

ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

PASSOVER ISSUE 5780/2020

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ESSEX & EAST ANGLIA

Inside your 32-page Community Newspaper

Holocaust
commemorated



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chaplains



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strong



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Coronavirus shatters community events

BY MANNY ROBINSON

COMMUNITY and religious events at Jewish organisations in Essex and beyond have been decimated - with the UK Government putting strict curbs in place on everyday life in order to tackle the spread of coronavirus.

All physical synagogue services and communal Seders have been suspended. Schools have been closed. Social clubs - including those run by JACS and the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre - have been cancelled.

Progressive communities have moved online entirely - using platforms including Zoom, Facebook Live and YouTube to broadcast Shabbat services, education classes and online get togethers. Virtual Seders are also planned.

Orthodox communities are unable to use technology during Shabbat and parts of Pesach, but are embracing streaming at all other times.

Lifecycle events including bar/batmitzvahs, weddings and baby blessings have been banned by the Government.

Funerals can still take place, although at the time of writing Liberal and Reform Judaism are not allowing mourners to attend in person and the United Synagogue were limiting to "immediate family" only

and enforcing strict social distancing. Those sitting shiva cannot have visitors.

People over 70, particularly those with respiratory problems, are most at risk of the coronavirus and have been advised to self-isolate from all social contact for at least 12 weeks.

With around 85 per cent of JACS members over the age of 70, Martin Moss of the Chigwell and Hainault branch confirmed: "We have cancelled our programme so far until after Pesach. But if the situation continues, we will have to cancel week by week unless we are told by the Government to do otherwise."

Jewish Care's Redbridge Jewish Community Centre (RJCC) has suspended all activity until further notice. Sharon Imber, programme co-ordinator at RJCC, told the Essex Jewish News: "Our priority is the safety and protection of our guests and those in our care."

Many of the most vulnerable in the Essex Jewish community live in Jewish Care and Jewish Blind & Disabled properties. Both charities have put in place a number of measures to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

Jewish Care has "taken the very difficult and painful decision" to suspend all visits to its care homes and dementia day centres, including Vi and John

Rubens House and The Dennis Centre in Redbridge and Shebson Lodge in Westcliff.

The exceptions will be for relatives visiting loved ones receiving end-of-life care and medical professionals.

In a statement, Jewish Care said: "We will do whatever we can to help facilitate phone calls, FaceTime or a Skype call with a loved one instead of a physical visit.

"We are also able to extend the offer of a number of additional services to those that this may affect. These include but are not limited to: Meals on Wheels; telephone befriending services; face to face befriending where possible and appropriate; the Jewish Care Direct helpline (open Monday-Friday 8.30am to 5pm on 0208 922 2222); and the Jewish Helpline (open Sunday-Thursday 12pm-12am and Friday 12pm-3pm on 0800 652 9249)."

Sadly, at the time of writing, a very small handful of people across four Jewish Care resources have tested positive for the coronavirus. It is not known if these are in Essex or elsewhere in the country.

The statement added: "We are being led by Public Health England on measures following the confirmed cases, including continued restricted access to the buildings. These homes will undergo an additional deep clean and will continue to take steps to ensure the highest standards of hygiene and infection control."

Jewish Blind & Disabled's tenants live in their own self-contained apartments in the charity's three buildings in Essex. JBD has advised them and their families to strictly follow all Government guidance. Communal lounges have been closed and events postponed.

The charity's chief executive, Lisa Wimborne, said: "We have no plans to shut our doors completely, we simply can't do this. Carers need to be able visit and tenants need to get shopping and supplies to them. We are however restricting who we bring into the buildings by carrying out only essential maintenance works and postponing all communal events. Volunteers have been asked not to come into our buildings but to provide telephone and online befriending instead."

Due to the high number of cancelled events, with more likely over the coming months, our regular What's On column has been suspended for this issue.

King Solomon students scoop 'Dragon's Den' award



King Solomon winners Harrison, Emily, Mia and Elisha with teacher Jordana Aaronson (centre)

BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

KANTOR King Solomon High School (KKS) students were victorious in a Dragon's Den style competition at the Jewish School Awards 2020 - winning £8,000 to help make the school more environmentally friendly.

Pupils Harrison, Emily, Mia and Elisha won for their idea of creating an 'Eco Club'

to implement positive changes to help the planet.

The four-person judging panel at the event - run by the Jewish Leadership Council's Partnerships for Jewish Schools (PaJeS) - praised the students for "an incredible, passionate and well-researched pitch embedded with Jewish values".

The prize money will help set up the Eco Club and provide every KKS classroom

with recycling bins and environmentally-friendly water purification machines.

Teacher Jordana Aaronson, who assisted the group, said: "The students worked exceptionally well as a team and represented the school and everything we stand for. I'm so proud of them and this achievement and look forward to seeing their project implemented."

A message from the editor of EJN

THIS issue was completed in the shadow of the coronavirus. Unfortunately due to so many of our distribution outlets closing, a print edition proved impossible. But we are glad you are reading this jam-packed issue online - whether via your synagogue website, the Essex Jewish Community Council or our new online platform with Issuu.

We have endeavoured to make the issue as upbeat as possible with lots of community news and photos, as well as the features and columns you have come to love.

But naturally some things may now be out of date, for example stories with details of upcoming events and charity treks that may now not be happening or interviews that were conducted earlier in the year.

Also, with our small volunteer team under the same pressures and stresses as everyone in this period of uncertainty, we have not been able to feature every story we had been sent.

Please enjoy the issue and we hope you and your loved ones are safe and well.

Chag Pesach Sameach from all of us at the Essex Jewish News.

We also had some smiles...



CHILDREN aged 4-11 from across the Essex Jewish community had a fantastic week attending Jewish Care's Redbridge Jewish Community Centre's (RJCC) half-term scheme.

ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

The Essex Jewish News is the newspaper of the Jewish community in Essex and is published by Essex Jewish News Ltd.

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Ahada Bereavement Counselling 07758 727 328	Jewish Marriage Council 020 8203 6311
Alzheimer's Society 020 8970 5770	Jewish Women's Aid 0800 591 203
Beehive Lane JACS 020 8554 0150	Moving on (Formerly Bereaved Partners Group) 020 8554 5227
Board of Deputies Information Desk 020 7543 5400	Newbury Park League of Jewish Women 020 8530 5411 or 020 8500 7832
Chabad Gants Hill addiction support 020 8554 1624	Redbridge Jewish Community Centre 020 8551 0017
Chai Cancer Care 0808 808 4567	Redbridge WIZO 020 8551 1301
Chigwell and Hainault League of Jewish Women 0790 560 5781	Resource 020 8346 4000
Chigwell and Hainault JACS 020 8551 2355	Samaritans 020 8553 9900/020 8520 9191
Citizens Advice Bureau 0870 126 4140	Southend and Westcliff JACS 01268 771978
Empathy 07765 191 067	Wanstead Jewish Literary Society 020 8505 0063
Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade 020 8989 8990	
Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service 020 8457 9710	
Jewish Blind and Disabled 020 8371 6611	
Jewish Care	

Phone numbers are correct at the time of going to press. If your contact number or the contact number of your organisation has changed, or if you would like a contact number to be included, please advise us.

But there's no room for complacency ...

IN last Chanukah's issue of the *Essex Jewish News*, your 'Comment' writer noted that, bearing in mind the General Election was scheduled for 12 December 2019, the earlier-deadlined piece could only hope and trust that, after election results became known, 47 percent of the UK's Jewish population – who had indicated they would “seriously consider” emigrating if a certain led Party were voted into power – could comfortably reassess this albeit understandable stance.

That “hope and trust” were overwhelmingly met and satisfied, as almost inevitably foreseeable in the prevailing circumstances, when the Corbyn-led Labour Party suffered a well-deserved and shattering defeat in the electoral ballot, its worst performance in several decades. And, as a consequence of course, the ‘Opposition’ leader resigned.

It would appear that antisemitism in the Labour Party – with the official ‘Enquiry’ into such by the Equality and Human Rights Commission ongoing currently – and that party's leader were significant factors in the outcome that sent the Conservative Party to the House of Commons with a huge majority of MPs. The government has affirmed that it's “working with the Jewish community to

COMMENT

stamp out anti-Jewish hatred and prejudice”.

Even the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis had felt the need to speak out publicly against the Labour Party during the election campaign. However – and although we can and should be thankful to the necessary extent regarding the General Election result – there can be no room for complacency so far as concerns antisemitism in the UK; or, indeed, in (now ‘Brexit’) Europe or even in today's world generally.

During 2019, the Community Security Trust recorded 1,805 antisemitic incidents in this country, the highest annual total ever, and 153 more than in 2018. Last year's figure for Greater London stands at 947. Of the CST's 2019 statistics, 126 incidents stemmed apparently from far-right activity. (A large measure of the overall CST numbers – 697 instances – arose from nefarious, on-line antisemitic comments.)

‘Violent assault’ accounted for 158 cases; approaching 50 percent of such were recorded in Barnet (the UK's biggest Jewish community area), Hack-

ney and Salford. Antisemitic acts included damage/desecration to real and personal property/synagogues and burial grounds; a large number also involved schools/colleges, pupils/students, teachers/academics. Some 505, clearly ‘Jew-hatred’ incidents were recorded as having included references to Israel and Zionism, with 63 of them comparing the State of Israel to Nazi Germany.

Some 75 years after the Holocaust, it's virtually beyond belief that the increasing growth of antisemitism around planet Earth has attained proportions which haven't existed since that disastrous epoch for Jewish communities in Nazi-occupied Europe and Russia. Jewish Leadership Council chairman Jonathan Goldstein was reported (in the *JC*) to have commented to the *Times of Israel*: “The future of global Jewry is under threat to an extent which it has never been since the Second World War.”

We must all strive, and do our utmost, to ensure – in whatever available way, and however we're able to – that the ‘Shoah’ and its cataclysmic evil against the Jewish people is never forgotten and never repeated. And we must thus seek to preserve the continuity of Judaism for our Jewish generations yet to come.

‘Cleanliness is next to Godliness’

YOUR ‘Comment’ writer believes this headline proverb originated in the ancient Babylonian and Hebrew tracts. Hygiene is, of course, of major importance to humanity ... and, naturally, should be so not only at times when there's a serious global threat from a potentially fatal virus. The Coronavirus, officially named Covid-19, stemmed apparently from dysfunctional hygiene standards at a food market in Wuhan, China.

Your writer somehow felt prompted to pen this piece, not only with the ‘Ten Plagues’ in ancient Egypt – as expressed in the very near forthcoming Seder services’ Haggadah – in mind; but also by the fact of feeling the need to cancel a post-Pesach sojourn in northern Italy. At the time of writing, nearly 4,000 cases of the virus had been recorded there (the third highest after China and South Korea).

Worldwide, almost 100,000 incidents had then been registered by health authorities; and with nearly 3,500 fatalities. In the UK, about 120 cases were noted, with two deaths (and there were almost 20 cases in Is-

rael). The effects of the spreading virus were growing, though many observers were saying that paranoia should be avoided; there had been much worse epidemics in human history. And that, in the current situation, almost 55,000 recoveries had been recorded. But, doubtless, Covid-19 statistics are highly likely to get worse before they get better.

The situation was clearly unpredictable; and the possibility of the virus mutating to a nastier – or even maybe a lighter – strain was always present. Aside from mounting travel consequences, cancellations, restrictions and the like, the virus was affecting many other significant aspects of society, including the economy, with knock-on effects for companies and their employees in various fields. Education, care and social etcetera implications were following on in view of health authorities' essential advice.

In the Jewish sphere, care homes and charities of various kinds were becoming heavily concerned, respectively, about residents and staff and some necessary cancellations of public fundraising events and gatherings. Synagogue communities were putting

up notices stating that, for the time being, there should be no hand-shaking in shul on, say, Shabbat, and no kissing of the Sifrei Torah, mezzuzot, chumashim and siddurim.

It was interesting to experience – even to create – a novel means by which to greet a fellow shulgoer, such as a friendly arm nudge, a hint of an ‘Oriental’ bow or even a cute little wave. One weekday, and on receiving an electronic message on his smartphone, your ‘Comment’ writer was confused momentarily by words at the end stating: “This e-mail has been checked for viruses ...”

In the circumstances, one supposes there shouldn't be room for whimsy. But if we follow the clear health advice, and take all in proportion, we'll weather the current storm ... hopefully, the upcoming warmer climes could help, it's said. And at the time of writing, Israeli scientists were announcing that a vaccine for the Covid-19 virus could be a possibility by the end of May; although, presumably, there would need to be time for subsequent safety tests.

Our good wishes to you for a healthy Passover and beyond.

WHERE YOU CAN PICK UP THE ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

DUE TO THE CURRENT CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY
 THE **ESSEX JEWISH NEWS** WILL BE AVAILABLE
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IDS tackles tough tenant questions on JBD visit



BY **SIMON ROTHSTEIN**

JEWISH Blind & Disabled chief executive Lisa Wimborne and Milne Court resident house manager Mark Simons welcomed Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP, as he visited the charity's building in South Woodford.

The former Secretary of State was given a tour of the development of 57 apartments for Jewish people living with physical disability or visual impairment. He visited also the apartment of tenant Edna Shaw, who showed him around and talked to him about life in Milne Court. After the visit,

she described him as “very charming”.

The MP then met with a large gathering of tenants in the communal lounge – where they bombarded him with questions on everything from ‘Brexit’ to benefits and antisemitism to social care.

Sir Iain – who took time to personally meet and chat to every tenant – spoke about how impressed he is with the way that members of the Jewish community look out for each other, providing support systems such as this development.

After the visit, Lisa Wimborne, Jewish Blind & Dis-

abled's chief executive, commented: “It is always good to welcome MPs into our developments to give our tenants the opportunity to engage first-hand in current issues with those who have the influence to make a difference.

“It was also a good opportunity for me to talk to him about the issues that matter to our tenants, in particular the NHS and current benefits system. On departing, Iain Duncan Smith promised a return visit. We look forward to welcoming him again soon.”

INTERVIEW WITH IDS ON PAGE 28

Help at hand

CHARITIES and organisations around Essex are helping the most vulnerable during this coronavirus crisis.

Chai Cancer Care were one of the first organisations to offer help to members of the Jewish community suffering from cancer as the virus spread. The charity are offering yoga, home based fitness, telephone and Skype counselling and meditation and mindfulness. They can be contacted on 07989 254420.

Jewish Care's Redbridge Jewish Community Centre are running Meals on Wheels and also a telephone befriending service. Contact 0208 551 0017. Jewish Care also has a dedicated web page outlining all it is doing at www.jewish-care.org/coronavirus

In Chigwell, the CATCH project (Care at Chigwell and Hainault) have called on all their over 70s as well as organising a combined community shop. All synagogues are offering support to their congregations in one form or another and readers are advised to contact their synagogue offices for advice.

Jewish Blind & Disabled is doing everything it can to protect its tenants and staff, while also considering the impact of social isolation across its three buildings in our region. They have asked volunteers to no longer come into buildings to run activities – but instead to help with shopping for tenants who require support, as well as taking part in a telephone/Skype befriending

service. If you would like to help, please contact volunteer@jbd.org

If you wish to help in other ways, then please contact your local Jewish charity or organisation, which will be able to advise on what you can do.

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Chaps chat at the Palace



SID GREEN and 30 members of Jewish Care's Redbridge Jewish Community Centre 'Chaps That Chat' group enjoyed a trip to Buckingham Palace.

Sid, who runs the group which is now attended by 65 men, said: “We went on a des-

ignated, two-hour route through the palace. Everyone found it incredible for our group to stand in Buckingham Palace, because they found all the portraits of past monarchs so fascinating.

“It was all just beautiful and we enjoyed every minute.”

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Chabad gets recognition to hold marriages

CHABAD Buckhurst Hill has achieved what could be considered the final stage of establishing itself as a fully-functioning synagogue, after gaining official recognition from the Chief Rabbi and the Civil Registry Office for the purpose of registering marriages.

Although the community's rabbi, Rabbi Odom Brandman, has been a registrar and officiating at weddings for a number of years, these were officially under the auspices of Chabad Gants Hill.

Now that this significant process has been completed – concluding in mid-February with Rabbi Brandman being tested by Dayan Gelley of the London Beth Din on all the laws and practises of an Orthodox Jewish wedding – he is now fully authorised to conduct ceremonies on his own, and using Chabad Buckhurst Hill's new Wedding Registry Books.

Rabbi Brandman told the *Essex Jewish News*: "This is an

exciting development for us. We have six weddings coming up in the community with the first in March.

