the doughnuts etc.

Sadly one of the 'casualties' of the pandemic has been the annual afternoon teas carried out by the Welfare Group. However starting in mid-December, Reverend Newman has hosted regular Zoom coffee and chat sessions. I hope however that by the time you read this article we will have started to think about hosting a proper tea after Pesach in the Mark Lewis Hall.

Although by the time you read this report Purim would have been and gone, at the time of writing the committee was discussing what activities we would be able to put on. The distribution of mishlach manot to the most vulnerable of our members and the recently bereaved would have taken place irrespective of any restrictions of social activities and in addition I suspect that some form of Zoom activity will also have taken place.

So what of the future?

Obviously future planning is very much dependent upon when we can begin to socialise in person or have to continue by way of Zoom meetings and events, so with this in mind as a committee we are planning for both eventualities.

Various coffee and chat groups will no doubt continue by Zoom until such time as restrictions are lifted; we are starting to plan events centred around Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah and I suspect that assisting some of our more elderly or infirm members with shopping will continue and not just be dropped by the wayside once life returns to some semblance of normality.

We are however always open to ideas, so if you have any thoughts please contact Estelle in the synagogue office or speak to anyone on the committee.

It is always uplifting when you realise that the help given by our volunteers is appreciated, whether it be by a letter or email of thanks received in the office or by someone special - albeit all our volunteers are special - being recognised in the wider community.

As most of our members know, when it comes to pastoral matters Reverend Newman is in a league of his own. However his work also extends into the wider community and in October this was recognised by BHRUT (Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Trust) when he was awarded a certificate for his essential work as a Chaplain in the local hospitals. A mazal tov to Reverend Newman on this award and Baruch Hashem this should continue for many years to come.

Finally my thanks go to Reverend Newman, Iris Taylor (my vice-chair) and the committee generally for their wholehearted support during the autumn and winter months; support that I am certain will continue for many months to come.

On behalf of the committee I would wish all our members and their families a safe, happy and kosher Pesach.

Mervyn Lyndon

MAGICAL MEMORIES

By Joyce Meltzer



Every time I visit the Medway towns in Kent - as soon as Rochester Castle appears in the distance, memories come back to me, as Rochester was my birth place. I also lived in Strood and Chatham, other Medway towns situated right next to each other and a few minutes' drive to each.

Our family belonged to Chatham Memorial Synagogue, a mid-Victorian building - unique in Britain with a burial ground behind. My paternal grandparents are buried there. Some of the gravestones are rather ancient, dating back to the 17th century. The synagogue has been re-modernised now.

We were a small, close-knit community of about 40 families. There was a weekly Hebrew class of up to twelve children. We had no minister, so our Hebrew teacher took services. The synagogue was near to Chatham Dockyards, so when ships came in carrying Jewish sailors, they always made their way to the shul. They certainly looked smart in their national uniforms. Some of them couldn't speak English very well, but once a few words of Yiddish were spoken to them, they felt very much at home. My mother used to invite the sailors for meals. They were so pleased to be with welcoming Jewish families, having been at sea for quite some time.

My school was minutes from Rochester Castle, so playing in the Castle grounds and going in the Castle was part of my life. I was the only Jewish pupil in the school but we had a Jewish

upbringing in our home.

Charles Dickens and his family lived in Chatham and many of the characters in his novels are based on real life Chatham people. (Not me, of course!) Each year in Rochester there is a Dickens Festival where one can mingle with people in streets dressed in period costume and watch the characters come to life.

Chatham Dockyards closed in 1984. It reopened a year later to the public and is now called 'The Historic Dockyards'. Over four hundred years of British naval history is on view here at the birthplace of Britain's fighting ships.

Rochester Castle is one of the finest examples of Norman architecture. This Medway landmark has one of the tallest Keeps, measuring 113 feet high.

There is one thing special about a memory - it lasts for ever.

JUST ONE SMALL STEP FOR A SHEPHERD...

In honour of the upcoming Lag B'Omer, let's take a look at the astounding personality of the great Rabbi Akiva, of whom it is said, "his name travels from one end of the world to the other".

At forty years old, he's a simple, unlearned shepherd. One day he found himself contemplating the steady drip, drip as water gently splashed on to the rock below. He saw that a hollow had been eroded into the rock's surface. And he realised that if the soft water could bore into the hard rock, most certainly would the fiery Torah penetrate his sensitive Jewish soul.

Akiva abandoned his shepherding, starting afresh in a new world he knew nothing about. He had to join the schoolchildren as they learnt the letters of the Alef-Beis for the first time, so little was his knowledge.

Yet Akiva persisted, year after year, until eventually he was the proud leader of 24,000 Torah students.

However, our story doesn't end here. Rabbi Akiva's students were not according each other the respect that is appropriate for a Torah scholar, and the Heavenly decree was that they all would die.

And so it was, and the world was left desolate. But our Rabbi Akiva, he was down but not out. Despite the immense tragedy that had befallen him, he realised that the only hope would be to pick up the pieces and carry on.

So, at eighty years old, having lost so much, once again he started afresh, teaching all he knew to five new students. And not in vain were his efforts, as the Talmud declares about this, "They alone upheld the Torah at that time".

This was Rabbi Akiva - a person of unbroken determination, a person who looked at what he still had and saw how far he could go with it.

Yosef Cohen
Grandson of Joyce Meltzer
Yosef Cohen is studying in the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem

A SECOND CHANCE

By Philippa Stanton

The problem with lockdown is that the days seem to mould into each other - one is not sure where one is, and what day it is. I receive a lot of information via email of what talks etc I can watch/listen to by Zoom, but quite often I find I have mistaken the date or time and missed something I really wanted to hear.

The United Synagogue publicised an interesting talk by Professor David Latchman, who I met many years ago, and I intended to click on to it - but unfortunately I was too late to see it! Or was I?

I always read "You and US" to keep up to date with what is happening in the communities - and was delighted to find that Richard Verber was offering me a second chance to see/hear "The US - 150 Years of Service" on the USTV!

I am not a regular TV fan - I do not own a TV set and the last time I watched television, I believe, was in Israel some years ago! However, I followed all the instructions, and watched the talk on my computer! It was a revelation - I found out a lot about the founding of the United Synagogue, and thoroughly enjoyed it! What is more, I found that I could click on to other talks that I had missed!

Congratulations to the US - I hope they continue with this excellent service.

OUR WELFARE MINISTER

As you may be aware, Lorraine Silver resigned as co-chair of the Welfare Committee last November, and I would like to thank her for the sterling work she did, not only for the Welfare Committee but for the community in general. I wish her and Michael well and look forward to seeing them in shul once things return to normal.

I am delighted that Mervyn Lyndon has taken on the job as chairman and is ably assisted by Iris Taylor as vice-chair, together with all members of the Welfare Committee who are doing an outstanding job during these difficult and trying times.

We are a very busy committee and are very lucky to have a large number of volunteers working for the committee, making telephone calls and doing shopping for people who need help. All ages are covered, and this has been highly successful.

We celebrated Chanukah on Zoom which covered various houses and sheltered accommodation on Monday when we had happy hour and a time to chat; and on Tuesday we covered Vi and John Rubens and other houses in the area. This was an exceptionally successful event and very well received.

I have initiated a very successful "Tea and Chat with Rev Newman" on Tuesday afternoon and was delighted to welcome over twenty members to these sessions. We have had several successful speakers, including Toast Master Howard Robbins and Elkan Levy, who gave an excellent talk on the Small Communities. After Pesach, we hope to welcome Judge Martyn Zaidman to our "Chat" which will be in the evening!

I was delighted to receive a special certificate from the BHR University Hospital Trust for my work as Jewish Hospital Chaplain to local hospitals - and attended a highly successful evening on Zoom from Southport together with St Anne's and Cranbrook United Synagogues on December 2, 2020, when I was interviewed on receiving the hospital award. My thanks to Mrs Gillian Moonman, chair of the Southport Synagogue, for her hard work in organising the evening.

I would like to thank Mervyn, Iris and Claire, together with Mike Callaghan and Malcolm Nathan and members of the executive and administration, who also work tirelessly for the community at a very high standard. Unfortunately there have been a large number of bereavements over the past twelve months, and my especial thanks go to Harold Marco, who has been a tower of strength to the community, helping with arrangements and sorting things out.

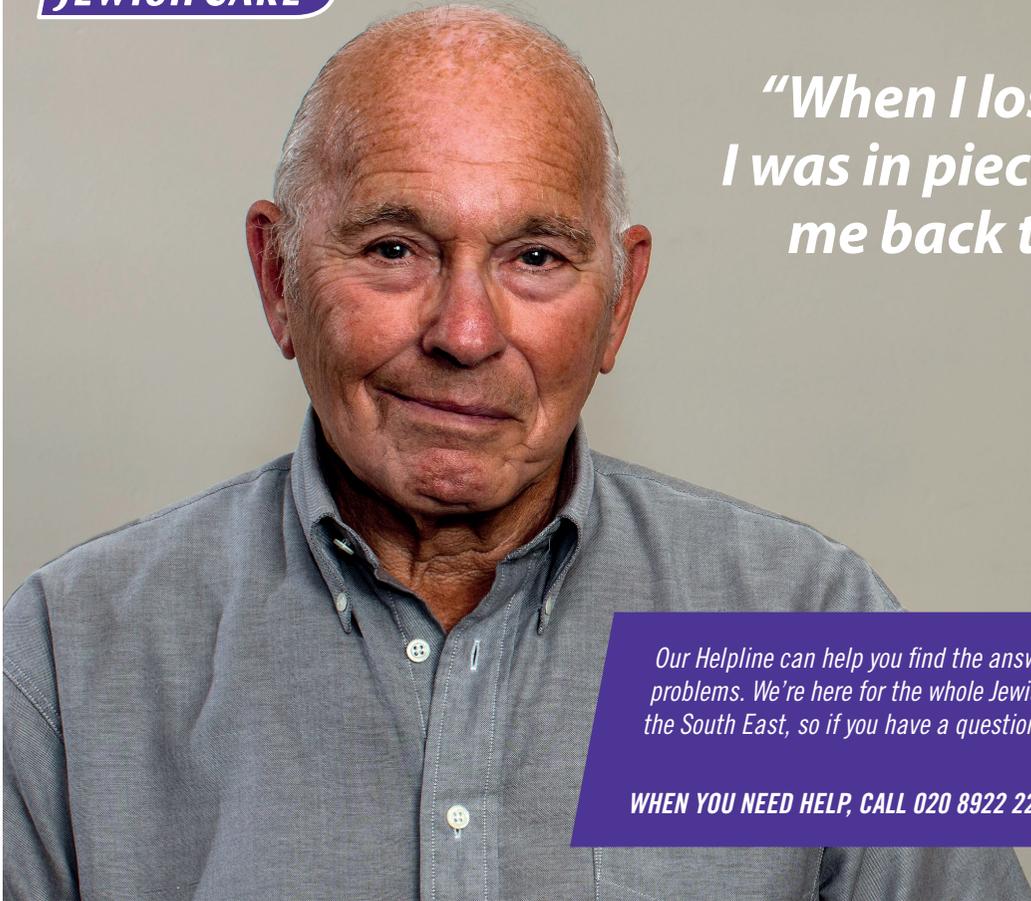
I would also like to thank my dear wife Gillian for all her help and support over the years, together with all our children and grandchildren, as without them I could not have performed my duties so well.

I would like to wish our community a happy and kosher Pesach and may we all continue going from strength to strength.

Reverend Gary Newman

Stanley, support group member

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FUND RAISING CAN BE FUN

By Philippa Stanton

One of the things I miss most during the lockdown is not being involved in anything or meeting anyone socially.

Before moving to Newbury Park, I was a member of Hemel Hempstead Synagogue, which met and held its shul services in Jewish Care's Rosetta House. Every year in June, Jewish Care held an annual Garden Fete in its grounds to raise money for the Houses, and for several years in the early 1980's my sister Linda and I ran the Big Raffle Stall at the fete. Thousands of raffle tickets were sent out by the committee long before the fete, and most were folded and placed in the drum before we arrived. My job was to canvass any likely visitors and cajole them into buying tickets on the day. Luckily this was not too difficult and we made several hundreds of pounds. A number of 'ticket sellers' came to our stall and tried to hand us the money they had collected and had to be redirected to the office inside, where the treasurer was keeping close watch on the 'takings'. We were left with a vast number of tickets to fold and include in the drum - but usually had a couple of elderly volunteers to help. As part of the team, they sat next to the stall quietly chatting together and folding tickets, and were entitled to free tea and cake with the rest of the workers!

A lot of the visitors came to see relatives at the Homes and they were very willing to spend their money. There were also a good number of visitors from Hemel Hempstead and surrounding areas - it was often the only light entertainment available on a Sunday afternoon to which people could take their children.

The tables were laid out in the garden, and our normal place was next to the children's Hoopla Stall! Everyone who has been to a fair knows the Hoopla - you buy three hoops from a grim-faced man, stand well away from the stall and have to get the hoop completely round the prize and its stand to win anything! But this was a Jewish Fete - the Hoopla was run by a young lad who had his own ideas! On one occasion, a young man brought his toddler to play - he was given a place almost immediately in front of a 'stand' and handed his three hoops. The toddler tried to get a hoop over the stand, but missed every time. His father started to commiserate with him when the young lad running the stall came up - he pointed to one of the hoops which (he said) was just touching the stand and handed the toddler his gift of a small packet of sweets. No-one went away empty-handed - the sweets had been donated and every child won something!

One summer was extremely hot and someone had donated a supply of ice-cream which was kept in a small fridge in the shade just behind our stand. One visitor bought ice-creams for his three children, and at the same time insisted on buying ice-creams for my sister and me. Another small child looked enviously at us all and was promptly bought an ice-cream as well! After all, this was a Jewish Fete!

When I moved to Newbury Park, I still heard from my friends in Hemel Hempstead and continued to return for the fete at their request. In June 1995, I remember that Linda and I took three hours, five trains and two buses to take up the Raffle Stand at Rosetta House! But it was worth-while - it was great fun meeting once-a-year friends and being part of the action! Things were easier on the way back as we were given a lift to Edgware and took the tube home! The same 'young lad' was

still running the Hoopla - but growing up fast! As well as helping out at the Jewish Care fetes, in November 1985 I became part of the Joint Israel Appeal [JIA] Fund-raising Committee at Newbury Park Shul. We met on Monday evenings and "knocked on doors" to raise funds. As well as raising a lot of money for Israel, I gradually began to get involved with the shul and when the United Synagogue welcomed Ladies on to the Board of Management, I became one of the first ladies to be a Board Member for Newbury Park Synagogue.

Although we began our JIA fund-raising by visiting people's houses, in 1995 I spent most of Sunday 21 May canvassing over the telephone at Balfour House, raising funds



to help Jewish families escape from the horrors of Chechnya. All in all we collected over £200,000 during that Sunday and thanks to all the generous donors and hardworking canvassers, the JIA were able to sponsor the special Jewish Agency flight on May 16 which carried fifty Jewish people, including twenty children, out of war-torn Chechnya to Israel.

As a canvasser for the JIA (later the UJIA) I was invited to join other donors on visits to Israel where we were able to see "where the money went". On one wonderful occasion, in 1991, we visited a quiet part of the country outside Budapest which had been designated a "JIA customs area", where we met with Jewish families and individuals who had fled from Russia and were going to Israel. We later flew on the same plane and once they were well on their way to Israel, there was singing and dancing in the aisles! Fortunately it was a special El Al flight!

Meanwhile, back at Newbury Park Synagogue, I joined a fund-raising committee and for many years we put on several exciting events, including a Klezmer evening and the End of Year Dinner Dances, which raised a lot of money for the shul and were most enjoyable, both to attend and to organise! We eventually handed the fund raising on to Elizabeth Levison and her committee, who continued to raise a lot of money for the shul.

In 1995 I became Editor of our shul magazine and my sister Linda and I wrote many articles about our visits to Israel - mostly with the JIA. During the lockdown, I have been looking through the old editions of the magazine and recalling what a wonderful time I had, visiting different countries, meeting new people and making lots of friends in different walks of life - as well as raising much needed funds for charity. On the whole, I have found that raising funds can be fun.