"Chabad Buckhurst Hill continues to flourish with a growing membership, while providing a wide range of services to both members and many non-members who avail themselves of our open-door policy and welcoming nature."

The shul has recently launched a campaign to help educate the community on the importance of having a Jewish Burial Policy. They are open to help those who don't currently have one to set something up, even if they are advanced in years. It works out cheaper to sign up to a policy than to wait until the end and pay the one-off burial fee, explained Rabbi Brandman.

For more information on either weddings or burial, please contact Rabbi Brandman on rabbibrandman@chabadonthehill.co.uk

A phoenix rises from the ashes



PAT LIDIKER LOOKS AT THE REBIRTH OF LEYTONSTONE & WANSTEAD COMMUNITY

THE revival of the 88-year-old Leytonstone & Wanstead Synagogue is a welcome antidote to news of others forced into closure because their congregants have moved elsewhere. Too many shuls with dwindling membership (not just locally) have found themselves stranded in the wrong place at the wrong time.

But the reason Leytonstone & Wanstead has seen a reversal in fortunes, and bucked the trend, is because recent developments have proved it to be in exactly the right place!

As its secretary and treasurer, Ruth Solomons, explains: "Luckily we are close to Stratford, which increasingly attracts Jewish business people, students and others to live and work there, many of who have joined us."

She says these newer congregants are wide-ranging with different interests, whether attending on Friday nights or Shabbat mornings, all contributing willingly in preparing food, clearing up or even taking home washing.

To meet the needs of younger families, future aspirations include formation of a cheder and youth groups, as well as including children in services for Chanukah, Purim



and other festivals.

Ruth, alongside her fiancé Phil Schryber, who maintains the community's website and social media, are part of a tireless, dedicated team led by its president Stanley Cirsch.

Having attended Leytonstone Synagogue since he was three years old, he, like others of his generation, is delighted to be part of this rebirth of their much-loved congregation.

Ruth stresses that help from Chabad Lubavitch in Stamford Hill is invaluable. She said: "Rabbi Brackman initiated inspection and conservation of our four Sefer Torahs, dating back to 1880,

and has increased monthly services to weekly. This has involved his walking a nine-mile round-trip every Shabbat and on Yom Tov, often supported by other Stamford Hill rabbonim, chazanim and their families."

Rabbi Blum recently stepped into his walking shoes to take over the shul's pastoral and rabbinic roles. He is helped by others from Stamford Hill in leading Friday night meals, discussions, Jewish learning, seder nights and the shul's first ever public menorah lighting this year. Funded by the Waltham Forest Borough of Culture, this was a huge success attracting

over 200 people.

First established in 1932, the shul moved to its current building in Fillebrook Road in 1954, but fell into dilapidation as congregants drifted away. Starting with fundraising, extensive restoration of the building began with repair of internal, leaking gutters in February 2019.

More recently, the community crowdfunded the repair of its only stained-glass window. This was shattered by an air rifle bullet in the 1950s; but it was considered symbolically important not to leave this visible sign of neglect any longer. The work was carried out by a local artisan, who had also repaired windows at Kinloss in Finchley.

With professional help where necessary, other work has involved repairing, plastering, redecorating, putting right structural damage to the roof, walls, door frames, brickwork and floors etc.

Members and neighbours recycled velvet curtains into seat cushions, cleared the overgrown garden and updated kitchen facilities for preparation of kiddushim, communal meals and extra catering for chaggim and events.

Support also came from CST, with a significant security enhancement grant to upgrade the doors, gate and fire exit.

Ruth says: "All this has typified the power of a community coming together through volunteering and pooling our modest resources."

"So it is through our own hard work, collaboration with Stamford Hill's Chabad and Belz communities, and collective donations, that a shul once believed beyond saving has now been restored."

All in all, the rebirth of this special community from the ruins, with its influx of new members, could turn out to be one of the finest bargains ever originating from Westfield Shopping Centre!



Rabbi Odom Brandman is now authorised to conduct marriages at Chabad Buckhurst Hill

Liberal shul welcomes new faces

MORE than 85 members of East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue (ELELS) came together for a special Shabbat service to welcome the community's newest faces.

Rabbi Richard Jacobi led a guitar-based, family service to greet all the new arrivals, who also brought along family and friends.

Each new member was invited by Rabbi Jacobi to read the blessings for the Torah. They were joined by the community's barmitzvah and batmitzvah students, who also stuck a celebratory leaf on the ELELS Tree of Life to commemorate their coming of age.

Synagogue chair Stewart Spivack said: "I am so happy to chair such a wonderful, growing and inclusive community – and look forward to welcoming many more new members during the coming months."

"And, of course, one never forgets the founders of our community, who still tirelessly work for the betterment of everyone."



Rabbi Richard Jacobi joins the children at the Sefer Torah

Chigwell quiz raises thousands for Maccabi



BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

TWO hundred people raised almost £3,000 for Chigwell Maccabi at a supper quiz featuring questions on everything from space to the small screen.

Guests enjoyed bagels, a raffle and eight very competitive rounds from quiz maestro Michael Finger and his family at Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue. It was organised by Sandra Waldman, who was helped by a large team of vol-

unteers of all ages.

The winners (pictured above) were Ashley Kissin, Hilary Kissin, Jacqueline Conner, Brian Conner, Linda Berman, Barry Berman, Marilyn Grynberg, Warren Grynberg, Ros Cooper and Jan Lazarus.

Ashley said: "Congratulations to Sandra and her team for organising a wonderful quiz which raised a large sum of money. It was great to win, beating 19 other tables. We are very proud."

Jewish community has ‘not achieved gender equality’



AJWO co-chairs Judy Silkoff and Laura Marks OBE PHOTO BY YAKIR ZUR

SEVENTY-SEVEN per cent of Jewish women say the Jewish community has not yet achieved gender equality, a new consultation has revealed.

Findings, based on an online survey of 364 women including many from Essex, were released by the recently relaunched Alliance of Jewish Women and their Organisations’ (AJWO).

The ‘What Do Jewish

Women Want 2020’ consultation also revealed that half of Jewish women feel communal organisations don’t offer women the same opportunities as men – with just 17 percent disagreeing – while three quarters believed that women were too often represented by men in the media. Almost all those completing the survey, 95 percent, agreed that Jewish men and boys must be educated

about equality.

On the more positive side, 69 percent believed the community has improved on gender equality over the past 10 years.

Laura Marks OBE, the founder of Mitzvah Day and co-chair of AJWO, said: “Jewish women are brave, competent and gamechangers. I’m galvanised by the mandate they have given us to go out in the world, as Jewish women, to

drive social change.”

Co-chair Judy Silkoff added: “Particularly as an Orthodox Jewish woman, I’m very encouraged to see so many Orthodox women engaging in the discussion about really important equality issues, such as better education for men and boys.”

The AJWO dates back to 1902 and was relaunched earlier this year.

‘Reform Roadshow’ comes to Southend



Rabbis Romain, Janner-Klausner and Elf

BY **MIKE ROYSTON**

TWO of Britain’s best-known rabbis took part in a discussion at Southend and District Reform Synagogue.

Reform Judaism’s senior rabbi, Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, and writer and broadcaster Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain MBE, brought their ‘Reform Judaism Roadshow’ to the synagogue.

Rabbis Janner-Klausner and Romain are currently touring UK towns and cities to speak about and discuss issues relating to Reform Judaism.

The evening was hosted by Southend’s Rabbi Warren Elf MBE, and the event was well attended by the local Jewish community.

The visiting rabbis said how much they had enjoyed their visit to Southend.

Kid’s Kosher Cookery Club relaunched

OVERSUBSCRIBED every single month, the relaunched Kids Kosher Cookery Club at Chabad Buckhurst Hill has been a massive hit.

Aimed at children of primary school age, each month is themed around an upcoming festival allowing the kids to roll their sleeves up and really get stuck in to the cooking.

Events have seen children making round challahs and honey cake for Rosh Hashanah, latkes and doughnuts for Chanukah, shnitzels and desserts for a Friday night dinner, fruit bouquets and smoothies for Tu Bishvat and Hamentashen for Purim.

For details of upcoming events, please visit www.chabadonthehill.co.uk

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ESSEX
JEWISH NEWS

Alf celebrates his centenary A story of escape



Alf Collis at his 100th party with volunteer coordinator Valerie Marks

GREAT-GRANDFATHER to ten, and grandpa to seven, Redbridge resident Alf Collis recently celebrated his 100th birthday surrounded by 65 of his family and friends. The special centenary event took place at one of the regular Jewish

Care Supportive Communities Tea Parties in Redbridge that Alf has been attending every month since May last year.

Alf, who was driving until the age of 94, didn't retire from his car hire business until he was well into his 80s.

He said: "I've always been very proud of my work and tried to help other people. I am passionate about driving and repairing vehicles. I worked seven days and six nights a week, and I drove my first lorry at the age of 14. I'm also a fighter, and I

never give up on anything."

Born on 24 October 1919 in the East End of London, Alf grew up in Stamford Hill where his father used to deliver the milk. Later, his father started a haulage and moving business, Collis Transport, which Alf took over until starting his own car hire company in 1965. He also served in World War II.

Alf married Isabel on 31 December 1941 in East London, and they were happily married for 42 years. Living in Stoke Newington, they had two children Jeff and Lindy.

After Isabel's death Alf re-married, and was then sadly widowed twice more. He moved to Redbridge when he re-married in the 1980s.

Talking about his birthday celebrations, Alf said: "The family organised the party with lots of family, friends, music and speeches from the grandchildren. I saw some of the cousins I haven't seen in years. It was fantastic and exhausting, and I got about 150 birthday cards!"

Volunteer coordinators at the Redbridge Supportive Communities Tea Parties, Barbara Jaffe from Romford and Valerie Marks from Woodford, helped organise the celebration for Alf, along with the event host. They said: "Alf is so on the button, he's happy to chat whenever we call him and he's always ready when the volunteer drivers call for him. He hasn't missed one of the tea parties since he started. We absolutely love his company."



Muriel Silver, Norma Hart, speaker Lilian Lousky and her mother Freda Hasbani

REDBRIDGE WIZO held a very successful luncheon at Chabad Buckhurst Hill, raising £810 for their project in Israel – a shelter for women and children at risk.

The speaker was Lilian Lousky, who told how she escaped to England from Syria as a young girl. She gave the moving account of how, aged 12, her family in Syria were forced to leave her behind as a guarantee of their own return; but, with help from neighbours and friends, she was able to get to England to join them... with much hardship along the way.

Norma Hart said: "We all enjoyed a really lovely speaker and very successful lunch. We

were also delighted to have Lilian's mother Freda Hasbani with us."

WIZO, Israel's leading organisation for education and social services, promotes an equal society for all supported by a global network of Zionist women. It raises money for day care centres, therapeutic centres, guided playgroups and help for those affected by domestic violence in the family. It also operates a national hotline for the prevention of domestic violence and for children at risk.

Anyone interested in joining the Redbridge branch should call Norma on 020 8500 2537.

HAPPY PESACH FROM THE KKL TEAM

Wishing the community a Chag Kasher v'Sameach

As well as providing first-rate will drafting and estate planning services, KKL combines professionalism with caring pastoral services. These include regular home visits and taking care of any Jewish needs in accordance with your wishes.

For a no-obligation and confidential consultation, and to find out more about supporting JNF UK's vital work in Israel, please get in touch.

Tel: 0800 358 3587 Email: enquiries@kk1.org.uk



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From Redbridge to the Costa del Sol



BY **BRENDA SOSKIN**

BRITISH migration to Spain has resulted in the country being home to one of the largest British-born populations outside the United Kingdom, and the largest in Europe.

Brits determined to begin a new life take out a one-way ticket, mainly to live in the Costa del Sol, and enjoy around 325 days of sunshine each year. Although it isn't all about sun and sangria, these ex-pats need to bring home the cash to survive long-term. Hence, the subject of a recent Channel 5 documentary, *Bargain Loving Brits in the Sun*. The documentary featured, in particular, two ex-Redbridge residents Tony and Michelle Johnstone who left the UK to live in Mijas, Andalucía.

In the documentary, Michelle explained that one morning, 11 years ago, they were enjoying their morning

coffee in Gibraltar, when someone they knew told them about a business just on the market, which led to them signing a contract at 6pm that very evening.

The business was to supply and fit awnings, blinds and shutters, a perfect opportunity for the couple; and so Ace of Shades was born. Tony explained that while other businesses such as running a bar do not last long, because of competition, blinds, shutters and awnings are a necessity, especially since the recent heat wave in that part of Spain.

Michelle is the marketing expert of their business, using social media and advertising to spread the word, with Tony the main man supplying the product and leading a team of fitters.

In her early life in the UK, Michelle was a Playboy Bunny for four years, which she describes as "the best job I ever had". She was also a former senior warden and marriage

registrar of South West Essex & Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWESRS); and was known for her four-inch-high stilettoes that she wore on the bimah. Tony and Michelle were married at the synagogue in 2001 and retain close ties to its members.

On the programme, Michelle showed viewers round her beautiful home and garden, followed everywhere by her rescue dog Lolly. Although she is always busy, she finds time once a month to run her group for UK ex-pats known as 'Ladies of Spain', a support group for women on their own and those new to Spain, in order to chat, have coffee and make friends.

Comparing Fuengirola, Andalucía, with their previous nearest seaside town, Southend, it is fair to say they have a good lifestyle. They may work hard but, more importantly, they always have time for each other.

KLBD Roadshow hits Cambridge

BY **MARK HARRIS**

THE KLBD (Kashrut Authority – London Beth Din) 'Roadshow' arrived in the university city of Cambridge on the first Sunday in March. Around, apparently, 150 certified kosher and approved products – including some alcoholic beverages, such as malt whisky and lager – were displayed on tables in the hall at the orthodox Cambridge Synagogue, sited near the River Cam.

A substantial number of the food and drink items were available as samples to be tasted, and some of them could even be taken home. But before attendee members, from both the permanent and student community, took the tempting opportunity to do so, Sharon Feldman-Vazan of KLBD spoke about the work of the organisation, the worldwide kosher certification process and the difference between 'certified' and 'approved' products.

A brief Q&A session led on to the anticipatory audience milling around the laden tables to try whatever tasty offerings that caught their eye. A separate table, with a variety of gins (and tonics, if desired) for sampling, was hosted by Rabbi Dr Reuven Leigh, director of 'The Rohr' Chabad House Cambridge and hon-

orary minister of the Cambridge Traditional Jewish Congregation.

The KLBD Roadshow was free to attend; the event was sponsored by the Cambridge

Jewish Chaplaincy Board in aid of Magen David Adom, Israel's national emergency medical service, and to which attendees could make a donation if they wished.

Double celebration



Fiona and Rabbi David Hulbert with their family EAST London & Essex Liberal Synagogue (ELELS) celebrated the ruby wedding anniversary of its Emeritus Rabbi David Hulbert and his wife Fiona at a special Shabbat service.

Synagogue chair Stewart Spivack said: "David and Fiona's service to the congregation, and to the people of Redbridge, over 35 years was remembered and marked with

thanks and joy."

The wedding anniversary was combined with a second celebration – the *auf ruf* of Natalie and Menasha. The happy couple were called to the bimah to recite blessings, witnessed by many of their family and friends.

Stewart added: "It was a lovely occasion followed by a splendid kiddush!"

Bingo at Clore

CLORE Tikva Primary School's FACT (Fundraisers At Clore Tikva) team held a well-attended and fun bingo evening in order to continue raising funds for the school.

Despite a traffic jam on the M25 preventing the planned bingo caller being 'the voice of the balls', the 100-strong players managed to make use of their dabbers thanks to the dulcet tones of parent understudy, Lisa Richards, who stepped into the breach.

Winners received cash prizes (or Amazon vouchers for those under 18) due to each round being sponsored by companies including Ealing Trading, All About the Cake, Churchill Estates, Blooming Lovely Gardens, Sixty Six, Phenofit, Sher and Lasky Opticians, Nick Bick Jewellery and Instant Mortgages.

The top raffle prize of a DKNY bag, donated by Choice, was won by Year 6 pupil Aziza Karakus, who then charitably gifted the prize to her aunt.

FACT chair Mel Phillips said: "On behalf of the school, I am grateful to everyone who bought a ticket, a raffle ticket, provided round sponsorship or donated a raffle prize. This fantastic evening was made possible thanks to the support of the whole community, who enabled us to raise an amazing £2,000 for our school."

Novel approach

LONGSTANDING Essex *Jewish News* writer and editorial committee member, Mark Harris, awaits the publication of his latest fiction book in early summer 2020.