One thing I would dearly like to know: is the "young lad" who ran the Hoopla Stall for Jewish Care back in the 1980's still involved in fund raising?

SQUARE EYES

By Hilary Segall

How many times did your parents say that to you if you sat and watched too much TV? Well, in these extraordinary times we can only say thank goodness for TV, Zoom, Face-time, WhatsApp video calls, etc! Without this technology where would be?

So as a nod to the TV and other online platforms a round-up of all those amazing, interesting things we logged on to, viewed from the comfort of our settee, office or kitchen chair!

Every November the UK Jewish Film Festival invites us to view Jewish and Israeli films from around the world; normally we would see around seven to eight films, usually at the Phoenix in East Finchley, Everyman in Muswell Hill, JW3 in Finchley and if we're lucky enough South Woodford! But of course this year has been a different kettle of fish – so we scanned the programme, bought a pass for £35 and watched, from the comfort of our own home, some good, some terrible and some genuinely thought-provoking films.

Highly recommended were: **Black Mercedes** (a film noir), set in war-torn 1940s Warsaw, it's a unique whodunit murder mystery which will keep you guessing until the end; **Breaking Bread**, a delicious documentary following a group of Palestinian and Israeli chefs taking part in a unique food festival in the mixed city of Haifa. A wonderfully feel-good and extremely appetising film with a clear message: Arabs and Jews should unite over their love of food rather than fighting over politics and territory.

Robert particularly liked **Children of the Inquisition**: narrated from an American point of view, it tells the story of one lady in particular, who could trace her roots back to Spain in the late fifteenth century and where one of her ancestors ended up being the bishop of Segovia. **Honeymoon**, the closing night gala, had us both in stitches – arriving at the hotel after the wedding, things start to go wrong! With night-time scenes of Jerusalem, bizarre encounters with ex-partners, the groom's parents and a robot vacuum cleaner, this will keep you smiling – perfect for now! And the terrible ones: **Blumenthal**, a comedy which failed even to make us smile and a documentary, **Dr Miami**, which had us walking out of the office in despair! With an absolute plethora of online documentaries, virtual tours round the National Gallery, Royal Academy, the opportunity of watching the National Theatre and lectures from around the globe, it's not surprising that Square Eyes is a perfect aphorism! Plus all the offerings from Netflix; the wonderful **Queen's Gambit** and the less wonderful **The Crown**, to all sorts of films and series both on terrestrial TV and other platforms, you could have spent the whole of lock-down in front of the telly!

All of this without even mentioning all the reading that has been done! Elsewhere Ruth Lyndon has reviewed some of the books she has read; it seems we have both been keeping Waterstones afloat!

Well, in the first half of lock-down I finished the Hilary Mantel trilogy about Cromwell, **The Mirror and the Light** – an

excellent book with so much historical detail and written as though you were present and able to feel the madness of King Henry VIII's court; another monster read was the latest offering from Robert Galbraith (aka J K Rowling), **Troubled Blood**, the fifth in the Cormoran Strike series, which saw Rowling being demonised on Twitter for her views on transgender people. That aside, the writing is superb and nothing in the book feels superfluous. Ruth mentioned Donna Leon and her detective novels set in Venice – heavenly! The interplay between Commissario Brunetti and his wife Paola, the daughter of a count and the meals they eat and their discussions about life and love make you long for a trip to Venice and all its dark alleyways and hidden campi.

Another book which kept me enthralled was **The Architect's Apprentice** by Elif Shafak, set in 16th Istanbul and centred on the court and the menagerie. This book kept appearing on Waterstone's website as one I might like to read so I took the plunge, bought it, along with **The Beekeeper of Aleppo** (yet to read), and several others and it kept me hooked from start to finish, learning about architecture and life in multi-cultural Istanbul on the way.

Both Robert and I enjoy spy fiction and Stella Rimington, former Director General of MI5, writes with great authenticity and plenty of intrigue to keep you guessing. **Rip Tide** is next on the list after a really poignant novel by Tracy Chevalier: **A Single Thread**. This is my current read and I am so enjoying this novel, set in the aftermath of World War I when the protagonist, Violet Speedwell, is learning to live her life as a single woman in the 30s, having lost both a brother and her fiancé in the Great War. It is incredibly descriptive - one feels totally a part of the narrative; her description of the Hampshire countryside and the work of the cathedral embroiderers is simply beautiful. It's a sad indictment on the way women, especially single women, were treated between the wars.

And there are more! If you enjoy crime try **PD James** with her clever plots and wonderful descriptions of her detective, Adam Dalgliesh, played so memorably by Roy Marsden amidst the wonderful Norfolk countryside. **Victoria Hislop** was one that Ruth mentioned. I love her books, particularly the Greek-themed novels, but all are equally interesting with historical knowledge that you know something about but which explains it in greater detail. Again, incredibly descriptive and a book that makes you feel a part of the story. There are all the historical **Philippa Gregory** novels set in the Tudor court and now her new series **Tidelands**, set in Sussex in 1648, plum in the middle of the Interregnum. And if you really want a very different read try the late **Philip Kerr**, who wrote a series of novels about a Berlin detective, Bernie Gunther, who gets himself into some very interesting situations! I shall say no more in case I spoil it for you!

So, over to you – if lock-down continues who knows how many more gems we will read in the coming months?

We wish a hearty Mazel Tov to Jeffrey Leader who has been awarded the MBE in the Queens Birthday Honours List. The following tribute appeared in the Essex Jewish News:

JEFFREY LEADER, MBE

By Manny Robinson

Warm tributes have been paid to Jeffrey Leader on his being awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Mr Leader, 73, who lives in Buckhurst Hill and is a member of Cranbrook United Synagogue, told the Essex Jewish News that he was "absolutely surprised, delighted and 'honoured'" by the award which has been given for services to general education and Jewish education, including running Pikuach, the Board of Deputies Jewish schools inspection service.

He added that the tributes, many from former pupils that had appeared on social media had "moved me more than getting the award."

One pupil wrote on Facebook: "Sometimes you are lucky. You get a teacher who is inspirational, creative, kind, exceptionally intelligent and just born to do the job. Jeffrey Leader was one of the above. From his Woody drawings to the way he made learning so much fun, his beyond brilliant oratory skills. He made going to shul so much fun and taught us so well that most of us could take a service ourselves. He was such a hero to so many he taught for so many reasons. Mr Leader is an absolute rock star."

Board of Deputies president Marie van der Zyl said: "This is a fitting tribute to Jeffrey whose work on Pikuach has created an inspection service which is widely admired and ensures religious education teaching at Jewish schools is rigorously tested. We are very proud of his achievements."

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mervis said in a recent speech that Jeffrey 'was a legend and trailblazer in the world of Jewish education.'

Jeffrey Leader also led many synagogue services at Beehive Lane. "I was always known as the 'second chazan'" he said. "I am not in the same class as some of the recognized chazanim but I am pleased to say that I can hold a tune."

His roles have included running the services at the former Ilford United Synagogue in Beehive Lane (now Cranbrook United) and was a teacher at Ilford Jewish Primary School but was sacked after going to Israel at the outbreak of the Yom Kippur war.

"The head teacher at the school had a very Victorian attitude to life and couldn't understand me with my Cavalier approach and long hair" he said.

His roles have included headship of a London Jewish primary school, directorship of the Agency for Jewish Education, initiating Jewish leadership programmes in partnership with Bar Ilan University, leading Ofsted inspections and creating courses for Jewish Studies teachers leading to qualified teacher status in collaboration with Roehampton and Hertfordshire Universities. He is currently supporting student teachers at Hertfordshire University. Jeffrey was told he had been awarded the MBE in June. "I was told not to say anything to anybody," he said. "Another letter came in October and I was then able to tell my family and friends."

Because of coronavirus it is not known when he will go to Buckingham Palace to receive his award.



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RESEARCHING MY FAMILY TREE

By Lisa Mina

In June, Lorraine Silver led a Zoom session on tracing your family tree. She spoke about her own journey: websites she had researched, libraries she had visited, knowledge she had learnt from a lot of hard work and visits to other countries. This session really inspired me and I decided I would love to research my family tree and also pass on to my girls some truly amazing stories of our family history that can get lost when people pass away.