Retired lawyer, Mark's new novel 'A Virtual Reality – Second Exodus?' is the much-encouraged sequel to 'A Virtual Reality' published in 2018. In this his 25th year of association with the EJN, Mark's book will be the sixth of his fiction works, comprising a trilogy of his own Jewish short story anthologies and three novels, the first being 'Last Days in Berlin' ... a city he knows very well.

'A Virtual Reality' involves an amazing 'time travel' exploit back to medieval Cambridge and its oppressed Jewish community. The forthcoming sequel – which is more Jewishly 'global' in aspect – is, literally, out of this world!

Mark says: "Somehow, I'd felt compelled to write my new novel, during 2019, against the very concerning background of continuing and statistically increasing antisemitism in the UK and continental Europe; but, indeed, also elsewhere across planet Earth. Of course, my book is a work of fiction; and I really do hope it stays that way!"

When published, Mark's new novel will be available from any good bookshop; and online from Amazon, Waterstone's, Blackwell's and WH Smith's etc.

Do not 'Pass over' doing something so important



BY **CAROLYN ADDLEMAN**

WHATEVER your family or financial circumstances, making a will is one of the most crucial things you can do in your lifetime – it takes care of your present assets in the future. Incredibly, seven out of ten people never make a will, often causing their family and friends heartache and giving rise to painful legal disputes at a difficult and emotional time.

The financial consequences of dying without making a proper will can be serious. Your estate may be shared out according to legal rules in a way that you do not intend. There are hidden pitfalls in will making which only a trained legal eye can spot and successfully overcome. Thousands of pounds can be lost if a will is not properly drawn up with a valid witness so don't rely on a 'DIY' will – most disputes about wills relate to those that are made without the benefit of legal advice.

The only way to guarantee that your wishes are properly carried out is to make a will with the benefit of proper advice and appropriate legal guidance, and to ensure that it is reviewed whenever circumstances change. Only then can you be sure that your chosen beneficiaries will receive what is properly due to them.

Your will can be drawn up without charge through JNF UK's subsidiary, KKL Executor & Trustee Company. KKL has decades of experience of providing this service to the

Jewish community and beyond. In addition to its well-known will writing service, KKL can also act as Executor in administering your estate. This role may be less well known, but it is equally vital, acting as the oldest communal Executor and Trustee Company. In particular, we have acted for many people who had no close family or friends or professional advisors who could undertake this role. We can arrange a home visit to discuss your requirements and explain how our services work.

The appointment of KKL as Executor can remove the anxiety about who will administer your estate in accordance with your will. KKL will perform not only the usual tasks associated with administering an estate (for example – collecting in assets, calculating and paying inheritance tax, paying legacies and distributing residue under the terms of the will) but also the very Jewish functions associated with death – arranging the funeral and tombstone consecration and for Kaddish to be said.

Whatever your age or circumstances, making or changing your will now with the benefit of proper advice ensures that all the years of nurturing your assets will not be wasted.

Carolyn Addleman is director of legacies at KKL Executor & Trustee Company Ltd, a subsidiary of JNF UK. She can be contacted on Freephone 0800 358 3587 or at carolyn@kkl.org.uk

WIJPS achieves best ever SATS results

YEAR 6 pupils at Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School (WIJPS) recorded the school's best ever results in the National SATs.

Students achieved outstandingly high marks with, WIJPS ranked sixth in Redbridge overall; and in joint second place for pupils who demonstrated an ability to use and apply their knowledge and understanding above their years (known as greater depth).

With an 84.8% pass rate for all three key areas of assessment combined (reading, writing and maths), pupils not only exceeded all expectations but overall results were 20%

above the national average and 12% above the average for all schools across Redbridge.

Head Andrea Elliker said: "We are extremely proud of our Year 6's achievements and congratulate all our staff for their accomplishment of such outstanding results for 2018/2019.

"This has reflected the growth in the standard of teaching and learning that we have now come to expect at WIJPS and it is clearly reflected in the children's results. We hope that their success continues as they progress through their secondary school years and beyond."

Twinning in Chigwell... second time around Singing relaunches

BY **PAT LIDIKER**

WHEN planning his second barmitzvah at Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue earlier this year, Jeffrey Glassman called on the help of fellow member Harvey Frankel, who regularly organises twinning events for 13-year-olds.

It was to be a double family occasion as Jeffrey was emulating his own father-in-law, Max Preska, the first person to celebrate a second barmitzvah at Chigwell Synagogue. That was in 1987 but, this time, Jeffrey was adding an extra twist.

Harvey put him in touch with Yad Vashem UK, who twinned him with a boy who had shared his own Hebrew name and birthday. Jeffrey then researched the family and the town in which they had lived.

Yaacob David Vaksman was born in Wierzbnik, Poland, 83 years ago; but in 1941, at the time of the German occupation, he and his family were transported from the ghetto to Treblinka.

Jeffrey told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Tragically, he never celebrated his own barmitzvah because he was murdered by the Nazis at six years old along with his father, brother and sister. Now I will keep their memory alive by lighting a candle for them before Yom Kippur and on Yom HaShoah."

During the service and his address, Jeffrey wore a Yad Vashem memorial pin as a tribute; and was then presented with a framed certificate by Chigwell's Rabbi Davis to commemorate the twinning.



Jeffrey Glassman and wife Ruth at Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue

A retired pharmacist – he ran two shops in East London for 50 years – Jeffrey grew up in Stamford Hill. He met his wife Ruth at Clapton Jewish Youth Club and they married 62 years ago at Egerton Road Synagogue.

The couple have three daughters, eight grandchildren and now five great-grandchildren, all living in the Chigwell area and happily filling up the front row for his second barmitzvah.

Jeffrey told the congregation: "My generation is the last

to have memories of living through the Second World War, I was only two when it started and eight when it was over. My father was called up in 1939. I remember being evacuated with my mother, sister and my mother's sick sister. I remember, too, sleeping in air raid shelters and London Underground stations. Our family home was damaged and two young cousins were killed in the Blitz."

He adds that, fortunately, the younger generation today have no such memories so

thinks it important that they are reminded of World War II, the facts of the Holocaust and what happened to the six million Jews. This is why he wanted to mark his own second barmitzvah in this way.

He added: "70 years ago, as a small, nervous boy, I performed my barmitzvah because I was told I had to by my parents! This time I feel privileged to have celebrated with the support of Rabbi Goodwin, my close family, friends and the congregation at Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue."



WOODFORD Forest Synagogue, with the support of Jewish Care, are relaunching Singing for Memory as soon as they are able. Once safe to proceed it will take place from 10.30am to noon and every Friday, except the first Friday of the month.

Research suggests strongly that singing can improve brain activity, wellbeing and mood. The weekly group is a great opportunity for people living with dementia, or other conditions affecting memory, to benefit from singing familiar songs and participating in stimulating, musical activities. And you don't even have to be a good singer to come!

Piano and percussion accompany the group with a skilled, friendly and compassionate bunch of volunteers offering support. Tea and biscuits are also served.

Successful sessions have already been running for over a year, and the group is now welcoming new carers and their relatives to join them at Woodford Forest Synagogue in Church-

fields, South Woodford and Jewish Care's Dennis Centre on Clarence Avenue.

For further information or other enquiries, please call Woodford Forest Synagogue on 020 8504 1990, or email office@wfus.org.uk to let them know you're coming.

New deputy head

BRADLEY ABRAHAMS is the new deputy head of Kantor King Solomon High School (KKS). He joined the school last summer on the future leaders' programme, in preparation for headship. His ethos is that high expectations lead to success.

Bradley attended Seven Kings High School, before going on to study psychology at Leicester University and taking a Masters in leadership.

Aside from the role of deputy head, Bradley is the KKS designated safeguarding lead and also teaches English.



FREEDOM

FOR ISRAEL'S HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

There are over 190,000 Holocaust survivors living in Israel, of which an alarming 25% are living below the poverty line.

The Magen David Adom UK Holocaust Survivors' Fund was set up to ensure that no-one who survived the atrocities perpetrated by Nazi Germany will ever worry about calling an ambulance, for fear of the costs involved.

To ensure that Israel's Holocaust survivors do not live in fear, you can donate to the Holocaust Survivors' Fund by visiting mdauk.org/freedom.

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Councillors ask Labour Party to investigate 'antisemitic' motion



Cllr Jas Athwal with Board Of Deputies vice president Amanda Bowman

THE REDBRIDGE Labour Group of borough councillors have called for the constituency Labour Party to investigate allegations that a motion by the Cranbrook and Valentines branch minimised antisemitism.

The branch put forward a motion asking those standing for the national Labour leadership to ignore the Board of Deputies' request to sign up to 10 pledges to heal the party's rift with the Jewish community. During the ensuing debate, a Jewish member of the branch was reported as saying that he and a fellow Jew were bullied and accused of being 'agents of a foreign power'.

Among the first to condemn the motion were Councillors Khayer Chowdury, Farah Husain and Varinder Singe Bola, while Councillor Shamshia Singh made his condemnation on Twitter.

Later, the Redbridge Labour Group issued a statement, which said: "The Labour Group were extremely concerned to hear that a young party member felt intim-

ated at the Cranbrook and Valentines branch meeting on 13 January.

"In addition, we are led to believe antisemitic tropes were directed at the member because of his objection to the motion. It is also a cause of concern that any members would use a motion to call for Labour Party leadership to disengage with, and reject, any requests from the Board of Deputies, widely considered the foremost Jewish organisation in the UK.

"We must recognise that it has been the collective behaviour of the Labour Party structures and leadership that has led us to this unedifying position of being investigated by the EHRC for institutional antisemitism. Therefore calls to ignore the largest Jewish body in the country, and in this manner, are counter-productive.

"Our Party's ethos has always been to stand up to bigotry in all its forms and anyone found to have acted in this manner must be met with a zero toler-

ance. We call upon the chair and executive of the Ilford South Group to investigate these allegations as a matter of urgency and refer the matter to the Labour Party immediately."

Ilford South's newly elected MP, Sam Tarry, had said there were "conflicting accounts of what happened and what was said" at the meeting. But the MP faced criticism for not publicly condemning the motion, which also attacked the Board of Deputies for supposedly being "pro-Tory".

Mr Tarry tweeted: "I always take any allegation of racism extremely seriously. Having now seen the motion and spoken to several members who were in attendance at the meeting, I've asked that any complaints go through the party's formal channels to ensure that this matter is dealt with thoroughly and impartially."

After the allegations of antisemitic behaviour had emerged, Redbridge councillors reached out to the Board of Deputies. Board vice president Amanda Bowman, together with Daniel Elton, met Redbridge councillors, including council leader Jas Athwal, to discuss antisemitism.

Amanda said: "It was great to see both Labour and Conservative councillors reach out to the Board of Deputies to learn about antisemitism. That is just the sort of leadership political parties need if they want to rid themselves of racism."

Cllr Athwal added: "It was wonderful to meet with Amanda Bowman and Daniel Elton to get a fuller understanding of the challenges facing the Jewish community and our society as a whole. It is an important reminder that the Jewish community's fight is our fight and that we need to play our part in driving out antisemitism in all its forms."

Chabad launches new Jewish community in Havering

BY **SIMON ROTHSTEIN**

CHABAD NE London & Essex has opened a Havering community – covering the expanding Jewish populations in Romford, Collier Row, Hornchurch, Upminster and Rainham.

Activities began in January with regular meetings, discussion groups, one-to-one learning and a challah bake led by Devorah Sufirin. This was followed by a joint challah bake with Romford and District Affiliated (United) Synagogue with 25 participants. A website is also in the process of being set up.

The fledgling community joins the established Chabad

Houses in Gants Hill and Buckhurst Hill and the growing congregation in Epping. Regular activities are also held in Southend.

Rabbi Sufirin MBE, the executive director of Chabad NE London & Essex, told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Continuous requests have been made to us over a fair period of time, asking Chabad to get more involved in the area of Havering. In discussion with my wife Devorah, we decided that we must respond."

In the short term, the new Havering community will be serviced mainly by Rabbi and Mrs Sufirin, as the foundations are laid and relationships are built. They will also be scouting the wider areas to map

where Jewish people are living, as well as embarking on a fundraising programme.

Rabbi Sufirin added: "Even though funding is always a concern and a challenge, when it comes to Jewish education and the needs of securing Jewish communities, we cannot allow money to hold us back – just as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Schneerson z"l, taught us so well."

Rabbi and Mrs Sufirin are currently celebrating their 37th anniversary of Chabad leadership locally – picking up the baton of his late Parents Rev Aron Dov & Hennie Sufirin, who laid the first seeds for Chabad in Essex back in 1976.

Rabbi Danny Rich steps down

RABBI Danny Rich has stepped down as the senior rabbi and chief executive of Liberal Judaism after 15 years in the role.

Danny announced his decision to Liberal Judaism's Council in January and left his post at the end of March. His tenure and achievements will be celebrated at Liberal Judaism's flagship event of 2020, the Biennial Weekend, which takes place on 22-24 May.

During his decade and a half as the professional head of Liberal Judaism, Danny saw new communities develop or open all over the country – including Shenfield and Brentwood's Tikvah Chadasha.

He was also at the forefront of the successful campaign to ensure equal marriage in the UK – working with the Quakers and Unitarians to show religious support from same sex couples seeking to marry, and presenting evidence to Parliament to support the case – and led campaigns on social justice issues ranging from refugee



Rabbi Danny Rich resettlement to the Living Wage.

Danny said: "In paying tribute to many rabbinic and lay colleagues, to professional and lay volunteers and to Liberal Jewish congregants and others, I am pleased with what Liberal Judaism has become during the last 15 years and what it has achieved during my tenure.

"Alongside many Liberal Judaism initiatives and a

thriving LJY-Netzer youth movement, I am particularly proud of the crucial role of Liberal Judaism, in partnership with Citizens UK and others, in making the United Kingdom a welcoming home for Syrian refugees, and of the Liberal Judaism leadership to persuade Parliament to introduce equal marriage.

"As I move to pastures new, I shall continue to play a different role in promoting Liberal Jewish values and furthering the Jewish mission – to contribute to the creation of a decent and worthy society in which 'a person may sit under the vine and the fig and no other person shall make them afraid'."

Liberal Judaism's president Rabbi Dr Andrew Goldstein led the tributes, saying: "Danny has been a mentor to many rabbis and lay people and influenced bringing many of them to Liberal Judaism. His place in the history of Liberal Judaism is assured, and it is hoped that he will continue to make contributions in the future in areas that most interest him."

Clore Tikva thrilled by 'good' Ofsted report

THRILLED staff and students at Clore Tikva Primary School are celebrating, after being rated as 'good' by Ofsted.

The school, which was previously rated as 'requires improvement' following an Ofsted inspection in November 2017, was praised by the inspectors for the hard work and leadership over the past two years, which has moved the school forward as well as its ethos and key value of 'love your neighbour as yourself'.

The report started: "Equality of opportunity is woven into the fabric of the school and the interfaith work undertaken by the staff is very strong. Pupils stated that they are really proud to attend a school where they can learn about other beliefs and meet those who practise them."

It also recognised the clear pride parents have in the school and appreciation of how well it promotes their children's per-



Happy pupils at Clore Tikva

sonal development and emotional well-being.

Head Margot Buller said: "I am delighted to be able to share our Ofsted news, I would particularly like to thank and congratulate all the children of Clore Tikva School. They are amazing and really impressed the team with their openness and consideration of others, honesty, en-

thusiasm for learning and confidence.

"Clore Tikva is a very special school. It is such a pleasure to work here. I would like to thank all staff, governors and parents as together we make a positive and vibrant school community. Our ethos is clear from the website and on entering the school premises."

Can collective punishment ever be justified – even by God?

PERSONAL OPINION

RENEE BRAVO



PESACH is one of the highlights of the Jewish year, and there is a tremendous variation in the way we recognise it. From the family who change everything and only use supervised products, through to those who change nothing but keep to 'supervised' products, or those who just keep 'no chometz', to those who make a family Seder but do not read the Haggadah; and many variations in between. But

there is one thing which almost everybody does, and that is the reciting of the Ten Plagues, and the ritual of dipping one's finger and making ten blobs of wine on the plate. It is seen as one of the great victories of the Jewish people. But I find myself at variance with most people's view of the Ten Plagues, namely, 'isn't it wonderful what God did for us?'

I don't agree with that. For me, it is one of the worst

examples of collective punishment. Can collective punishment ever be justified, even by God? To kill all those innocent Egyptians, even babies. To destroy their livelihoods, to bring destruction and despair to everybody, regardless of their guilt or evil intent. Should we be proud of what God did in our name?

There is another phrase which bothers me about this story. When God tells Moses what he intends to do, he says: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will not let you go." He says it six times. So Pharaoh's obstinacy was not his own fault. God hardened his heart. Perhaps we shouldn't read it so carefully.