I first started off by speaking to my parents and my in-laws. I then started visiting websites that provide information for free, such as freebmd.org.uk and jewishgen.org, as I was also worried I wouldn't find out much and didn't want to spend a fortune and have nothing to show for it. I guess I was a bit sceptical and thought I wouldn't find much to begin with and that this project would take me years before having substantial information or old photos.

I was researching the Rosenberg family and in particular Harry Rosenberg, who was my great-grandfather. My mum told me that Rosenberg was like the English equivalent of Smith and Harry the equivalent of John. I doubted it was easy to find the right John Smith, but luckily for me, I managed to find my Harry Rosenberg. I knew roughly when he was born, the year he died (1945) and his name. Only one search result appeared – it was him! The result on Jewish deaths showed where he died and his last place of residence was 32 Hughes Mansions, Stepney, London. I was intrigued to see the place where he and his family lived. I did a Google search on their address, expecting to see a Google map location, but instead I saw lots of news articles. I clicked on one. Hughes Mansions was hit by the last of Hitler's rockets that fell on London. 134 people died. I was shocked that my family was part of something that was a poignant part of history but also that it was an extremely sad occasion.

One of Harry's children came up in my search online. She lived with him at 32 Hughes Mansions and was married to a Leading Aircraftman (LAC) in the Royal Air Force (RAF). I then searched for him on JewishGen. It confirmed that he was the spouse, but then my heart broke as it showed me that they also had a child, who had died at the very young age of two on the same date, in the bomb that had hit their home. I found it so amazing that I had found out this information and decided to share it with a Jewish Essex group on Facebook. The intention was to find out if anyone else was tracing their family tree, if they had relatives at Hughes Mansions or even, in the rarest possibility, that they maybe knew someone who had a memory of my family. I could not believe it when I got an instant reply... a possible relative! We sent each other a few messages and we were definitely talking about the

same family. We exchanged phone numbers. Another one of her relatives contacted me and said she knew more and had photos. I phoned each of them and had amazing conversations. I had my pen and paper to hand and was hurriedly making notes, which I could add to my PowerPoint presentation of my family tree. The lady who had the photos then sent them to me. This was my two-year old cousin who sadly died in that bomb.

We have said we would keep in touch. We want to visit the cemeteries together to pay our respects, as she had never been to their graves. She said she would send me more photos. I promised I would show her my family tree project and all my findings that relate to her as well. I feel that I was really lucky in my first week of research to find living relatives I didn't know about but it just shows you how amazing the internet and social media can be.

I hope this stories inspires others too!

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RAV KOOK IN ENGLAND 1916-1919

Part I - The Clash with the Chief Rabbi

This is the first of two articles based on one bearing the same title written by Rabbi Alexander Carlebach in a Torah journal over forty years ago. The article dealt with the three and a half short but fateful years when an East-European Rabbi from Eretz Yisrael was transplanted into the strange (to him) world of London and Anglo-Jewry. He was Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Ha'Kohen Kook, later the Chief Rabbi of Mandatory Palestine (1921-1935) and was, without doubt, one of the most influential rabbis of the 20th century. He is best known for his writings on both philosophical and halachic issues which are still being published and are studied by thousands of Yeshiva students and laymen alike to this day. Much can be learnt from this period spent by him in London dealing with the problem of Jewish soldiers fighting a, so to speak, non-Jewish war and his involvement in the process of obtaining the Balfour Declaration, which, please G-d, will be the subject of the second article. Apart from Rabbi Carlebach's piece I have referred to other biographies of Rav Kook, including those published by Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriya and Jacob Agus. However, this material is often hagiographical and does some injustice to Rav Kook's main 'opponent' of those years, Chief Rabbi Hertz.

In the summer of 1914 Rav Kook, Rabbi of Jaffa and the colonies, left his beloved Holy Land to attend the 2nd convention of Agudat Yisrael in Frankfurt. It's surprising that someone like Rav Kook, whose religious-nationalist views were known, would have been invited to such a convention, however at the time, the anti-Zionist line had not yet developed within the Aguda and Rav Kook hoped to exert some moderating influence. He also hoped that more orthodox Jews would make aliya to help with the spiritual building of the land. The convention never started. On July 28 the Great War broke out and not only was the Rav prevented from returning to Jaffa, as a Russian citizen, he was arrested and interned by the Germans as an enemy alien, later with help from the local Jewish community he and his wife were allowed to proceed to Switzerland.

After spending just over a year as a guest in the home of Avraham Kimchi in the little town of St. Gallen he received an invitation from a Mr. B.L. Deichovsky, president of the Machzike Hadas congregation in the East End of London, to serve as their Rabbi. According to the correspondence published in Rav Kook's collected letters the Rav asked Deichovsky, also known as Dr. Bernard Homa, whether his nomination was unanimous within the M.H. and what duties he would have. He stipulated that he would not be involved in communal controversies and that his position would be temporary until he would be able to return to Israel. He also asked Deichovsky regarding the attitude of the Chief Rabbi, Dr. J.H. Hertz, towards his appointment as well as that of Rabbi Dr. Meir Jung of the Federation. Dr. Jung later sent him a congratulatory telegram and he also received a warm letter from Rabbi Dr. Victor Schonfeld of the Adass Yisroel.

Rav Kook and his Rebbetzen arrived in England in January 1916. By then he had received a letter of welcome from Rabbi Dr. Hertz including his recently published 'Book of Jewish Thoughts' which like the 'Hertz Chumash' contains also the thoughts of non-Jewish thinkers and one wonders what Rav Kook did with it.

They spent a few weeks in North London before settling down in Princelet Street, not far from the Machzike Hadas. The large Georgian building on the corner of Fournier Street and Brick Lane reflects the history of the area. Originally built in 1742 as a church called La Neuve Eglise by the Huguenots, fleeing religious persecution in France, it later became a Methodist chapel. In 1897 Jews who had fled from Russia converted it into the Spitalfields Great Synagogue - the Machzike Hadas - and in the 1970's, when the M.H. congregation moved to new premises in Golders Green, it became the Brick Lane mosque for the Bangladeshi community.

Although the weekly Jewish World referred to the new Rav as 'Rabbi Dr. Kook', he couldn't even speak English let alone have an academic qualification. This is because he came from the Lithuanian Yeshiva world where, to say that secular studies were frowned upon would be a gross understatement. 'Rabbi Doctors' were considered 'treif' i.e. a Rabbi who constantly needs a doctor by his side must have something wrong with him! As the M.H. congregants were mainly orthodox immigrants Rav Kook didn't need to know much English. There were no weekly sermons customary in the anglicized synagogues and the few drashas that he gave on Shabbat Shuva and Shabbat Ha'Gadol were delivered in Yiddish. Rabbi Dr. S.M. Lehrman, who was then a young yeshiva student gave the Rav lessons in English, the rest he acquired by reading the Bible in English. Many years later Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook told his students in Jerusalem that his father had learned English by reading Rodkinson's translation of the Talmud which, like the Bible, he also knew by heart!

Rav Kook had a secretary called Shimon Glicenstein, who also acted as an interpreter when he had to appear before the authorities. One such occasion was when the Rav was summoned to Commercial Street police station. His readiness to write recommendations for those claiming to be rabbis, ministers or yeshiva students in order to exempt them from military service came to the notice of the local police. The summons arrived on Saturday afternoon but he was allowed to come to the police station later that evening after Shabbat. Glicenstein was present during the very polite but strained conversation acting as interpreter. The police officer claimed that the rabbi, as a foreigner, was undermining the war effort however, Rav Kook was non-apologetic and explained that he considered it his duty to help scholars and Talmud students with their army exemptions. The policeman gave him a strict warning to stop issuing the recommendations but he was unimpressed and continued his practice almost immediately.

With the introduction of compulsory military service in Britain for the first time a conflict evolved between the official Rabbinate and Rav Kook and his peers. Clergy of all denominations were exempt as were theological students; however the terms for exemption were a bit more complicated for the Jewish community. Rabbis and ministers were, of course, 'clergy' but what about a Ba'al Koreh, a shammas or unofficial rabbis in smaller shuls and shtibles? Were 'Yeshiva Bochurs' theological students? Furthermore, to what extent was the difficulty of maintaining religious observance a ground for exemption. It was almost impossible to observe Shabbat and Kashrut in the army. The soldiers had to shave with razors and the uniforms were made

of sha'atnez - a mixture of wool and linen prohibited by the Torah. Kohanim could be exposed to dead bodies. Chief Rabbi Hertz, who could not be expected to reach any other conclusion, stated from the outset that religion and its observance could not serve as an excuse for not serving in the army of a country at war. The Church would have called this a "dispensation" where, for example, the Pope enjoys wide powers of dispensation from canon law. Often during war rabbis are more lenient in their decisions than they would be in peacetime but there are certainly no blanket dispensations. Even if there was a chief-rabbinical "dispensation" it would have been ignored by the observant Jews while the non-observant majority didn't require it as they did as they pleased. Rav Kook felt that he was saving Orthodox Judaism by issuing recommendations for exemption as can be seen by his rather ambitious plan to reprint the Talmud in England in 1917. The plan, which remained abortive, was born out of the fear that the East European sources for such books might not survive the war. Almost all the Yeshivas in Europe were forced to close as the war raged around them and therefore, it seems the Rav decided that he had to save the young orthodox Jews of England. He argued in a letter to the Chief Rabbi, who was backed by Dayan Chaikin, that any religious compulsion should be abhorrent to the democratic and liberal character of Great Britain. Furthermore, the studies and very religious conduct of Torah students were as essential to success in war as any military effort. This last argument is still used in Israel today by Charedim to justify the exemption of Yeshiva students from military service. They like to quote Rav Kook on this but we cannot compare a war fought by Jews to defend their homeland (or for that matter the war against the Nazis) with WWI, a war between the Allied and Central Powers. Another issue (incidentally not mentioned by the biographers but must have troubled Rav Kook) was the possibility of Jews killing fellow Jews. 100,000 Jews served in the German army in WWI (12,000 of them were killed in action and 18,000 received the Iron Cross). It wasn't just Tommies and Gerries shooting each other across the trenches it was also Abies and Izzies!

He also defended the young immigrant, mainly secular, Jews from Russia who, as allied nationals resident in Britain, could not be conscripted into His Majesty's Armed Forces but were expected to volunteer. However, as refugees from the violent pogroms they were loath to fight either with or as allies of Russia and many of them took the vacant jobs of the British boys serving at the front. In the pages of the Daily Mail, Jews were accused of lack of patriotism and of enjoying a parasitical 'good life' (however good that could have been in the slums of the East End!) while others fought and died. It was no use arguing that they were contributing to the war effort by their work on the home front. Under growing pressure from public opinion Parliament passed a law which gave the Russian nationals a choice - either join the British army or be sent back to Russia. Rav Kook pleaded in his letters to the Chief Rabbi and the Home Secretary, the minister responsible for such matters, (who was ironically a Jew, Herbert Samuel later to become High Commissioner for Palestine) that this alternative horrified Russian Jews since they knew that a fate much worse than army service awaited them if they returned to the hated country from where they had escaped by the skin of their teeth. Furthermore, he argued that most of them had very little English and their religious convictions and habits would make their life in the army a misery. We have no way of knowing how many young Jews were 'saved' by Rav Kook (I would guess at around a hundred) certainly not thousands, because ultimately, British Jews including the Russian refugees had a very high rate of participation with 41,000 serving out of a total population of only 280,000. Casualty rates were also very high. Out of 1,230 former pupils of the JFS who served 240 lost their lives.

An incident that was recorded by Glicenstein in his diary in 1916 reflects the deep abyss that existed between the Chief Rabbi and Rav Kook. A delegation from Manchester arrived at

Rav Kook's home on erev Yom Kippur requesting help for a Jewish refugee. A British court had decided to extradite him the next morning to Russia where he had already been sentenced to death for desertion. Even though the Rav was about to take his fast he got into the cab with the delegation and headed for the Chief Rabbi's residence. Rabbi Hertz thought they had come to receive his greetings before the Holy Day and proceeded to bestow upon them a very hearty blessing, but Rav Kook interrupted and explaining the situation added that as Chief Rabbi he could try to stop the extradition and thereby save a Jewish soul. However, Rabbi Hertz refused by quoting the Talmudic dictum 'Dina D'Malchuta Dina' i.e. he was bound by "the Law of the Land". In a last effort to convince the Chief Rabbi, Rav Kook cried out "How can you not try to save a fellow Jew from hanging?" but they left Hamilton Terrace without any commitment from Rabbi Hertz. In the end the Jewish refugee had a miraculous escape. That night due to a heavy aerial attack by the Germans the prisoner could not be taken to the docks and the ship left without him. While waiting for the next ship to Odessa a new certificate was handed in to the immigration authorities with Rav Kook's signature and the prisoner was set free.

In 1917, Ze'ev Jabotinsky (Menachem Begin's mentor) arrived in London together with Lt. Colonel Patterson and started pressing the Government to set up a Jewish Legion to fight with General Allenby on the Palestine front. Patterson, an Irish Protestant, had commanded the Zion Mule Corps at Gallipoli and wrote in his book: "Many of the Zionists whom I thought somewhat lacking in courage showed themselves fearless to a degree when under heavy fire..." The War Office, after much hesitation, announced its approval which provoked outrage amongst the secular Jewish anti-Zionists and even some dissension in the Zionist leadership, who considered Jabotinsky a danger to their cause. Rav Kook heartily approved of the whole idea and was invited to visit the troops at their training camp near Plymouth. Patterson wrote: "The famous and learned Rabbi Kook of Jerusalem paid us a visit and gave the men a stirring address on their duties as Jewish soldiers." Apart from this spiritual encouragement the Rav also provided for their religious needs as can be learned from his collected letters and from a most unexpected source as David Ben-Gurion!, a volunteer in the camp who wrote to his Paula in July 1918: "Here Shabbat is observed and there are no exercises on that day apart from synagogue parade together with all the officers led by the Colonel." In Patterson's book 'With the Judaeans in the Palestine Campaign' (1922) there is a special chapter dealing with 'The Kashrut Problem' - not mentioned by Ben-Gurion.

In 1919 Rav Kook was elected Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and two years later became the first Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land. Perhaps this new 'official' position made him more sympathetic in hindsight towards Rabbi Hertz's predicament. Those war years were anomalous times and Rav Kook's position in Anglo-Jewry was anomalous as well. Here was one of the most eminent rabbis of his generation exercising his authority as he pleased in a community which had its own hierarchy with the Chief Rabbi at its head. The divergences of views that existed between the two rabbis did not lead to strife and contention because each of them recognized the special status of the other. Although Rav Kook's influence was strong it was limited to the immigrant community and never penetrated the establishment, the United Synagogue in particular. In an obituary in 1935 the Jewish Chronicle wrote "Kook... deeply impressed himself on East End Jewry" and that's not far from the truth.

Chaim Levison, Jerusalem

MEMORIES OF ST ANNE'S SHUL

By Kenneth Black

In 1952, after six years in the position, my late father, Rev. Sidney Black, left the St. Anne's shul to come to Ilford. On leaving, he and my late mother presented the shul with a Besumim (Spice) Box.



Fast forward to 1998 and my younger brother, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Black of Kenton Shul, was holidaying with my sister-in-law in the north of England. He visited the then Rabbi of St. Anne's and found that they were still using the Besumim Box. A few weeks ago he was speaking with the current Rabbi, Rabbi Bergson

(who recently joined with Rev. Newman in a Zoom entertainment evening). My brother asked Rabbi Bergson if he knew of the whereabouts of the Box. It turns out that 68 years after we left, it is still used in the shul every week.

This stirred up some memories of St. Anne's that I would like to share with you. Not everything was great - the local sports group and the Conservative Association did not admit Jews - but they did not know about Mezuzot on Jewish doorposts. Thus it was that a couple of Conservatives came to our door and began telling my mother about the "joys" of joining. She let them go on for a while and then told them that her husband was the local Jewish minister. The men said they would let us know and a few days later came a call to say that if the minister wishes to join, he may - he didn't!!!