These are some of the many questions I will ask God when I get there. I look forward to the answers.

'You would never see a crowd like this at Kinloss'



IAN MURRAY REPORTS ON CHIGWELL & HAINAULT SYNAGOGUE'S REFLECTIONS 2020 EVENT

A GROUND-BREAKING community initiative brought some of the world's best Jewish speakers to Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue for Reflections 2020.

This all-day event attracted over 200 attendees. They were rewarded with an outstanding array of speakers including Rabbi Baruch Davis, Rebbetzen Ilana Epstein, Rebbetzen Jacqueline Feldman, Rebbetzen Shalvie Friedman, Rabbi Rafi Goodwin, Adam Green, Rabbi Dovid Katz, Rabbi Daniel Rowe, Rabbi Andrew Shore, Rabbi Daniel Sturgess and Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz.

Rabbi Rowe's opening, keynote talk addressed the subject of 'The man in the mirror - how to see ourselves, G-d and the world around us'. This fascinating subject set the standard and held everyone's attention.

Afterwards, the audience dispersed and had to choose four talks from a choice of 12. The range of options was amazing. Rabbi Katz spoke twice - about the ethics of Artificial Intelligence and the ethics of preemptive strikes.

Rabbi Sturgess, who was raised in our community, talked about how he stumbled upon life's most important questions after going to Exeter University. Other choices ranged from Israel TV's fascination with the ultra-Orthodox world (Rebbetzen Feldman) to how to cultivate happiness (Rabbi Goodwin in his inimitable, humorous way). Rebbetzen Epstein's talk about food in the Holocaust was especially moving. She talked about special, handed down recipes that enabled the women to create as nutritious meals as possible in dire circumstances.

Rabbi Davis gave a powerful and provocative talk on G-d, the Holocaust and Israel. Particularly enjoyable for the local congregants was a marvellous talk by home grown Adam Green about his work on the Israeli Bereshit spacecraft. It was particularly pleasing to see Sandra and Kevan beaming with justifiable pride. Rebbetzen Friedman spoke about Elijah, and Rabbi Shaw gave a persuasive talk on how we are living in an age of miracles and per-

haps not realising it.

Towards the end, Rabbi Dr Tatz spoke twice in his own inimitable way. First, about 'Free will: the ultimate innovation'; and then he gave the concluding keynote talk in which he reflected on 'Moral knowledge: how do we know what is right?'

Our team of helpers worked tirelessly. Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits were available from several stations throughout the day. An excellent buffet lunch provided much-needed nourishment, and one could sense the enjoyment felt by people as they left. One lady from North West London told me: "I was astonished both by the huge numbers attending and the quality of the speakers. You would never see a crowd like this at Kinloss."

An event of this size requires an immense amount of preparation. Our community owe a big thank you to everyone involved. All the hard work was justified on the day - this was a spectacular success.

Events like this help us to justify our reputation, so beautifully described by the late Chief Rabbi Jakobovits when he called us "the jewel in the crown of the United Synagogue". Let's hope that we can do it again next year.

Volunteer Betty turns 100



Volunteer Betty Morris (left) at her 100th birthday celebration with a member of the Centre at Jewish Care's Dennis Centre for people living with dementia

JEWISH Care held a special party to celebrate volunteer Betty Morris turning 100. Betty has been volunteering at Jewish Care's Dennis Centre for people living with dementia for more

than 15 years.

Centre manager Zoe McGurrell told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Betty has always been a very active volunteer, she has so much energy and is

an inspiration to us all. She looks amazing and is a very valued member of our volunteering team. We were so pleased to be celebrating Betty's 100th birthday with her."



FAMILY AND FRIENDS COMING FROM ABROAD FOR SIMCHA OR A VISIT?

PROBLEMS ACCOMMODATING THEM?

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Meet Zelda – EJN's own agony aunt

WE are delighted to introduce you to Zelda – the new *Essex Jewish News* Agony Aunt, who will be answering the questions that REALLY matter to you. For her first appearance, Zelda tackles an issue as old as Judaism itself ... the overbearing mother-in-law.

Dear Zelda,

Whenever she visits us for dinner, my mother-in-law is constantly going on about how her homemade apple strudel is wonderful and that mine falls short. The other day we were due to eat at her house, and that morning I was some way behind her in a queue at the local deli. She didn't see me and she purchased portions of the deli's apple strudel, serving it to us that evening, again boasting of how hers was fantastic. When I make it, I follow the traditional recipe and filling with the stretched filo pastry; it is quite difficult to make but tastes delicious. Should I let her know that I am onto her apple strudel secret or should I keep shtum?

Hannah

Dear Hannah,

I have found two solutions to your problem. First, the next time she is due at your house for dinner, buy the apple strudel at the deli and if she criticises it then say that it is from the same deli where she buys hers. Her embarrassment could cause some friction within the family, especially if your husband sides with his mother. The second solution is to make cheesecake!

Zelda

STANDING TOGETHER

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) was 'Stand Together'. Throughout history genocidal regimes have deliberately aimed at fracturing society by marginalising certain groups. The emphasis this year was on standing together with others in our communities in order to stop division and the spread of hatred in our society. Once again the day was commemorated all over Essex and beyond and below you can read reports and see pictures from some of the events that took place.

NEWBURY PARK

BY **BRENDA SOSKIN**

MORE than 600 primary and secondary school children and their teachers, from across Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, were invited to take part in half-day seminars over six days at South West Essex & Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWESRS).

Organised by Sheila Chiat, president of SWESRS, the programme was dedicated to the memory of Esther Brunstein, a survivor of both Auschwitz and Belsen and an indefatigable campaigner against racism. A fighter for human rights, Esther was invited to address the UN General Assembly in 1998, the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Esther's daughter, Denise Fluskey, and Rabbi Henry Goldstein shared their memories of Esther and discussed her legacy with the students.

Eva Kugler, a Holocaust survivor, addressed the students about her experiences in Nazi Germany. She was seven years old in 1938 when Kristallnacht took place. Her father was arrested, his business and home confiscated; he was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp and later to a labour camp. However, with forged visas Eva and her sister were sent to France, to a Jewish home for displaced children. Eva's parents survived four concentration camps, twice miraculously spared from Auschwitz. Finally, in 1941 Eva and her sister were given visas and were sent to America, living in four foster homes. Miraculously, all survived and the family was reunited in 1946.

Rolf Penzias also recalled his experiences of the Kindertransport. He was one of about 10,000 child refugees, mostly Jewish, who were sent without their parents out of Austria, Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia to foster families and hostels

in Britain.

In his own words, Rolf recalled: "I was born in Munich, and I was 16 when I left with my brother, who was 14. When we crossed the border into Holland, the Dutch people came to meet us. The Dutch women had big hats, and they threw sweets, and drinks and food onto the train. What they did was incredible, I can still remember it so clearly. When we got into Harwich we were taken to a holiday camp at Dovercourt Bay, it was in the winter and there was no heating in the huts."

Luckily Rolf's parents survived the war as they were sent to a concentration camp in the south of Italy. He was also fortunate because he was able to write to them through the Red Cross during the war, and afterwards he spent three years working to get them into the UK for them to be reunited.

Over the six days, other synagogue members and local rabbis, who are children of survivors, also shared their parents' stories and the lessons to be learnt from the Holocaust and the continuing threat of anti-semitism.

SOUTHEND

BY **GEOFFREY PEPPER**

CLOSE to 400 people attended the annual Holocaust Memorial Day event in Southend.

Southend and District Reform Synagogue's Rabbi Warren Elf spoke first – warning about recent rhetoric and dangerous words being used for political effect, and where that can lead.

Southend & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation's Rabbi Geoffrey Hyman, who has met many Holocaust survivors, spoke next. Reflecting on the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and what his own family went through, he said: "We have an absolute obligation to hear the survivors again and again." The rabbi quoted a verse from Leviticus:



Top left: Present at the Chelmsford HMD were the mayor, Cllr Bob Massey (left), and local MP Vicky Ford
Top right: Guest speaker Ernest Simon at the Brentwood HMD PHOTO BY IAN DAVIDSON

Above left: Guest speaker Susie Barnett (centre) with from left to right Steven Jaffe, Natasha Radford of Tikvah Chadasha Synagogue, Ernest Simon, past mayor David Tee and Moira Dare-Edwards at the Brentwood HMD PHOTO BY IAN DAVIDSON

Above right: Stones painted with the names of survivors by pupils from Leverton Primary School, King Harold Business Academy and Daventry Foundation

Left: Members of Jewish community and Southend Council at the annual tree-planting

"Thou shalt not stand still on the blood of your neighbour's, not remain silent bystanders."

Rabbi Hyman then introduced "a giant of a lady", Susan Pollack MBE. Susan is an Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen survivor, who was also on the Death March in 1944-45. Born in 1930 in Hungary, she lost her entire family in the Holocaust.

Susan lamented: "I came here in 1962, was a Samaritan for 10 years, and I have been talking for over 30 years. Who is going to talk after we have all gone? Action is very important, the past is getting closer and the great evil that destroyed my whole family, such hatred should never happen again."

There also was music and poetry, and a presentation by students based on encouraging them to focus on why we should remember.

Concluding remarks were given by the Mayor of Southend

on Sea, Councillor John Lamb, who had earlier lit the Holocaust candle and was clearly moved. He said: "I feel very strongly. We should not be frightened to speak up against the various injustices, and oppose those who try to deny or change history."

Members of the Jewish community and Southend Council then attended the annual tree-planting ceremony in the town, to commemorate the lives of those who perished in the Holocaust and more recent genocides.

REDBRIDGE

BY **MANNY ROBINSON**

REDBRIDGE Council marked Holocaust Memorial Day by affirming its commitment to fighting hate and in-

equality by launching the Redbridge Equality Pledge.

Cllr Jas Athwal told the large crowd at the Holocaust Memorial in Valentines Park: "Holocaust Memorial Day is the time for our community to remember those who suffered unimaginable horrors during the Nazi regime, to honour survivors and victims and to make a stand against persecution.

"Everyone can make a commitment towards helping make sure that we are all treated equally and fairly by others, regardless of our race, gender, religion, sexuality or disability – giving us each the freedom to be who we are."

The choir of Cranbrook United and South West Essex Reform Synagogues performed at the service. Among those laying wreaths were Deputy Lieutenant of

Redbridge Thomas Chan, Mayor of Redbridge Cllr Zulfiqar Hussain and Cllr Joyce Ryan.

Politicians, including Wes Streeting, MP for Ilford North, local rabbonim, councillors and school children came together to remember those who died in the Holocaust as well as those who suffered in genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

CAMBRIDGE

BY **MARK HARRIS**

THIS year's Holocaust Memorial Day event was held, as usual, at the city's Corn Exchange with the general theme 'Stand Together, Strong Together'. Cambridge HMD was organised by its artistic director, historian Helen Weinstein

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of Historyworks.

The commemorative, civic ceremony included speeches, testimonies, readings, music, poetry and drama; and focused on 75 years since the liberation of the Nazi death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, as well as the 25th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia. Groups supporting equality and diversity in today's world were also represented.

Holocaust survivor Eva Clarke addressed the capacity assembly. Alongside Helen Weinstein and poet Michael Rosen, she had worked with hundreds of local schoolchildren in the lead-up to the HMD event.

Several Cambridge schools, particularly choirs, participated in the annual event; with three, specially commissioned poems written by Mr Rosen – 'Better When We Stand Together', 'Strong Together Hand in Hand' and 'Our Word Our World' – set to music by composer Bethany Kirby.

The event closed with a rendition of the song, 'We Are One World, One Voice, One Heart Beating'.

CHELMSFORD

BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

A VARIED Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in Chelmsford included contributions from many students from local schools.

Five pupils from King Edward VI Grammar School enacted a powerful scene from the play 'Ghetto' by Joseph

Sobol; and there were readings from New Hall and St John Payne students, and two excellent pieces of music from Felsted and KEGS boys.

Further readings were presented by the Mayor of Chelmsford, Cllr Bob Massey, Vicky Ford, MP for Chelmsford, Cllr John Jowers, chairman of Essex County Council and pre-selected members of the community.

In a moving Memorial Candle Lighting ceremony, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex – who was representing HM the Queen – lit one of the six candles. The other five were lit by representatives of various branches of the local community.

A packed audience in the City Council Chamber also heard the personal story of Henri Obstfeld BEM, who was a young child in Holland during the Nazi occupation.

The commemoration was organised by Chelmsford Jewish community chairman Stan Keller on behalf of Chelmsford City Council.

In his closing speech, Stan brought gasps from the audience as he reported on antisemitic outrages that have occurred over the last 12 months in Europe, America and closer to home in London and Essex. He stressed how important it is for the younger generation to carry forward the message of speaking out against all forms of discrimination; and he praised the city of Chelmsford for being an example of tolerance and coming to 'Stand Together' – the theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day – with the Jewish community.

BRENTWOOD

BY MOIRA DARE-EDWARDS
ESSEX AREA LINK
FOR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF ISRAEL

AT a time of increasing antisemitism how vital and important was it for us, in 2020, as a community of Christians and Jews in Brentwood, to 'Stand Together' (the theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day) to remember those millions who died in the Holocaust and those still suffering; and to honour and hear those who are able to still bear witness in order to combat this evil, and the attempts to deny this history.

An exhibition featuring Nicholas Winton, British Kindertransport rescuer, and Corrie Ten Boom who hid Jews in Holland, together with information on Auschwitz, on the 75th anniversary of its liberation, was taken into several local schools and was on display for the general public.

On two mornings in Brentwood, Susie Barnett, Holocaust survivor from Nazi Germany, spoke very movingly to students from local schools and the general public about the eventual survival of her entire family; but also of the devastating and lasting effect that all the events had on each member of the family.

On the Saturday evening, a Meeting of Commemoration was held. The guest speaker was Ernest Simon, who was born and brought up in the Jewish ghetto of Eisenstadt, Austria; and who escaped to England as a child refugee on a Kindertransport in January 1939. Inter-



Lady Zahava Kohn (centre) with her daughter Hephzi (left) surrounded by pupils from Kantor King Solomon High School

SCHOOLS

BY LAURA MARKS

woven with his personal narrative were details of historical events about the Holocaust, giving the audience an excellent picture of life for Jewish people at that time. This was followed by many interesting questions.

The culmination of the evening was the lighting of six candles by survivors, and representatives of the wider community, in memory of the six million Jewish people who lost their lives in the Holocaust, and a minute's silence and Kaddish.

All these events, with the purpose of education, remembrance, commemoration and reflection, were attended variously by local MP Dr Alex Burghart, the mayor of Brentwood, a past mayor, councillors and other invited guests including Steven Jaffe, consultant to the Jewish Leadership Council, which brings together CEOs of major Jewish community organisations in the UK.

KANTOR King Solomon High School were honoured to share the incredible story of Holocaust survivor Lady Zahava Kohn. Joined by her daughter Hephzi, sharing original items from the Holocaust including the bowls they ate from and letters sent to relatives, they told the incredible story of survival, stories from Bergen Belsen the concentration camp she was sent to along with her parents, her rehabilitation and being reunited with her brother after five years apart.

Pupils were joined by sixth form students from Wanstead, Beal, Trinity and Ilford County High, Valentine and Woodford County High who worked in groups discussing several topics in relation to the Holocaust.

They asked fantastic questions and it was a privilege to host this event once again.

Hephzi said: "Coming to Kantor King Solomon for the past nine years has actually been one of the highlights of each year for me. We speak about once or twice a week in schools all over London (in the past all over the UK, too) – but there has always been something particularly special about coming to KKS for your Holocaust seminars to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. They are unique.

"The fact that you bring together students from all over the borough of Redbridge – who sit together – to discuss, learn and work together is remarkable. I know how much work this must take to organise, but the benefits are huge. You are giving kids an opportunity to learn about the Holocaust, prejudice and racism in a unique way. I hope these sessions will stay with them."

Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre at Loughton

BY PAT LIDIKER

EPPING Forest District Council will build and install a public Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre on Loughton's Traps Hill in a landmark first for the area.

The announcement was made on Holocaust Memorial Day, during a tree planting ceremony in the garden of Epping Forest District Museum. The event was given added poignance as it marked 75 years since Loughton opened its doors to 23 Holocaust survivors after the liberation of the concentration camps.

Following a Council Cabinet meeting earlier this month, councillors agreed to grant a long lease of 125 years to an unused area of land of 14.1m x 6m, which is close to Loughton Library, for the Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre.

Once it is finished, it will have a huge part to play in keep-

ing knowledge of the Holocaust alive, particularly for secondary school students learning about World War Two. The new facilities – which will be maintained by the Holocaust Educational Trust – will host a permanent exhibition in conjunction with events at Loughton Library and Epping Forest District Museum.

The approval of the Centre marks the fruition of plans and research dating back to October 2018, when the Epping Forest Holocaust Memorial Group was established. Cllr Howard Kauffman, a member of the group along with several other residents, says many meetings took place to reach this stage.

He told the *Essex Jewish News*: "One of the reasons for this site is because of the Holocaust survivors who came to Loughton immediately after the war and were guests in the Holmehurst Hostel, so there is actually DNA here.

"We also have an agreement with the cricket ground opposite to hold events in some of the open space every year, not as a gathering point but a very reserved, remembrance place. It is all about education."

There is a significant Jewish population in the Epping Forest area, with synagogues in Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton and a community in Epping.

Many attended the tree planting ceremony on Holocaust Memorial Day, when painted stones were laid bearing the names of Loughton's Holocaust survivors and the staff at the Holmehurst Hostel that housed them. The Jewish community was joined by local dignitaries, councillors and children from nearby schools for the event.

Chabad Buckhurst Hill's Rabbi Odom Brandman said: "I know everyone in our Essex Jewish community will be pleased to see how this meaningful day has been recognised. A tree has great meaning: the roots represent our past, the fruit represents our future and we cannot grow without the strong roots to give us what we need."

Richard Bassett, chairman of Epping Forest District Council, added: "I feel very privileged to plant the tree, a sign of life and hope. I'm very thankful to the schools for their participation and to the Jewish community for welcoming us to be part of this. I have attended several events to mark this day and

have heard so many moving stories of human survival. We must not tolerate any form of genocide, and must make sure the horrors are never forgotten and never repeated."

Pupils from Leverton Primary School, King Harold

Business Academy and Davenant Foundation School painted the names on the stones, having learned about the survivors and caring staff at the Loughton hostel. They were told that stones are often put on Jewish graves and memorials

as, unlike flowers, they won't die; and so will always be there as a symbol of the memory of each person. The name painted on the 24th stone is that of Heini Goldberg, who looked after survivors at Holmehurst Hostel.

Southend survivor sculpted on his 90th birthday

BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

ROYAL sculptress to the stars Frances Segelman (Lady Petchey) undertook a unique project with Holocaust survivor Leslie Kleinman BEM to celebrate his 90th birthday.

A special sculpting session took place at Jewish Care's Redbridge Jewish Community Centre (RJCC) with Leslie's family and friends in attendance, along with members of both RJCC and Jewish Care's Holocaust Survivors' Centre.

An initial life-size, clay bust of Leslie took just two hours to complete, and will be cast subsequently into bronze at the Bronze Age Foundry in Limehouse. Frances' daughter, Victoria Perloff, also painted a portrait of Leslie which she presented to him on the day.

Well known for her busts of royalty and celebrities, Frances' sculpture is the latest in a series created of Holocaust survivors

living in the UK, including Sir Ben Helfgott, Ivor Perl BEM, Miriam Freeman and Freddie Knoller.

Frances said: "It has been a great privilege to sculpt Leslie Kleinman. These important art events help future generations learn from the Holocaust so that it never happens again."

Born in Rumania, 29 May 1929, Leslie arrived in Auschwitz at the age of 15, on his birthday. He now talks regularly to schoolchildren about his experiences and the dangers of hatred and prejudice.

Leslie, a member of Southend & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation, said: "Dr Mengele passed me as I said I was older than I really was. All I can tell you is that when I go to schools to talk to children, they listen to what I have to say."

Leslie's wife, Miriam Kleinman, added: "He survived by being positive and his hope kept him alive, he felt all the time that God was walking with him.



PHOTO BY SOPHIE DUNN

He has no hatred towards anyone, which is an amazing thing for someone who has been through so much. This is a big milestone in Leslie's life and in mine. It's amazing that he's reached the grand old age of 90. The sculpture shows his likeness and his strength and what made him survive."



Rabbi Odom Brandman and Cllr Richard Bassett with pupils from local schools in Loughton at the tree planting ceremony to mark HMD

ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

Passover Greetings to the Community 5780/2020




SUKKAT SHALOM REFORM SYNAGOGUE
1 Victory Road, Hermon Hill, Wanstead, E11 1UL

Rabbi Larry Becker and all of our members wish you a happy and healthy Passover (Pesach)

If you would like more information about the synagogue please contact us on
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(Answer phone, please leave a message)
Email: admin@sukkatshalom.me.uk
Website: www.sukkatshalom.org.uk



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Southend and District Reform Synagogue
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Westcliff-on-Sea
Essex SS0 9SZ
Telephone 01702 711663
www.southendreform.org.uk

The Executive and Council of Southend and District Reform Synagogue, together with Rabbi Warren Elf MBE, warmly wish the community and all readers a happy and healthy Pesach

For the duration of the coronavirus crisis, online Shabbat services are held on Friday night at 6.00 p.m. and Saturday morning at 10.30 a.m. Please contact the synagogue for details on 01702 711663
Our online Communal Seder will be on Thursday 9th April at 6.30 p.m.

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Rabbi & Rebbetzen Singer, The Honorary Officers, Board of Management and our Community send greetings to all EJN readers for a Healthy and Peaceful Pesach.

קהילה קדושה שיר חדש



East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue

Rabbi Richard Jacobi and Emeritus Rabbi David Hulbert, the Honorary Officers and Council send warm wishes to the community and all readers of The Essex Jewish News for a healthy and happy Pesach 5780

Marlborough Road, London E18 1AR
020 8989 7619
eastlondonandessexliberal@gmail.com
eastlondonandessexliberalsynagogue.org

New Essex Masorti Synagogue



The Board of New Essex Masorti Synagogue wishes the community a healthy and safe Pesach 5780

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Rabbi Lee Sunderland, the Honorary Officers and Congregation wish everyone a Healthy Kosher Pesach



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The Governors, Staff and Students at both schools wish the whole community a very happy Pesach

LOUGHTON SYNAGOGUE
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Rabbi Yanky Abrams, the Honorary Officers and Board of Management wish all readers a Happy and Peaceful Pesach



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At this difficult time for all of us, Rabbi Davis, Rabbi Goodwin, the Honorary Officers and Board of Management wish all readers of the Essex Jewish News a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful Pesach
See our website chigshul.org.uk for our online activities.
The cost of this advert is being covered by private donations

*Passover Greetings to the
Community 5780/2020*

chabad
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wish all of our friends and supporters a
very happy and healthy Pesach

On behalf of Executive Directors:
Rabbi & Mrs Sufrin MBE
of **Chabad Gants Hill**

Rabbi & Mrs Brandman
of **Chabad Buckhurst Hill**

Rabbi & Mrs Posen
of **Chabad Epping**

Chabad also has an office in Westcliff-on-Sea

Gants Hill: www.chabadilford.co.uk

Buckhurst Hill: www.chabadonthehill.co.uk

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Rabbi Geoffrey & Rebbetzin Michelle Hyman along with the community of
Southend & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation
warmly wish the Community and all EJM Readers

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open during Chol Hamoed. For more times and details, please visit our website or phone the Shul Office.



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Rabbi Steven & Rebbetzen Siobhan Dansky,
Reverend Gary & Gillian Newman, the Executive Board
and Synagogue Advisory Council wish all their
members and the community
A Happy, Healthy and Kosher Pesach.

**THANK
YOU**

This issue was
produced in some
very unsettling
circumstances, as
our community and
country moved into
lockdown in order to
fight the coronavirus.

We would like to
thank our volunteer
team, contributors
and advertisers who
made this online
edition possible.

We hope you all have
an enjoyable and safe
Passover.



Chag Pesach Sameach!

At these unprecedented times, Rabbi Lisa Barrett, Council and staff of SWESRS wish the entire Jewish
community a safe, healthy and happy Pesach.

Staying connected is more important than ever, and the spiritual support of community takes on special
significance as we learn to live in physical isolation. But there's no need to feel alone! Join us online for our
Family Friendly First Night Pesach Seder, and our Second Night Communal Seder. Join us too for our online
Shabbat services, Musical services, learning, meditation and more.

You can find online joining details and information about all our online activities on our website
www.swesrs.org.uk. You can also contact us by email: admin@swesrs.org.uk or telephone: 020 8599 0936

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PASSOVER THOUGHTS FROM OUR COMMUNAL LEADERS

BY **CHIEF RABBI EPHRAIM MIRVIS**
CHIEF RABBI OF THE UNITED HEBREW CONGREGATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

A RECENT BBC News item reported that more than a quarter of people engage in monthly domestic disputes about which types of plastic can be recycled. Research carried out in London last year found that nearly 90% of drivers were still grappling with what the new Ultra Low Emissions Zone would mean for them. A report issued in January by a cross-party Parliamentary group suggested that, in efforts to reduce plastic waste, many are using materials which can actually cause greater damage to the environment.

When it comes to respond-

ing to climate change, I fear that too many of us are failing to see the wood for the trees.

It is told of the apocryphal 'wise elders of Chelm' that they were becoming increasingly concerned about the town's only bridge. A small cavity in the bridge quickly became a dangerous gap. Every day brought more incidents of people falling into the valley below and injuring themselves. An emergency meeting of the elders was called. After a full day of intense discussion and debate, the unanimous solution was finally announced: they would urgently build a hospital in the valley below!

I wonder what the reaction of the elders of Chelm would be to the problem of climate change and, indeed, whether it would be different at all to the way many people

actually view the issue today.

On Pesach, we recall how Aaron, not Moses, was instructed to instigate the first three of the ten plagues – blood and frogs, which emerged from water, and lice, which emerged from the earth.

Rashi explains that Moses owed both water and the earth a personal debt of gratitude. The waters of the Nile had protected his life when, as a baby, he was set afloat in a basket, while the earth provided the hiding place for the body of the Egyptian taskmaster whom Moses had killed in order to save a Hebrew slave.

This anthropomorphism is surprising. Can one really feel a sense of respect or deference for a river or the earth?

I believe that there is a powerful message here about our attitude to the environment. We tend to measure the

impact of climate change by sea level, temperature increase or the amount of carbon in the air. These are, of course, all crucial in their own right, but what if we measured the impact of climate change by the number of human lives it has already destroyed? Might that help focus our minds?

Accurate figures would be difficult to produce, but there is no question that millions of lives are lost every year to air pollution, natural disasters, pandemics and extreme water or food shortages related to climate change.

More than anything, Pesach is about responsibility. Slaves are merely an instrument, acting purely upon instruction. As we celebrate our freedom from Egypt and its accompanying responsibility – to Torah, to Hashem and to living in His service – we must

not forget our responsibility to protect the fragile world that He created for us.

Consequently, our response to climate change should be not only about this type of plastic or that; this type of car or that. It should be a far more fundamental shift in the way that we think about the natural environment. Planet Earth has sustained humanity for millennia, just as it sustained Moses in Egypt. In return, we are failing to offer it the respect that it deserves.

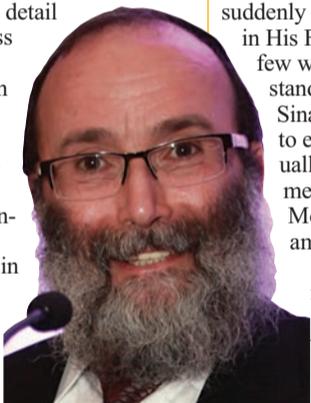
Valerie and I wish you a Chag Kasher Vesameach.



BY **RABBI ARYEH SUFRIN MBE**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHABAD LUBAVITCH NORTH EAST LONDON AND ESSEX

THE festival of Passover is one of transformation. Our homes, kitchens and food intake all change. Likewise, amongst the deeper meanings of this unique festival is that every Jew has the inner capacity and actual ability to transform themselves, in a short time, from one extreme to the opposite. The Torah describes in detail the bitterness of the enslavement in Egypt, and the nadir of spiritual depravity to which the enslaved Jews had sunken in those days.

Enslaved in a country from which



even a single slave could not escape; completely in the power of a Pharaoh who bathed in the blood of Jewish children; in utmost destitution; broken in body and spirit by the meanest kind of forced labour – suddenly Pharaoh's power is broken; the entire people are liberated; the erstwhile slaves emerge from bondage as a free nation, bold and dignified "with an outstretched arm" and "with great wealth".

Likewise, is our spiritual liberation in a manner that bespeaks a complete transformation. After having sunk to the lowest degree of impurity, we suddenly behold G-d revealed in His Full Glory; and only a few weeks later, we all stand at the foot of Mount Sinai where G-d speaks to each one of us individually, without any intermediary, not even that of Moses, and declares: "I am G-d, thy G-d!"

A practical lesson indeed for us all. No matter what the status of the Jew is, individually or collectively; no mat-

ter how gloomy the position appears to be in the light of human appraisal, we are reminded daily of the Exodus – and strive effectively towards complete liberation and freedom, in a bold manner ("with an outstretched arm") and to the fullest attainment ("with great wealth"): freedom from all shackles and obstacles in our escape from our "personal" Egypt, in order to reach Spiritual heights.

Without pause and hesitation on this road; we cannot rely on our initial accomplishments; one must go on and on, higher and higher, until one apprehends and experiences the call: "I am G-d, thy G-d!"

A timely message of Passover in our present time and age, when in recent times we have united together, particularly here in the UK, standing strong and bold against the ills of antisemitism. Our ability to transform ourselves as the Jewish People as we left Egypt some 3,300 years ago remains the same today for each of us daily.

Wishing you and yours a very happy and Kosher Pesach.

BY **RABBI LAURA JANNER-KLAUSNER**
SENIOR RABBI TO REFORM JUDAISM

DAYENU – it would have been enough for us.

At this time of the year, a time for rejoicing in our freedom from slavery, we recount at our Seder the very many blessings which we have been given. In addition to the long list of wonders our ancestors were fortunate to benefit from, we think of our own blessings. Even just looking around us at the Seder, we hopefully see how fortunate we are to be with people we care for and who care for us; a table looking resplendent for the holiday, with plenty to eat; a roof over our heads to give us warmth and shelter. We count the many blessings we are fortunate to have been given.

Similarly, we think of the blessings we have been given as a community. Even in these times, which have seemed like the most difficult in many decades, we must still recognise our fortune. There are

challenges, without question, but our Jewish community remains one which can feel secure and confident – a vibrant and diverse community, with allies beyond our walls who are prepared to stand with us at any time of concern.

We must be grateful, because we must recognise also that not everyone is so lucky. We see ourselves as having personally come out of Egypt to enjoy the freedom we have today, and we recognise that not everyone – in our society, in our world – has had that same opportunity. Even in our enlightened and modern age, there are still far too many whose life is bitter like the Maror on our Seder plate.

And so we come to realise another meaning to our song of Dayenu – the blessings we recount may have been enough for us, but what about others? They have not been able to



heal the many wrongs in our world. It is left to us now to use our freedom to help those who need it: the family in our local community who have to rely on food banks; the refugee seeking a place of shelter; those who starve in our world of plenty.

Our community is thankfully blessed with many people who take this obligation seriously. Here in Essex, within our synagogue communities, there are many members proudly doing their bit – through collections for the needy in their community and through building interfaith understanding as well as

much more. They offer us all an example of how we must meet the responsibility of our freedom at this festival of our freedom.

We can only do what we are capable of but, hopefully, for those who need it, what we can do will be enough.

BY **RABBI CHARLEY BAGINSKY**
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS AT LIBERAL JUDAISM

COMMUNAL Seder nights – especially those I've heard about at East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue – never fail to attract people in force. Outside the obvious attractions of wonderful songs, tasty food and learned rabbis there is an eternal connection about the Seder.

It connects us to the past, not only to the distant past of liberation from Egypt, but every moment in the past when we have not been free; and even to moments in our current lives when we feel bound. It links us also to every other Jew celebrating the Seder



that night. Regardless of location or denomination, the Seder is accessible, designed to be understood and internalised.

The Jewish mystics stated that there were two types of encounters between God and humanity, one a call from above and one a call from below. The one from above is supernatural and is initiated by God, whereas the one from below is humanity calling on God and is, therefore, more human. While the first requires no human effort, the second requires our participation. Its significance, therefore, is more than a memory of an event, it has the potential to change us.

Time and time again the Seder tells us that we were redeemed from

Egypt with signs and

wonders – a calling to us from above. But, as we all know, the climax comes at the splitting of the sea. The Midrash tells us Naschon ben Amindav braves his own fears and took the first step into the sea, which answers him by parting.