However, most people were very friendly and not bigoted. One Shabbat my father was walking to shul in the rain. A local bus inspector stopped the bus on a bridge over the railway line for my father to get on. When my father made the excuse that he had no money on him, the inspector said that didn't matter. My father had a real job to persuade the inspector that he really wasn't getting on the bus.

One day Rev. Black needed to make around fifteen phone calls, one after the other. After the first couple of calls, the operator (remember when you had to get him to connect you) asked if there were many more and as fast as dad finished one call, the next person was there waiting to be connected. That day the shul president



wanted to speak to dad and said to the operator "You keep telling me that St. Anne's 2129 is engaged. This is very important. Please could you interrupt the call?" "St. Anne's 2129" said the operator. "That's Rev. Black's number. I couldn't interrupt him."

Perhaps my favourite memory is when I went back to St. Anne's some sixteen or eighteen years after we left. (For a long time the shul could not get a rabbi to stay for more than a couple of years, although since then they have had some fine ministers). I met one of the members whom I still remembered. We got talking and he told me they had had an Education Committee meeting the night before. "Do you know what we do when we have a problem? We say 'What would Rev. Black have done about it.'"

BRADY CLUBS MEMORIES PRESERVED IN ONLINE ARCHIVE

The Brady Club for Working Lads was established in 1896 in Durward Street, London, E1. The project was driven by Lady Rothschild and other wealthy West End Jews who wanted to improve the social quality of life and help to anglicise the East End boys, who came mainly from East European refugee families, and whose lingua franca was Yiddish. The building was situated behind Whitechapel tube station in what was then Bucks Row, before being re-named Durward Street.

In 1900 the Brady Boys Club, the only Jewish Youth Club in the country at that time, was admitted to the membership of the London Federation of Working Boys Clubs which offered the opportunity to compete in sporting activities with youth clubs across the capital; a huge step on the road to acceptance and integration. This meant that Jewish children, of Yiddish speaking refugees from the Russian Empire, Ukraine, Romania and Poland were now fully-fledged members of a London-wide youth organisation that had never previously had Jewish children in its ranks.

In 1925, Miriam Moses OBE established the Brady Girls Club, which occupied the same building until 1935 when the girls moved to a building in Hanbury Street, London, E1.

The people who came to run the clubs were drawn from mostly West End Jewish men and women, whose families had long been settled in England and who, for the most part, had been university educated. They were all volunteers and their success in 'improving' their young charges was certainly due to the willingness of the children's parents to support the project. By 1960, when the Boys Club moved from Durward Street to amalgamate with the Girls club in Hanbury Street, the average nightly attendances exceeded two hundred.

In the interim, with the support of the Jewish Youth Fund, Skeet Hill House near Orpington was purchased in 1944, which enabled young boys and girls to escape from the bombsites and debris of the East End and experience, usually for the first time, open green spaces, trees and a weekend of freedom from post war Britain.

From this beginning many thousands of young Jews, members of these two great youth clubs, ventured into the wider world buoyed by the confidence and positivity they gained from their membership of the Brady Clubs.

The Clubs remained in Hanbury Street until the mid-1970s, and then moved to North West London with the decline of the Jewish population in East London.

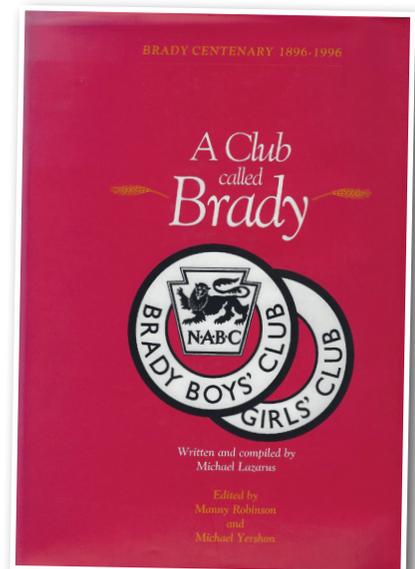
In 2016, Susan Andrews MA, Reader in Photography at the Sir John Cass Faculty at London Metropolitan University was contacted about a cache of photographs, recently re-discovered in an attic by journalist Hannah Charlton. The photographs were in various states of repair, but all were related to the members and premises of the Brady Clubs between circa 1940 to mid-1970. Susan realised that there was an historical value to the collection, but knew little about the Brady Club. She decided to organise an exhibition entitled 'Nostalgia is Not Enough' to raise some public awareness.

The exhibition was visited by old Bradians, who approached Susan to find out more about the collection and add greatly to their history. Subsequently, students, staff and old Bradians worked together to archive the photographs and record the Brady story.

The passion shown by the old Bradians, in their continued affiliation to their past community and on-going relationships with their peer group, led to the formation of the Brady Photographic Archive Committee (BPAC). This culminated in a second, larger exhibition of the photos and memorabilia in May 2018, at the London Metropolitan building in Aldgate with the support of the University, its students and particularly Susan Andrews. The BPAC obtained funding to build a website (<http://www.bradyarchive.co.uk/>), to make some of the newly found photographs and memorabilia available to the Brady diaspora around the world.

In addition to building a website, BPAC has been involved in other activities to keep the Brady name alive. In November 2019, members joined the AJEX March and Service at the Cenotaph to commemorate those former Club members who were active in the service of their country during the first and second World Wars, and subsequent engagements. After the March, Old Bradians attended a memorial service for the fallen Club members at Sandys Row Synagogue, where children from the Kinder Transport had been taken after their arrival at Liverpool Street Station. Also remembered were the one hundred and thirty-four men women and children, killed on Seder night, March 27, 1945, when a V2 bomb landed on Hughes Mansions, Vallance Road, E1. Of those killed, one hundred and twenty were Jewish and twenty-one of the children were members of the Brady Club but survivors were taken after the event. The current pandemic has meant that the annual AJEX March has had to be cancelled, but BPAC are hoping to be able to hold a memorial service around Passover 2021, if circumstance permit.

Many of the readers of this article either were members of Brady, or their parents or grandparents were members of the largest Jewish Youth Club in East London. To search for pictures and articles, view the website: <https://www.bradyarchive.co.uk>. and take advantage of joining our mailing list, to be kept informed of new addition to the archive, and our future planned activities. Alternatively, email bradpacom@gmail.com to be added to the email list.



SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

Mazel Tov

Jeffrey Leader, Director of Pikuach on receiving the MBE for services to Education.

Maurice Conway received the Legion of Honour, the highest French Order of Merit, for "helping to liberate France" in the war.

Community Welfare Minister, Reverend Gary Newman, on being awarded a Twenty Year Service Certificate for his essential work in the local hospitals for BHRUT (Barking, Havering, Redbridge University Trust).

We would like to wish Mazel Tov to all those who have celebrated an Anniversary, Birth, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, Special Birthday or other Simcha.

Mazel Tov to Elizabeth Levison on the Wedding in Israel of her youngest grand daughter, Naomi on 14th October; and on the birth of her fifteenth great grandchild, Eitan, son of her eldest grandson Elchanan, also in Israel.

Mazel Tov to Hermie and Shirley Rothman on their 70th Wedding Anniversary.

Mazel Tov to Stuart & Shelley Goldman on the birth of a grandchild and to Barbara Goldman on the birth of a great grandchild in Israel.

Condolences

We offer our condolences to all those who have suffered a bereavement this year.

Our thoughts are with you at this time of sorrow.

To the family of each of the following members:-

Renee Adler
Lily Bitton
Marion Borman
June Cohen
Laurence Cohen
Bessie Coverman
Yvonne Fox
Jeffrey Golding
Betty Grant
Alan Green

Arnold Green
Shirley Greenbaum
Michael Hart
Edith Huberman
Roma Ingram
Valerie Lang
Edward Lee
Alan Levene
Suzanne Levy
Barney Lipman

Melvyn Mack
Anne Marsh
David Miller
Dennis Moss
Andrew Persell
Iris Phillips
Yvonne Rein
Celia Rudda
Evelyn Scholar
Dr Morris Schwartz

Ralph Selmon
Linda Sherman
Helen Silton
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RONNIE MOSS



Ronnie Moss, who sadly passed away on April 21 last year, was known to members of the old Ilford Synagogue as a long-serving Financial Representative, who fought hard to keep the membership fees as low as he could. Together with his beloved wife Joan, to whom he was married for fifty-five years, he took great delight in shul affairs and shul life, but there was a lot more to Ronnie's life than many realise.