It has never been easy to believe in God or even, at times, to be Jewish. Many of us cry out for some signs and wonders that could provide proof that we are not alone, we are waiting for the miraculous intervention from above. But as Rabbi Dr Abraham Joshua Heschel said: "True prayer leads us to action." When we immerse ourselves in indifference, or are complacent to other's needs, then we fail to initiate the call from below; we fail in our part to be God's partners in the world.

I think that this is possibly the most central message of Passover and the Seder, and perhaps the answer to its continued popularity and centrality. Of course, it reminds us of the power of God – but it also reminds us of the power of people to change the shape of history, generation after generation.

BY **RABBI RONI TABICK**
RABBI OF NEW STOKE NEWINGTON MASORTI SYNAGOGUE

SEQUELS are tricky things. Original movies can be bold, different and exciting – sequels always run the risk of either being too much like the original, and hence boring, or too different, and thus unsatisfying. How do you follow up something which is very much beloved and successful?

The first Pesach must have been an unbelievable spectacle – against all odds, the Israelite people were finally freed from slavery, and rushed out of Egypt so quickly that they didn't have time for their dough to rise. It's the moment that we focus on at our Seders, and which is described in Exodus 12. It was miraculous, life-altering, magical.

But what about the second Pesach?

In Numbers 9, we read about the first anniversary of the Exodus, when the people celebrate Pesach for the first time as a ritual, rather than as lived experience. They offer up the Pesach sacrifices, but there is a problem – some people in the community are ritually impure

and thus unable to sacrifice the lamb.

They turn to Moses saying: "We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the Lord's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?"

Moses answered them: "Wait until I find out what the Lord commands concerning you." (Numbers 9:7-8)

This situation, obviously, has never come up before, and so Moses doesn't immediately know what to do. In most cases, while ritual impurity might prevent a person from taking part in the rituals of the Tabernacle, there wasn't such a pressing need – the offering could be done later. The Paschal lamb is different – it had to be slaughtered on the 14th of Nisan or it would be too late. What could be done?

God's solution is that they could have another opportunity, a month later, on the 14th Iyar. This make-up opportunity



became known as Pesach Sheni, or Second Pesach.

The original Pesach teaches us about the meaning of freedom; the responsibility we have to care for the vulnerable and the oppressed because we know what it's like to be in their shoes.

But the sequel, the Pesach celebrated a year later (Pesach II) offers us some different lessons. Pesach II teaches us about inclusion, that everyone in the community has a right to participate in its rituals; and thus we need to go out of our way to help people find access to what we do in our shuls and our homes.

The Seder encourages asking questions as a way to get conversation started – that's why we sing Ma Nishtanah, and learn about the Four Sons – but the sequel to the first Pesach teaches us something even stronger. Questions aren't just important for education – the right question can change the world.



**BOARD OF DEPUTIES OF
BRITISH JEWS**
ADVOCACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

A message for Pesach from the President

PESACH is a poignant time of year for all of us. It is the moment when we reflect both on the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt and also celebrate their freedom from Pharaoh.

For many years, we have lived free and safe lives as Jews in the UK. However, the antisemitism crisis in Labour has given Pesach an extra level of significance. For the first time I can remember, anti-Jewish racism has been at the front and centre of British politics. Heading into a General Election last December, it is not overstating matters to say that many in our community were feeling real anxiety, and, in some cases, even fear, over our future.

The Labour leadership election will be decided shortly before the start of Pesach. We are hoping that this moment will be a turning point for the party. This is the reason that, in January, we produced our Ten Pledges for Labour Leadership and Deputy Leadership candidates. The pledges identify the ten key points we believe Labour needs to sign up to in order to begin healing its relationship with the Jewish community.

This relationship, once rock solid, has been all but destroyed. It will take leadership, commitment and, most importantly, action. We expect that those seeking to move the party forward will openly and unequivocally endorse these Ten Pledges in full, making it clear that if elected as leader, or deputy leader, they will commit themselves to their full implementation.

We have been encouraged that all the leadership candidates have signed up to the pledges (although, disgracefully, deputy leadership candidates Richard Burgon and Dawn Butler refused to accept them). We are also hugely encouraged by the massive media coverage the pledges have received and the way they have compelled candidates to confront the antisemitism in their party.

Of course, antisemitism is not just a problem for Labour. We engaged with all the major parties during the election campaign when candidates made antisemitic statements or posts. We will

continue to call out racism, wherever it comes from and whenever it happens, in a completely even-handed way.

Those who know the Board of Deputies will understand we are not a single-issue organisation. We exist to ensure that the UK's Jewish community can live freely, happily and continue to practise our traditions.

We are working to ensure that the Jewish community's interests are protected after Brexit, whether that is safeguarding UK-Israel trade, carrying over to UK law EU sanctions on groups like Hamas, or guaranteeing the same or better access to Kosher meat.

We are passionate about protecting our religious freedoms, whether the right to circumcise our baby boys in accordance with our tradition or to ensure that employees are able to take time off for Jewish festivals and follow their Jewish traditions within the law.

Through Pikuach, we supervise religious education in Jewish schools, and we travel the country with the Jewish Living Experience exhibition, educating non-Jewish children and adults about our way of life.

We engage with Government ministers, MPs, local councillors, diplomats, faith leaders and with a huge variety of public bodies on behalf of the community we represent.

This festival of freedom reminds us how our ancestors suffered. It is our aim to ensure that our generation of Jews continues to live safely and happily.

Wishing you all a Chag Kasher ve-Sameach,

Marie van der Zyl

Marie van der Zyl
President of the Board of
Deputies of British Jews

Awards nod for Supportive Communities



VOLUNTEERS at Jewish Care's Supportive Communities Tea Parties in Redbridge have been shortlisted for the Redbridge Mayoral Community Award in the Community and Neighbourhood category.

The monthly tea parties have been running for seven years and provide an opportunity for people to connect with others at tea parties hosted by volunteers in their

local area.

At the groups, new friendships are built and old friends reconnected. The tea parties give guests a chance to socialise and talk about common interests. There are now almost 30 regular attendees and two regular tea parties a month.

Alison Smardina, Supportive Communities Officer, says: "When I found out that we had

been shortlisted, I was so pleased for the volunteers. They are all amazing, dedicated volunteers who work so hard coordinating the tea parties, calling to invite guests, hosting and driving our guests to and from the afternoons, as many of them are not mobile. I am so proud of them.

"We started with one group and it has grown to two. It's so important for people to be able

to get out to socialise with others in our community and enjoy stimulating conversation. This has huge effects on people's wellbeing, and is so important for us to help combat loneliness and social isolation."

For more information about Jewish Care's Supportive Communities Tea Parties, contact Alison Smardina on 020 8922 2273 or asmardina@jcare.org

A hero tells his story



Rami Sherman with Rabbi Richard Jacobi

BY JUDITH KONZON

FORTY members of East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue braved a wild and windy night to hear a fascinating story of courage of a completely different order.

Rami Sherman, in his youth a member of IDF's famed Sayeret Matkal unit, entranced the audience with his account of his role in the daring raid on Entebbe in July 1976.

At the time, the world was captivated by the audacity and chutzpah of the raid. The IDF flew four Hercules aircraft laden with 100 brave young men disguised in Ugandan army uniform, medical personnel and supplies, and one special black Mercedes limousine, 4,000 kilometres through enemy skies in the dead of night to launch the raid on the Ugandan international airport. The aim was to free over 100 Israeli and Jewish hostages and the French pilot and aircrew, who had volunteered to stay with their passengers after their capture by Palestinian and German terrorists.

The ill-fated Air France

flight had been hijacked en-route from Tel Aviv to Paris. While the world waited, holding its breath and listening to the terrorists' demands, the Israeli government, led by Yitzhak Rabin, decided to act. They assembled the crack unit of volunteer soldiers to fly the clandestine mission to the Ugandan airport and bring back the hostages.

In their planning, the Israeli government allowed for up to 40% casualties – in the event four hostages and one soldier were lost.

The success of the mission was a world-changing event, which enhanced Israel's standing on the international stage and led to Ugandan reprisals against other innocent parties.

It still has repercussions today, both for the hostages who continue to live with their terrible experience and for Israeli politics, because the soldier lost – Yoni Netanyahu – became a national hero, and his family name continues to dominate Israeli politics.

Rami Sherman told his incredible tale with warmth and humility; but his actions as a 23-year-old soldier could not be overestimated.

A few words in your ear



BY ALFRED LEVY

BECAUSE so many Jewish and Yiddish words have passed into the English language over the years, I thought it might be useful to have some fun and explore their possible alternative origins:

MATZO: This of course is a compound word, the first half of which, MAT, derives from the Old English or Early Saxon matt, meaning 'flat rug'. (Og sil infee matt cava? – Who took the rug from my cave?). The second half of the word is a querulous exclamation used by some Jewish people when confronted with an undeniable – usually adverse – statement of fact: ZO?! (whose fault is that?) We must therefore conclude that the word originally meant flat, controversial and tasting like a rug. About right, really.

MAZELTOV: Good Luck? Yes, but consider. The first syllable, MA, in most languages is taken to mean 'mother'. The second syllable, ZELT, is a little more complicated. It was recently established that elderly Jewish scribes were unable to write or pronounce the letter F and, nowadays, it is accepted that most words of that period (1000 – 200 BCE) with the initial Z were intended to start with the letter F. (Zebediah = Febediah – after the second month, of course – and so on). Thus, ZELT is obviously intended to be FELT and, as our

more erudite readers will know, this word has the same meaning in every language. It is the material used to cover roofs. The suffix, OV, is fairly obvious and is a corruption of the ancient Russian word for roof. Therefore, when you wished someone Mazeltov in ancient times it meant that you hoped their mother would be able to cover the roof with sufficient felt to keep out the weather, and thus they would remain healthy.

BAGEL (or its corruption, BEIGEL): Today we accept this word to mean a ring of boiled bread dough arranged around a hole and then baked. This was not always so. BA, the first syllable, expresses the cry of dissatisfaction of a sheep, presumably when confronted with a hole or space where his food should have been. GEL, the second half of the word, clearly means GIRL, FEMALE or WOMAN. The obvious conclusion is that a

bagel was seen to be fit only for women and sheep to eat. And we can't argue with that.

BUBBELA (or Boobella): Has very diverse origins. It is clear even to the tyro language student that, as far back as pre-revolution Russia, the first syllable, BUB, always had the connotation of breast or bosom. In fact, some scholars lean towards the theory that, when spelled with two B's as here, it should mean double-breasted. This is demonstrated by the Russo-Germanic word UBERBUBBAGE-FLOSENHETSKI which, of course, means double-breasted overcoat. In the book *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, he mentions pendulous bubs and the meaning is quite clear, and does not need to be expanded upon in this publication. The second syllable, ELA or ELLA, is undoubtedly derived from the name of the ancient Polish goddess, ELLAWICZ, the middle-

European goddess of maternalism. So we now arrive at the almost indisputable meaning of the word Bubbela – a large breasted, matriarchal lady with, not surprisingly, a broad shoulder to cry on.

PURIM: Finally, in this short treatise, let us look at this word. It is common knowledge that, when writing from right to left, Hebrew scribes would often become confused by this unnatural process. This resulted, from time to time, in a word becoming completely reversed and the letters transposed. Our research has shown that this is exactly what happened in the case of Purim. This reveals that the intended word was MURIP; and once one realises this, it goes a long way towards understanding the real meaning of the word. MUR obviously derives from the Latin for 'wall'. The source of IP goes back many centuries to the complicated translations of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was a verb meaning to force, to push or to compel. Thus, we learn that the word PURIM means 'a festival that drives us all up the wall'.



JEWISH Blind & Disabled's Abi Spital (pictured) and Keren Yakov gave a very well-received talk to the pupils of Wohl Ilford Jewish

Primary School. The entire school attended a special assembly where Abi and Keren discussed all the different fun ways children and adults raise

money for the charity, before showing off some of the aids that make independent living possible for those with disabilities.

Letters of thanks for Paul

BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

CHILDREN from Blackmore Primary School, in Ingatstone, wrote touching letters to Paul Levy, a member of the Chelmsford Jewish Community who speaks about Judaism at local schools.

Paul volunteers to give talks to pupils of all faiths, and none, and says they are fascinated about elements of our religion – especially the breaking of the glass during a wedding ceremony.

After speaking at Blackmore, Paul received a large number of hand-written letters through the post as a thank you.

One student, named

Lewis, wrote: "Thank you very much for visiting and talking to us about how Jewish people live their lives. I found it was very interesting – especially how you read from right to left and pray three times a day. I would love to learn more about Judaism in the near future."

Another, Ruby, added: "I liked it when you spoke about the Jewish home and what you do on Friday night/Shabbat. Thank you for bringing in your candle sticks, menorah and kiddush cup. It was all very interesting."

To find out more about Chelmsford Jewish Community, please visit www.jewishcommunitychelmsford.co.uk

Sacha going to the summit to support GIFT

In June 2020, Clayhall resident Sacha Johnstone is planning to summit Mt. Kilimanjaro – the tallest mountain in Africa, standing at an impressive 19,340 feet above sea level. Sacha will be joining a team of around a dozen other climbers from across the community, as they attempt to raise much needed funds for GIFT.

GIFT (which stands for Give It Forward Today) is one of several charities which sit under the 'Jewish Futures' umbrella.

Primarily, GIFT is most known for supporting hundreds of Jewish families across London (and Essex) who are experiencing serious financial hardship. GIFT supplies them with weekly care packages filled with household essentials such as kosher food and toiletries, as well as everything they need in order to make a beautiful Shabbat meal for their families such as challah and grape juice. In addition, GIFT run educational programmes in schools and universities, and provide volunteering opportunities for people to visit the elderly and the sick, as well as providing free tuition for schoolchildren at a weekly homework club.

When asked why he has chosen to embark on this chal-

lenge, Sacha told us that: "GIFT is one of the silent heroes of our community. It really is so much more than just a foodbank. Through its dynamic educational programmes, and impactful volunteering initiatives, GIFT is helping to create a culture of social responsibility, so that giving to those less fortunate than ourselves becomes the norm across the Jewish community and wider society."

The 26-year-old is no stranger to pushing himself physically and mentally outside of his comfort zone. He has previously completed the 3 Peaks Challenge – which involves climbing the highest mountains in England, Scotland and Wales in under 24 hours – and, in 2018, took part in a 12-day expedition through the Himalayas in order to reach the base camp of Mt. Everest, which stands at a similar altitude to Mt. Kilimanjaro. This time, he is looking forward to reaching the top of the mountain.

Sacha – a member of Cranbrook United Synagogue and former head boy at Kantor King Solomon High School – is aiming to raise at least £4,000 for the charity. He is encouraging support from across the Essex Jewish community, particularly since GIFT supports many families



Sacha pointing to the summit of Mt. Everest on a previous mountain climb in November 2018

living in the area.

He added: "Giving is the basis upon which all relationships are formed, and in a

world that seems to cultivate selfishness and isolationism, the work that GIFT does seems more important than

ever before."

If you would like to sponsor Sacha or find out more about his upcom-

ing challenge, you can do so by visiting his fundraising page at www.gift.charitycheckout.co.uk/pf/sacha-johnstone

Jacob's trek to fight poverty



BY MICAELA BLITZ

ESSEX student Jacob Shapira is planning to trek up the highest mountain in the world this summer in order to raise money for charity. The 19-year-old, who is currently studying History and Spanish at Bristol University, is an ex Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School and JFS pupil from Chigwell. He will be scaling Kilimanjaro at the end of August along with 16 of his university peers.

Jacob aims to raise £3,000 for Hope for Children, an international charity that combats child poverty and hunger, as well as providing education and healthcare programmes. The organisation works towards creating a happy, healthy and positive childhood for children

across the world.

As Jacob told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Hope for Children is a small charity that does vital work across the world, helping children living in poverty and deprivation to have better lives, with access to food, education and the chance to have a good life. I wanted to help raise awareness of their brilliant work and help to give them the necessary funding they need in order to continue the amazing work that they do."

As well as taking part in the trek, Jacob is also running the London Half Marathon to raise money and help with his fitness and endurance levels. He knows that climbing Kilimanjaro will be tough going, but he is determined to do it; and he is currently training by running at

least once a week and regularly training at the gym, as well as walking as much as possible to help increase his stamina.

Jacob has been raising money mainly through online donations and bucket collections, but also plans to do some more events with other students to help reach his target.

He adds: "I really want to raise as much money as possible for this great cause. Every £100 raised is enough to feed a child for a year, so any donation, big or small, will really make a crucial difference to the lives of many impoverished children around the world."