From February 1947 till October 1949 he served in the RAF in Singapore and regularly attended reunions both in the UK, Singapore and Burma.

He worked with Joan on the local JNF Committees, first at Forest Gate and then Ilford, and his children remember going door to door in Forest Gate to collect the famous Blue Boxes; but Ronnie also worked with the National JNF Committee. For many years he and Joan were active members of the committee producing the Annual Dinner and Ball and the brochure and also organised boxing events, among other things. As well as FR for Beehive Lane Ronnie was also JNF National Treasurer for many years.

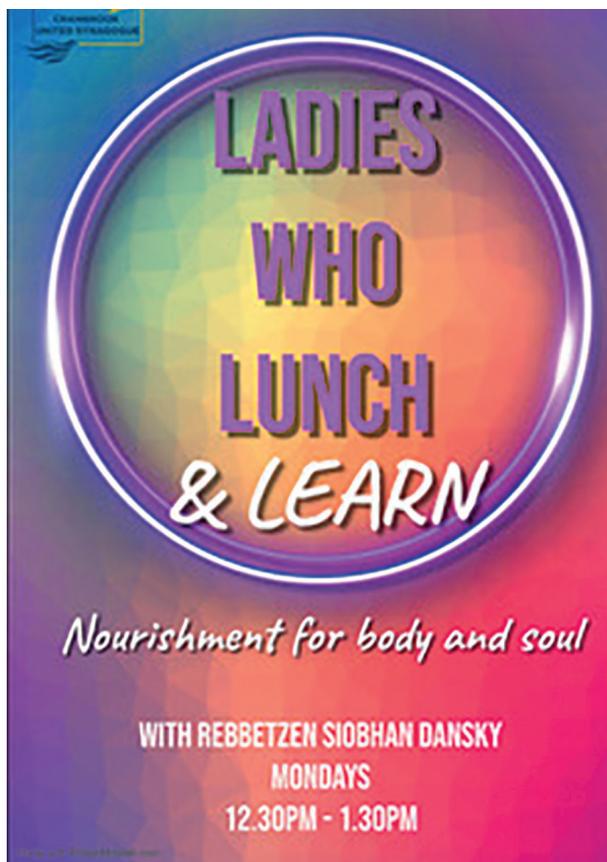
For the JNF, Ronnie worked on the Mountbatten Forest in Israel, and on a trip there, Joan became friendly with Lady Edwina Mountbatten. In later years, he would go to Israel with his close friend, Leon Schaller OBE.

His actual employment was as an accountant, at one time with Rediffusion, with its interests in television. In fact, when Sunday Night at the London Palladium had American stars, Ronnie would have to take cash to the theatre to pay them.

He also found time to be a primary school governor in nearby Wanstead.

With a number of friends, Ronnie was involved with one of the London Wards, and one year helped to organise the Lord Mayor's Show. Ronnie was made a Freeman of the City of London in 2011, although not having any sheep, he never exercised his right to drive his flock over London Bridge.

Ronnie and Joan leave a son Antony, daughter Melanie, five grandchildren and three great grandchildren. The consecration of his stone is due to take place at Waltham Abbey on April 25, 2021 at 10am.



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VIEW FROM THE LADIES GALLERY

I can't believe how this year has flown by. The dreaded P word is upon us once more! Little did anyone think that we would be unable once again to share a communal Seder with family and loved ones.

In spite of the challenges around us, the shul has endeavoured to continue working with and providing support to the community. It was with great regret that after many years of hard work and dedication to the community, Lorraine Silver, my co-women's honorary officer decided to step down from her position on the shul's executive and relinquished her role as co-chair of the Welfare Committee. She worked tirelessly on the merger of Ilford and Redbridge Synagogues, to make the creation of Cranbrook Synagogue a success. Her energy, commitment and determination will be greatly missed.

Over the last year Zoom has literally transformed our lives. This amazing technological advance has improved so many people's quality of life and been a lifeline for the many shielding. If you have a computer or internet access on your phone it has opened a world of possibilities. For my own family, the benefit of Zoom was highlighted with a Seder held with my dad's siblings. He has a sister in Paris, a sister in Sydney and a brother in Richmond with whom he hasn't been able to share a Seder for at least twenty-five years. It was a very special moment.

We have enjoyed lots of quizzes and chats with friends over the last year. I have attended Zooms on diverse subjects from a challah and babka hands-on cookery demo, a fascinating interview with the widow of the Israeli spy, Eli Cohen, a webinar on antisemitism organised by my daughter and an interesting discussion on live kidney donation talks by fascinating people all over the world. None of these would I have been able to attend in person. Most recently I attended the Holocaust Memorial Day event at The Wiener Library at which with Sir Keir Starmer gave an address, and watched The Japanese Schindler all without having to leave the house.

Amongst the many activities I organised for the community in the last year, was an Italian cookery demo with chef Silvia Nacamulli, where she prepared a delicious chicken dish and Italian inspired honey cake prior to Rosh Hashanah and a talk with JWA (Jewish Women's Aid), which sorrowfully highlighted the significant increase in domestic violence within the Jewish community over the last year of lockdowns. As the women's officer I work closely with Rebbetzen Siobhan putting programmes and events together for children and families. We worked hard with Hilary Segall, putting together the Chanukah car rally which was well supported by the community. As sadly, we were unable to have our traditional Chanukah party in person, I decided to put together a Chanukah arts & crafts pack for the children. I would like to thank all of the fantastic volunteers who helped with the extremely enjoyable doughnut making video and collating over one hundred and thirty art packs.

Every Thursday afternoon, I host a Ladies tea & chat via Zoom where we have lively debate and discussion over a cup of tea and a slice of cake, in my case a packet of chocolate biscuits or a few bars of chocolate!

It is a free-flowing conversation, and I distinctly recall one chat where subjects drifted from what's on Netflix, to the price of petrol, to the old dolls hospital that used to be in Kingsland Road, to what are we having for dinner! We have had some very interesting talks: one about growing up in Israel in 1967, a trip to Russia in the 1980s, growing up in a children's home and an insight to researching your family tree. Our chat is always engaging with lots of laughter, even if I'm too young always to understand what is being discussed, more specifically a gazunder whatever that may be! If you haven't joined us yet, why not give it a try; we'd love to see you. A flyer is sent out weekly. All you have to do is click on it.

As well as being the shul's Women's Honorary Officer, I lead the Ladies Guild, organising the Kiddushim and various other events. Even though the shul is currently closed some of us are still actively working behind the scenes. Harold Marco and I work closely on many different projects with members of the executive and invaluable support of the office staff. We are currently attending, via Zoom, a bereavement befriending course facilitated by Chesed, the welfare arm of the United Synagogue. Hopefully, by the time this article goes to print a bereavement group for our members, headed up by Rabbi Dansky will have begun.

Lockdown has been particularly difficult for many. For some it has been a time of reflection and given some of us a chance to re-evaluate our lives. Many have made a career change, whilst it has given others a chance to volunteer when they normally would not have time in their busy day-to-day lives.

My other life away from the shul, is also full. I am a qualified Reflexologist and Massage Therapist, which sadly due to lockdown I have been unable to practice for quite some time. My husband has been working at home full-time. I have a daughter at university in Paris, who is experiencing a much stricter lockdown than we are and a son studying at home full-time, who may or may not be taking his A-levels this summer. Life can be very unsettled at times. Whilst I do still venture out for a daily walk and go to the supermarket, it is not without a certain amount of trepidation. I still have quite a way to go before I am eligible for a vaccination so I continue to be cautious. I have also been volunteering for Jewish Care delivering meals on wheels for nearly ten years.

As I write this, the Covid-19 vaccination programme is being rolled out across the country. Hopefully by the summer the majority of the population will have been vaccinated and life can resume some sort of normality.