If you would like to make a donation, please visit www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Jacob-Schapira

Walking the walk for Jewish Care



Above: Natasha and her mother Helen. Above right: Grandad Harold. Below right: Zeida Leslie

BY MICAELA BLITZ

AN ex-Kantor King Solomon High School student from Chigwell has set herself a challenge to raise money in memory of her grandfathers.

Natasha Zack, 23, along with her mother Helen, are planning to walk a combined total of 300 miles between them over the month of April, to raise money for Jewish Care. Both her grandfathers were looked after by staff at Jewish Care's Vi and John Rubens House, Gants Hill.

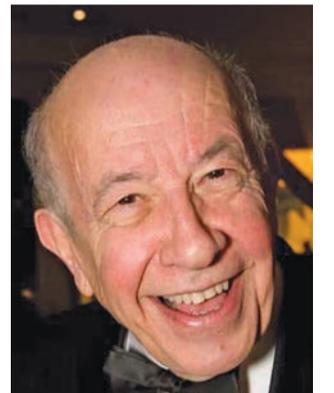
As Natasha explains: "We want to do this walking challenge because of all the wonderful things Jewish Care have done for my family and continue to do for others. Both my grandad, Harold Zack, and my zeida, Leslie Sherman, received such amazing care during the last few years of their life, and

we have been really grateful for the support that Jewish Care gave to them and us.

"I felt that this was a great way to show our appreciation for the work they do, whilst raising money for this worthwhile cause."

Natasha, who is doing currently an internship at JLGB, hopes that the challenge will not only raise funds for this worthwhile cause but will also encourage others to become more active and not take their health for granted.

As she explains: "Unfortunately, both my grandad and my zeida had conditions that affected them physically. My zeida had Parkinson's and dementia, which affected his muscles' ability to work as they should. It's a progressive condition for which there is no cure. My grandad had a bleed in his brain, and found it very difficult



to move after this had happened. They were both previously very active in their lives, and I think what happened to them proves that you just don't know what will happen in the future. But we have control over what we do now, which is why I am setting myself a challenge like this."

She added: "I would love it if others also took on this challenge to see how many miles they can walk in a month too."

If you would like to make a donation to support Natasha and Helen please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/getwalking1>

A new buzz at the Beehive

IT will be a year next month since Ilford United and Clayhall United synagogues merged to become one shul – Cranbrook United Synagogue – and the result has been a new buzz about Beehive Lane.

From Ilford's point of view, the merger, if one is honest, prevented the shul from going under. An ageing congregation and a Shabbat attendance that was miniscule when compared to the glory days of the 1950s and 1960s meant that the synagogue, if it carried on as it did, was unlikely to survive more than another five years or so.

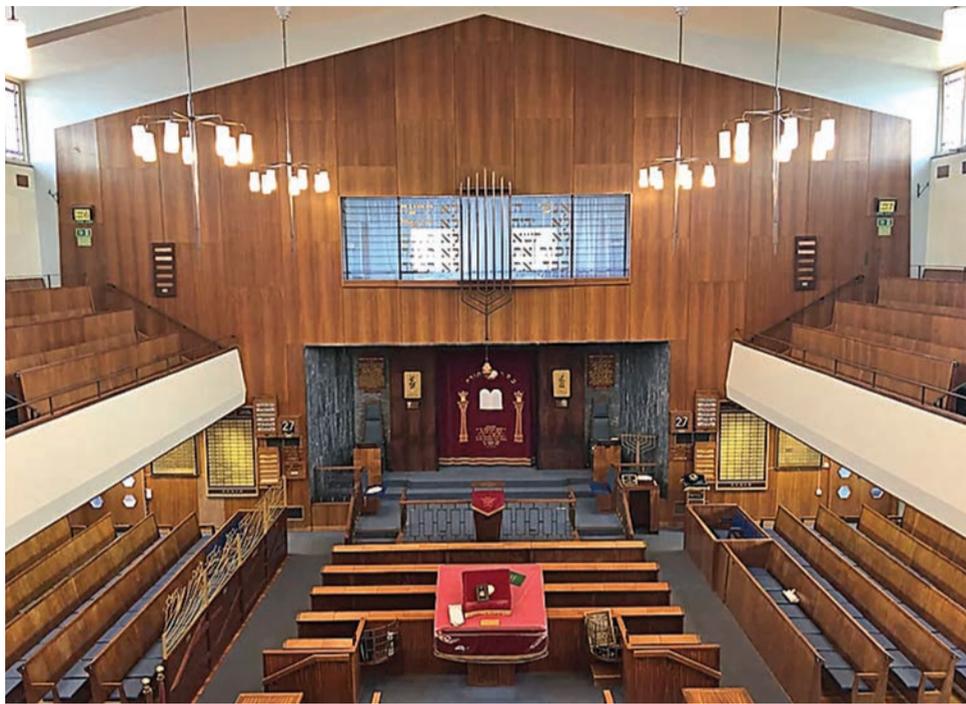
From Clayhall's point of view, the merger offered them the chance to worship in a 'cathedral' synagogue rather than the hall at the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre (RJCC). But, more importantly, the proposed redevelopment of RJCC over the next few years meant that there was unlikely to be room there for a synagogue.

What has become obvious in the past year is the determination of those in office to turn Cranbrook United into more than just a shul. The target appears to be to turn it into a proper community centre hosting different events. That is one of the major reasons the merger appealed to Clayhall.

Before the merger, the Beehive Lane building was empty for most of the time – apart from Beehive Lane JACS, who met (and still meet) there every Thursday.

Now Cranbrook has opened its doors to the community. One of its earliest successes was a health check, where more than 70 people attended the first ever Community Organisation's Open Day, at the shul, from eighteen health and social organisations including Jewish Care, JAMI, Jewish Blind and Disabled, Jewish Women's Aid, Redbridge Carers Support Services, Diabetes UK amongst others.

A Guys' and Gals' club meeting on a Monday has also



MANNY ROBINSON LOOKS AT THE MERGED SHULS, ILFORD AND CLAYHALL, ONE YEAR ON AND FINDS A CRANBROOK COMMUNITY CENTRE IN THE MAKING

got off the ground (see separate article elsewhere in the *EJN*) and is meant to replace the Friendship Clubs that flourished – and then faded – a few years ago.

On the religious side, there are both ladies' and men's Talmud shiurim, a ladies' lunch and learn, a Rosh Chodesh group, spirit with spirits, Purim and bingo; and coming up, an evening devoted to Yom Hashoah.

Another innovation has been to install an open mechitzah, so that women can actually see the services instead of being 'hidden' behind a curtain. Plans are in hand to extend the open mechitzah, so that all women can be on one level downstairs instead of some upstairs and some down.

The synagogue is also hosting, on a regular basis, the Eastern Jewry minyan that used to meet at Newbury Park station:

this takes place in the Beit Hamidrash in Schaller House every Shabbat.

Harold Marco, the synagogue's warden, told the *Essex Jewish News*: "We also want to attract more 40- and 50-year-olds to our open events. They may not necessarily be regular shul goers, but coming to other events could persuade them to attend services more often."

There is little doubt that the merger also saw a drift away by some, mainly Clayhall members, who found the walk to Beehive Lane (if they were 'shomer Shabbat') too much. Others left for other synagogues, but some have since returned.

Of course, any merger will have its teething problems. One disagreement has been the need for a choir, a feature for so many years in the old Ilford United Synagogue. For one reason or another, the choir now does not appear to complement the form

of service conducted by Rabbi Steven Dansky. The choir, however, will be performing once a month instead of every Shabbat.

Other changes from that experienced by the former Ilford members has been kaddish being said in unison with women.

Both Mike Callaghan and Malcolm Nathan, the joint chair, told the *Essex Jewish News* that they are delighted with the merger, which secures both shuls for many years to come.

Another innovation is to have a joint mincha and maariv minyan; and for details of these times, please visit the synagogue's website: www.cranbrooksynagogue.org.uk

On the celebration side, things are also looking up with six bar- and batmitzvot arranged for the 12 months ahead.

A year of promise that appears to have satisfied both former synagogues.

Young professionals wine and dine at Chabad

CHABAD Buckhurst Hill hosted a unique event for young Jewish professionals – Friday Night: A Wine Tasting Shabbos Dinner.

A full gourmet, four-course, traditional, Friday Night Dinner was served accompanied by a selection of five different wines – each with a story and a suitable match to the menu.

Wines were sourced from Kedem Europe, the largest importer of Kosher wines to the UK. Yishai Steinberg, one of Kedem's top salespeople, acted as guest speaker and resident wine connoisseur. He guided the participants through the wines, telling the story of each unique winery they were selected from, and helping all present to enjoy and appreciate them.

Participants were also treated to a fun programme with games, songs and jokes in a relaxed and engaging atmosphere.

Rabbi Odom Brandman, the director of the Chabad Centre in Buckhurst Hill, and his wife Henny came up with the

idea as a unique way of engaging with young professionals. Kevin Benham-Whyte, a friend and supporter who is currently living and working in Shanghai, generously sponsored the whole evening and flew in to participate, along with his daughters and their friends, who still live in Essex and were in the event's target age-range.

Rabbi Brandman told the *Essex Jewish News*: "The event was so popular, online bookings had to be closed on the Wednesday as the tickets were all sold out and the wines and food had already been ordered. Even though more young adults wanted to join, we had to make a cut-off and close the event."

"No expense was spared – we had elegant decorations, real crockery and glassware, good quality wines, chicken, steak and other delicious food, which all added to the calibre of the evening."

"With Kevin's support, we hope to make this an annual event, which will only grow and become more successful each year."

Southend's Pop-In celebrates its barmitzvah



BY GEOFFREY PEPPER

MORE than 120 people attended the 13th anniversary of the now legendary Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation (SWHC) POP-IN – billed as its barmitzvah party.

Care Committee chair Janice Steel said the POP-IN was started in 2006, at a meeting of the then newly formed committee with representatives from SWHC and Jewish Care. It came from an idea by Fay Sober (former wife of the community's chazan at the time, the late Reverend Len Sober) and the late Norman Zetter, a former chair of the Aid Society in Southend.

From 30 guests at the beginning, the monthly numbers trebled. The committee's ethos has stayed the same.

They work very closely together, each one bringing their strength to the group.

At the barmitzvah party, the care team were praised by SWHC Rabbi Geoffrey Hyman and the Mayor of Southend, Councillor John Lamb – who complimented them as "leaders of the community looking after their flock".

Catering was handled by SWHC shop manager David Law, with entertainment from Dean Gee. Special guests included Merrill Dresner, daughter of Fay Sober, Graham Freeman from Jewish Care and many of the POP-IN's generous sponsors.

SWHC president Michael Nelkin gave thanks to Janice Steel and the care committee for all their hard work in the community, which includes visiting the unwell, and for organising this event.

... and the buzz starts at the Guys' and Gals' club

BY PHILIP SHAMPLINA

FRIENDSHIP is a-plenty at Cranbrook Synagogue. To be precise, it's at the recently formed Brook Guys' and Gals' Club, the idea of myself and fellow shul-goer Colin Emden, based on the model of the old Friendship Clubs many synagogues had in the late 1960s.

At 22 Beehive Lane, each and every Monday throughout the year (except Yom Tovim), the Brook Guys' and Gals' Club meet from 10.30am to 3.30pm.

Here you will be greeted by two friendly, happy, smiling ladies. To enter, it's just £4 for a time of mirth, fun and laughter. On offer are a host of activities. You can join the card school – where you will play solo, whist, kalooki, poker, bridge; and also dominoes, chess, Scrabble, Monopoly and other board games. Table tennis and table football are also available.

There is also a discussion group for men, and also one

for women. Reminisce about the 'good old days' when you went to club at Brady, Brent-house, Cambridge and Hackney, Contemporary, Wanstead and Woodford, Maccabi, Leytonstone Maccabi, not forgetting Oxford and St Georges, Victoria and Stamford Hill clubs. Enjoy a good laugh with the Guys and Gals, who attended these haunts in yesteryear.

What about the Old Boys' Club on a Thursday night? When you enter the portals, you will hear all those foot-tapping songs you grew up with (I'm sure you'll be word perfect in every song that's being played).

You can read the newspapers, or just chat. Here there are no strangers, only friends you've yet to meet.

The 'meeter and greeter' will offer you tea, coffee, cake and biscuits. At lunchtime, you will be served with soup of the day and a roll, followed by tea, coffee, cake and biscuits.

Each week there are different activities to look forward

to: bingo, a piano recital, quiz, a talk by a member of the CST or a stand-up comedian. One week, an ex-chef from the Savoy Hotel gave a demonstration of the culinary arts and his soup, on that occasion, was sampled for lunch.

So when you've done your shopping, why don't you pop

into the Brook Guys' and Gals' Club and meet old and new friends for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee (you don't have to stay all the time).

For any enquiries, please contact Colin on 07860 313922 or myself on 07949 626677. We look forward to meeting you.

WIJPS choir on song



THE Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School choir put on an outstanding performance at a recent concert at the Arts Depot in North Finchley, held in aid of Boys Town Jerusalem.

The choir – made up of pupils from years four to six – sang 'Oyfen Pripiche, Thankful

Shooting for the Moon.

Boys Town Jerusalem was established in 1948 to provide a home and education for young immigrants to the newly-created State of Israel. Since then, it has grown into one of the country's largest and most-respected educational institutions. Approximately 950 students, aged 12-20, study and live on the campus. They are the children of immigrants from 45 countries on six continents, mirroring Israel's ethnic diversity. More than 75% come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and require substantial scholarship assistance.

CAMBRIDGE DIET

MARK HARRIS



Elazar & Alissa reach 'to the skies' in their Chaplaincy role

RABBI Elazar and Alissa Symon, the new Jewish student chaplains for Cambridge University and East Anglia, believe – and heartily – that “Judaism and fun can go together”. And since they both hail from Israel, I hope that my somewhat whimsical headline (or even airline?) may appeal to their sense of humour and irony! (Elazar tells me that he delights in “having a good laugh with students over a Shabbat table and late on a Friday night”!)



The UK’s University Jewish Chaplaincy (UJC) is active across the country at numerous universities. Its website declares: “Our chaplains and chaplaincy couples are there for Jewish students of all backgrounds and situations. They provide a warm, vibrant, inclusive and inspiring Jewish environment with thousands of students benefiting every year from their pastoral, spiritual and practical support ... They are also on hand to offer support during challenging times, as students adapt to life away from home for the first time.”

In accord with the UJC’s benevolent philosophy, Rabbi Elazar and Alissa Symon have keenly begun their two-year – possibly three-year chaplaincy role. Both are from Jerusalem, where they were brought up by orthodox-observant parents. Elazar explains that his “are quite liberal for that group”; and that he was sent to “an experimental school” in Israel called ‘Keshet’ (meaning ‘Rainbow’), where he “learned with religious and non-religious students” and found that to be “a special experience”. Alissa mentions that her parents “are very orthodox-observant” and that she “went to an all-girls school, which could be considered as ‘ultra-orthodox’ in Israeli society today”.



The couple were formerly Jewish student chaplains for Nottingham University and the East Midlands. So they possessed a goodly amount of experience – having worked also with young adults in Israel – before taking up their current responsibilities at the start of the academic year last October. Being in Cambridge over Rosh Hashanah, Elazar followed an exploit of his chaplaincy predecessor, Rabbi Mordechai Zeller, by blowing a shofar from the tower of Great St Mary’s during a multi-faith event at the ‘University Church’.

After High School, Elazar volunteered for a year of ‘National Service’ in Beit Shemesh (as did Alissa, who had met her future husband when both were 17 and on a



‘leadership programme’). Their work was at a secondary school, and mainly with the Ethiopian community; Elazar says he felt like “a big brother” to the students. Afterwards, and for seven years – with a break for a year-and-a-half serving in the army – he learned, and completed his rabbinical studies for semicha, at Otniel Yeshiva. The rabbi-chaplain is now studying for a BA in Philosophy with the Open University.



Alissa obtained a BA degree, in Middle Eastern Studies and the Humanities, at Jerusalem’s Shalem College. Last year, she completed an MPhil in Muslim-Jewish Relations at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Cambridge University. Her continuing research focuses on “the formation of Jewish and Palestinian transnational networks and their influence on the Israel-Palestinian conflict”. Alissa addressed Limmud 2019 on this subject; Elazar spoke on Talmudic and related topics.

Last autumn, she joined Cambridge’s Woolf Institute – which studies relations between the Abrahamic faiths, and between religion and society – as research assistant to its executive director, Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner. In Israel, Alissa was an ‘alumni coordinator’ for

the Bronfman Fellowship. She says her “job was to create a community for people with different levels of religious observance”, one “where they can dig deeper into their Jewish identity”. Alissa believes that “Judaism is a multi-layered, complex and beautiful religion and culture”. She worked also with young professionals on ‘leadership development’.