These are uncertain times. I am unsure what the months ahead will bring for us, but I sincerely hope that you will all stay safe and well. You all have a rich and diverse history and a unique story to tell. If you would like to tell your story on our Zoom Thursday chat, please get in touch via the shul office.

Best wishes
Claire Barzilai

COOKING FOR THE FESTIVALS

We hope you enjoy the following tried and tested recipes

Vegetable Curry

by Hilary Segall

Now tell me, who doesn't love a curry? All those delicious flavours mingled together, from crispy poppadums with relish, tasty veggie pakoras and samosas, all washed down with a bottle of beer, followed by loads of little vegetable dishes to savour with piquant, yellow aromatic rice, studded with cinnamon and cloves? Stop it Hilary, I'm hungry!

Well, it's really dead simple to recreate those flavours at home – all you need is time, which we have by the bucket load, lots of chopping boards and a little imagination!

My veggie curry was borne out of the fridge-clearing syndrome! Looking in the veg basket and salad drawer were some sad looking carrots, leeks, potatoes and mushrooms that really needed to be eaten up before the next Sainsbury's delivery!

I had put on a Tesco click and collect some ginger – now I don't actually know what I put in the quantity bit but when the ginger arrived... let's just say that by the time Robert had peeled and cut it into manageable pieces we ended up with over 20 portions of "knobble-sized" ginger! We froze the lot, then take out a portion, defrost it, cut it up into smaller pieces and with 3 or 4 cloves of garlic stick in in the spice grinder and blend with some water, and hey presto, you have a garlic and ginger paste, usually the basis of most curries! And you can even freeze this paste if the ginger is fresh.

So here we are, my fail-safe and very tasty Vegetable Curry.

Ingredients:

1 Butternut Squash (if very large, use half and save the other half for soup)

1 large sweet potato

Bag of baby aubergines

Box of button mushrooms

Cauliflower (Blanch this for a few minutes in boiling water)

Green beans (ditto the beans)

Carrots

Onions

And whatever other vegetable takes your fancy!

Method:

Now the above can either all be made and put into one curry or choose whatever combination you fancy and make several dishes out of them. With the squash and the sweet potato I usually peel them and cut them into chunks and roast in a tin with olive oil and some rosemary for around 30 mins in the oven. You should be able to get a knife in them but don't overcook as they will become too squashy in the curry and you need them to retain some bite.

The mushrooms you can leave whole, the aubergines should be topped and tailed and cut into rounds or chunks, same with the carrots and the cauliflower and beans should have been blanched in boiling water for a few mins.

Whichever combination you are putting them in simply heat a pan with some oil, put in the ginger and garlic paste and stir round for a couple of minutes, then add a finely diced onion and stir round. Add at least a heaped tablespoonful each of cumin, coriander and turmeric (or add as much or as little as you want) plus a good teaspoon of chilli, then add either all the vegetables, or in whatever combination you want. Stir and coat all the veg in the oil and add either water or a tin of tomatoes, cover and simmer on a low light on top of the stove or pop in the oven, gas mark 4, until the whole has reduced slightly and the veg are soft, BUT not mushy.

Serve, scattered with fresh coriander, with yellow Basmati rice, studded with a cinnamon stick and some cloves (remove before eating), and na'an bread, relish and the beer!

Enjoy!

Shavuot Recipe

by Hilary Segall

Fail-safe cheese cake recipe – works every time!!

Ingredients:

1lb curd cheese

4 ozs butter

Teacup caster sugar

Teaspoon each vanilla essence and lemon juice

4 eggs

Quarter cup of self-raising flour

10 ginger biscuits crushed

Method:

Preheat oven to Gas no. 7.

Crush biscuits in a processor and line a greased 8" push-up cake tin.

Separate eggs; Beat whites until they become soft peaks; add sugar to yolks and beat well, add curd cheese, essence, juice and butter and beat really well until a smooth mixture. Fold in flour and beat well; lastly fold in the whisked whites (at this point I add a sprinkling of cinnamon – optional).

Turn into greased cake tin and bake for 10 mins on gas no. 7, then turn down to gas no. 3 for 50mins. Once the cake has cooked and is a golden brown on top and the inserted skewer comes out clean, leave in oven to cool down with door open slightly – this will prevent the cake from cracking on the top and will ensure that it remains risen.

Ginger Chicken

by Hilary Segall

A great recipe for Seder night (or any other Festival) – can be made in advance and reheated in time for the Seder service. Serve with rice (if you are Sephardi or potatoes if you are Ashkenazi!)

1 chicken breast or bottom per person, skinned.

Clean chicken portions and pat dry. On a large piece of kitchen roll liberally sprinkled with cake meal, mixed with turmeric and ground ginger.

Dust portions on both sides and fry in hot oil until gently golden on both side (no longer than 7 mins). Place in a large roasting tin; into the hot oil add a large chopped onion, couple of cloves of garlic, grated fresh ginger (good size portion) and stir round adding the rest of the cake meal mix. Pour on litre and half of chicken stock and pour round chicken portions.

Cook in moderate oven (gas 4) for about 2 hours, to ensure that chicken is well-cooked on both sides and just before serving strew liberally with fresh coriander.

Pesach Recipe

by Philippa Stanton

When celebrating Passover at home, we always had several guests for the Seder Nights, and I found that turkey was an ideal 'meat course'. However, there was often quite a lot of turkey left over, and not wishing to waste any, I later used some of the cooked turkey pieces in a Turkey Pie. I have never tried to make pastry with matzo meal, but I used this excellent method of turning left-over turkey or chicken into a delicious Passover dish.

Quick Chicken/Turkey Pie

Ingredients:

- Approx 1 lb cooked chicken or turkey pieces
- 1 large onion, skinned and finely sliced
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 2 lb potatoes, peeled and boiled
- 1 large egg
- Salt. Ground black pepper

Method:

Heat oil in a saucepan and fry onions until transparent. Pour into a deep lightly-greased casserole or large dish and spread over the bottom of the dish. Allow to cool.

Chop cooked chicken/turkey into small pieces, making sure you remove any bones. Pile on top of the onions. Pour a little more oil on top, to moisten.

Meanwhile, put the boiled potatoes in a bowl and mash with a fork or a masher, making sure there are no lumps. Beat the egg. Pour on to the mashed potatoes, add salt and pepper and mix well. Spoon the potato mix over the chicken/turkey and spread smoothly. Run a fork over the top to make a ridged design!

Place in a hot oven Reg 5, 190°C and cook for 30/40 minutes, or until brown and bubbling. Serve hot.

MONDAYS 4-5PM

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CST wishes our whole community a safe and enjoyable Pesach

CST's work did not stop during 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. That is because antisemitism, terrorism and extremism continued, adapting to the situation as they so often seem to do. CST's work must continue, as those threatening to cause harm to our Jewish community persist.

We know that antisemitism grows at times of crisis, uncertainty and fear. There is a basic anger, but there is also a growing belief in conspiracy theories and a hunt for scapegoats. Unfortunately, that will often include us.

The value of community is most obvious when times are tough. Last Pesach, we never knew what this new Coronavirus situation had in store. The idea that, come next Pesach, family and friends must again be celebrating remotely, would have been overwhelming: worst still, would have been the thought that in many families, there would also be deep tragedy and loss. We now understand the situation, but that does not make it any easier. Yet here we are, coming together again, as best we can, how ever we can. Please know that CST is also still here. Like you, we didn't stop being who we are, working for the good of our community, our families and friends.

We work to serve you, our community. Our mission is to enable and encourage the flourishing of Jewish life in the UK, confident in the knowledge that we are there to keep it safe. This endeavour cannot happen without your cooperation and support: in fact, we depend on it.

There are lots of different ways to support CST.

You can contribute by becoming a volunteer and training in technical and physical aspects of modern-day security, ensuring that your shul and fellow congregants are as well-protected as possible.

You can report antisemitism to us when you see it.

Every report helps us to do our jobs better and to represent our community to police and government. Help us to help you, that is what we are here for.

You can donate to us. We are a charity and rely upon the generosity of our community. CST's trustees and donors give to CST as well as all manner of other charities and causes, Jewish and non-Jewish. All of this helps us to build a better Jewish, British, future together.

CST wishes you all a Chag Pesach Sameach.

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