The affable couple, who are expecting their first child in May, have encapsulated their personal, Jewish chaplaincy way of thinking in these succinct terms: “Judaism and fun can go together ... you can be an excellent student and a socially involved and active human being, and still hold a strong Jewish identity.” Elazar “loves chaplaincy’s idea of being there for the students wherever they are and with whatever they need”. Alissa, for whom “university was one of the most exciting and meaningful stages” in her own life, wants again “to be involved in this special stage in life, but from another perspective”.



Needless to say, they had been busily engaged with much activity at the point of this interview – at their home near the River Cam – and well into the second term of their chaplaincy role. The couple have found the Jewish

student ‘community’ in Cambridge to be “very welcoming, engaging, friendly, homely and positive ... and seeking, in a very natural way, the connection” with them. Aside from the warm, family-like and inspiring hospitality they provide for Jewish students in Cambridge (including, of course, on Shabbat for meals etc at their home), the pair organise many interesting and proac-

tive activities for them.

These include Elazar’s ‘Talmud Shiur’ (which he seeks to make relevant also “to Jewish students without a yeshiva or observant background”) with dinner every Wednesday, a ‘Lunch & Learn’ at various colleges on Thursdays and, last term, a programme about current happenings and Judaism with Jewish Theology (such as ‘Socialism versus Capital-

ism’ and the ‘anti-vaccine controversy’). This term, ‘outside speakers’ from Cambridge are talking about Jewish music and arts; and Alissa is doing a class on ‘Radical Jews’. And which – as she puts it – “is intended to engage the wider Jewish student population that isn’t necessarily seeking the Gomma, the Torah ... or to turn up at the Cambridge Synagogue”.



I ask the couple about the personal interests they like to pursue, when they have the time. Elazar says that he “loves football, and other sports as well” ... and that he “enjoys reading and hiking”. As a teenager, he was “absolutely crazy” about soccer, playing for Beitar Jerusalem youth team for four years; and owns up to the fact that he “kind of had a soft spot for Liverpool FC”. He also likes basketball; and says that, in recent years, he has “started liking tennis”, mentioning that one of the many things he enjoys about Cambridge is “having the chance to play at the courts just across the River Cam from home”.

Alissa has remarked that she “likes politics and debating”, noting also that she “reads a lot of poetry”. Her favourite verse writer is the late Yehuda Amichai, renowned as Israel’s greatest poet and one of the world’s leading bards. “I have all his works,” she tells me, “and I read them often.” Like her husband, she also “loves hiking”. And Alissa recalls that their longest hike, lasting five days, “was in northern India when on honeymoon ... a year late”!



Finally, I enquire (maybe somewhat prematurely) what thoughts or notions they would wish to carry away with them at the end of their chaplaincy time here; and what might be their then aspirations. Elazar hopes “to return to Israel with the experience of being a rabbi and leading a ‘community’ which is interesting, diverse and engaged” and knowing the “quality content” that is Cambridge, which he would be thus prompted to kind of recreate and “use in pursuing other rabbinical roles” of which he was presently, and quite understandably unsure, precisely.

Alissa noted the “sense of ‘community’ here” that she would wish to take back to her homeland; as well as the potential for maybe “establishing a new community” of some kind there. And she adds that, undoubtedly, they will be carrying the thought: “How do we translate to Israel what has been happening to our lives here in Cambridge?”



Judaism and fun can go together ... you can be an excellent student and a socially involved and active human being, and still hold a strong Jewish identity ...

The Prince and the pauper (and other characters who 'made' the East End)

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

MANNY ROBINSON



EVERY time I click on my Facebook page, there is one message or another asking for information about the old Jewish East End. Did you ever work at, or go to, the Houndsditch Warehouse? Here is a picture of my bubbah. Does anyone remember her? What street was Frumkins, the wine merchants, in? Is the Troxy still a cinema? Is Johnny Isaacs still a fish and chip shop? We used to have chicken eggs in the fowl and which we put into the soup – why don't we get them now?

Questions, questions, questions – and the only people, I guess, who can answer them all with any accuracy are now probably in their mid to late 80s, who remember with fondness the golden days of the Jewish East End which, to me, were the late 1940s and 1950s.

I say 'the golden days'. In truth, those days were like the pickled cucumbers we ate ... sweet and sour.

It was the generation that was born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, supermarkets, plastic, contact lenses, electric blankets and tumble driers; and before man walked on the moon.

It was also the generation when people married first and then lived together; a generation who thought 'fast food' was what you ate in a hurry, and a Big Mac was an oversized raincoat. A generation that had never heard of computer dating, day centres, disposable nappies, computers, knee replacements, artificial hearts or of men wearing earrings.

■ UNIQUE

There are countless books about the Jewish East End. Some concentrate on the synagogues and historic buildings; others are personal reflections of growing up in the area, while there are still more that look at the history of the Jewish migration to the East End.

But I have yet to come across a book that deals with some of the remarkable personalities who made their mark on the East End. All, sadly, are now long gone; but those unique characters live on in the memory of many East Enders. Here, surely, is a book waiting to be written.

The East End I remember was a world inhabited by good, honest people alongside spicers, villains and snorers; all with nebulous expressions on their faces. There was also a barrel organ player, a cornet player, one who played the mouth organ and salesmen who walked the streets selling laces, buttons, reels of cotton and elastic, usually worn around their necks like a Hawaiian lei.

I can remember vividly Ras Prince Monolulu. I was only 13 or 14 at the time, having come back from being evacuated to Wales, and saw this majestic figure walking through Petticoat Lane, or ad-

joining streets, shouting 'I Gotta Horse!' at the top of his voice. Monolulu wore a head-dress made of ostrich feathers, and lavishly embroidered gowns. He was certainly impossible to miss in a crowd.

■ TIPSTER

The story goes that Monolulu made his name as a racing tipster when he tipped Spion Kop, a 100-6 shot in the 1920 Derby, and it came home first. After that success, Monolulu became a legend, not only in the East End but throughout the world. His death in 1960 was bizarre: a journalist took Monolulu a box of chocolates while he was in hospital and he choked to death on one of them.

Walk outside Blooms or into Brick Lane and you would see Annie and Eva, two beigel sellers whose pitches were up-turned orange boxes. I remember them always covered in huge overcoats that came up to



Top: Ras Prince Monolulu. Left: bandleader Geraldo

PHOTOS BY ALAMY

their ears and knitted caps that came down over them. Their guttural cries of 'Beigels, Beigels!' were more like a ship's foghorn; and should you be so foolish as to pass them without buying a beigel or two, they would let out a torrent of Yiddish curses. If, however, you did buy some beigels, then the curses were stopped in mid-sentence and you would be inscribed for a long and healthy life.

Music was one of the most popular pastimes in the Jewish East End, and some of the most famous bandleaders of the time came from Whitechapel and surrounding areas. Gerald Bright was one, and he just added the letter 'o' to his first name and changed it from Gerald to Geraldo.

There is a lovely story – which I cannot confirm – that Geraldo, then at the height of his fame, was walking through Brick Lane when he came face-to-face with an elderly Jewish woman with a thick

usually as a 'bad-die' ... I met him a couple of years ago and he looked remarkably well for a man in his late 80s.

Bud Flanagan was already a household name when I was growing up. Chaim Weintrop, as he was originally called, was a national treasure and the East End Jews basked in reflected glory that 'one of us' had met the king. There is today a blue plaque at 12 Hanbury Street stating that Bud Flanagan lived there. And who could forget Meir and Anna Tzelniker at the Yiddish Theatre?

I also grew up marvelling at the achievements of Lew Grade and his brother Bernard Delfont, who grew up in the East End. Bernard was expelled from Stepney Jewish School for running a farthing sweepstake; but it didn't stop him becoming one of the country's great impresarios.

If music was the thing for many Jews, then boxing came a close second; and we all revelled in the exploits of the Aldgate Tiger, Al Phillips, who had

followed on from the remarkable success of Jack 'Kid' Berg. With boxers came boxing promoters like Jack Solomons and Harry Levene, both from the East End, and another personal friend, Mickey Duff, who, as Morris Praeger, was arguably the worst boxer ever seen at the old Mile End Arena.

But Mickey went to the other side of the ropes to become one of the sport's finest matchmakers in boxing history.

I also remember walking through The Lane and seeing Jack Marks, known as 'Fat Jack the fruiterer' and Jackie Brandford, who sold dresses at giveaway prices in Petticoat Lane. He would shout out to his entranced audience: "You've heard of Christian Dior. Well, I'm the Yiddisher Dior". He would ask £2 for a dress, slash it to £1 and then to 10 shillings. The dresses flew off his stall like hot cakes.

There was also Sid Strong, who would throw a dozen or so plates into the air and catch them as they fell. To my knowledge, Sid never ever dropped a plate.

On public service, there were no better representatives than Miriam Moses JP, OBE

IT WAS THE PEOPLE WHO FLOATED THROUGH THE EAST END, NOT THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS

who, in 1931, became the first Jewish woman to become a mayor; Sir Basil Henriques, who founded the Oxford and St George's youth club, and Phyllis Gerson MBE. But there were many more who helped shape the characters of so many of us in the East End in those far off days.

To me, the greatest memory of the old Jewish East End was the unintentional humour of the Jewish people. One great story relates to a mother and her daughter coming out of Wickhams store in Mile End Road. As they left, the mother shouted to her daughter: "I'll phone you on Sunday if I live that long. If not, Monday."

And the woman who asked a shop keeper: "How much the cracked brown eggs?"

"Three pence a dozen", he replied.

"How much the white eggs?"

"A shilling a dozen."

"Crack me a dozen white eggs."

Another world long gone.

Mike Gapes: a great friend

THE General Election has long gone but I feel it would be wrong not to pay tribute to Mike Gapes, who was Ilford's longest serving MP before he lost his seat. Mike quit the Labour Party to become an Independent in protest against the anti-semitism that was poisoning the party, and against the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.

He has always been a good friend of the Jewish community in Redbridge and has attended many events in the area. He was – and is – a man of principle and the Jewish community owes him a debt of gratitude for his friendship over the past 27 years.



THE way to find out if you are old is to fall down in front of a crowd of people. If they start laughing, you are young. If they panic and run towards you ...you are old!

The 'ins' and 'outs' of Jewish marriage

WATCHER had noted, of course, the overwhelmingly clear outcome of the December 2019 General Election. And this feature's writer considers that, at least now, the UK's Jewish population will feel somewhat more hopeful and secure in relation to the earlier and oft-reported subject of antisemitism in certain political quarters. But around that time, Watcher became more specifically aware of a particular and amazing statistic which immediately impelled him to take a deep breath; and to think – even aside from the menace to Jewish life of an increasing antisemitism worldwide – about another existential element, which could be threatening the survival of the Jewish people ...

Intermarriage amongst British – and, indeed, global – Jewry has now reached the highest level for generations; and the Jewish 'marrying out' statistic has been rising steadily since the 1960s/70s. In the late 'Swinging Sixties' the figure stood at around 11 percent. During the first half of the 1980s, the number was hoisted to 23 percent. Nowadays, the national statistic for Jews marrying non-Jews is approaching half the figure for the United States of America – currently, almost 60 percent (17 percent before 1970) – which was Watcher's initial and astonishing prompt for researching this issue's column. Inevitably, the total will be higher if the data for a growing number of 'cohabit-

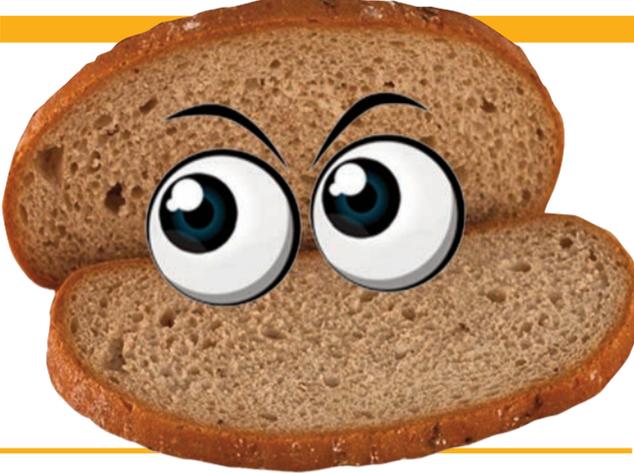
double our efforts to acculturate the Jewish pride and identity of our children, so that they appreciate the eternal value of our heritage."

But the word 'corrosive' has been employed, by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, to describe the likely effect of the statistical position regarding Jewish intermarriage. The adjective concerned the fact that, across mixed marriages, only about one-third of the children would be raised as Jewish (40 percent where the mother is Jewish; and a mere 10 percent where the father is such). Watcher learns that '83 percent' represents the proportion of 'Jewish' children of such marriages who marry out. (Extremist assertions – likely to be considered reprehensible by a majority of the faith – speak of Jewish intermarriage "doing Hitler's work for him".)

Watcher has taken on board, too, the kind of controversy that, today, seems to surround the generally differing reactions and attitudes, as between Jewry's various religious groupings – from Orthodox to Liberal – towards married or cohabiting couples (and their children, if any) where one spouse or cohabitee is non-Jewish, or both are LGBT+. Naturally there are exceptions to such a generality, dependent maybe on the specific composition of the community concerned.

Your observer acknowledges the prevailing arguments, including the potentially negative outcomes where 'derision and contempt' could be the order of the day; and the perhaps beneficial re-

WATCHER IN THE RYE



parents would sit shiva, literally, for a child said to be 'lost' to intermarriage.)

As compared to the constrictive ghettos and shtetls of the Jewish past – and apart from the continuing, close-knit Charedi communities – it's not that easy to get to grips with maintaining a distinctive Jewish identity in the post-modern, open (sexually and otherwise), assimilative, secular, diverse, geographically dispersed and multicultural societies in which most people live today. Even dedicated 'Jewish' primary and secondary schools will be educating large proportions of non-Jewish pupils. And many contend that this can, like community acceptance (as mentioned earlier), be of advantage in spreading authentic knowledge of the history and culture of our Jewish faith, whilst effectively removing

than one percent) of the eight billions of Earth's inhabitants. The average number of children born into non-ultra Orthodox Jewish families is relatively low now; and Jewish communities are ageing (with many Jews marrying too late to have, or to want, any children).

The 'Jewish couple' divorce rate is apparently nearing 35 percent (though, apparently, the national average stands at 47 percent). And a Jewish divorcee, desirous of remarriage, is reported to be two-and-a-half times more likely to then wed a non-Jew. Less than one in three cohabiting Jews are noted to have a Jewish partner. Watcher un-

derstands that about one third of Jews between the ages of 25 and 29 cohabit now; and the number is said to be increasing. Many Jews (and for whatever motivation) have resolved not to get married at all, nor even to cohabit. 'Jewish dating sites' may appear not to be having the success rate for which some might wish. And in circumstances where (compared to days of yore) there aren't that many 'Jewish' organised venues where not-that-religious young Jewish guys and gals can actually meet socially.

Needless to mention, but Watcher appreciates that many of these untoward and problematic considerations apply also beyond Jewish communities. But the survival apprehension in the present framework comes down to the exceedingly small, and continuously decreasing, Jewish population in many areas; and which situation could threaten seriously Judaism's thousands of years of continuity from its ancient origins.

Your writer has touched on, albeit very broadly, the likely backcloth and reasons which underlie the current high percentage of Jewish men and women marrying non-Jews. It was presumed, frequently, that more Jewish men than women were marrying out; but, actually, the statistics display a number equivalence as between the genders. Watcher believes this denies effectively the some-

what sleazy allegation that Jewish men are rather more attracted to non-Jewish women for sexual reasons (of one sort or another). But it does look like any specifically Jewish-male hubris in that connection is unravelled by the numbers!

So are there any other significant grounds for Jewish men and women to wish to marry out? From time to time, Watcher has listened to a Jewish man or woman, who has intermarried, reciting this not unknown aphorism in context: "But you can't help who you fall in love with." Though Watcher has heard it said also that you actually can, if you really want to ...

WATCHER IN THE RYE



ANY READERS HAVING COMMENTS ON THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THIS ARTICLE SHOULD EMAIL THEM TO THE ESSEX JEWISH NEWS (SEE PAGE 2)



ing' Jews/non-Jews is taken into account. (In the USA, there's said to be much more Philo-Semitism than anti-Semitism!)

However, Watcher notes also that the 'marrying out' numeric has been climbing – over the last two decades or so – at a much lower rate than had been expected generally. In that connect, and a few years back, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis stated: "But we must never be complacent. On the contrary, we must re-

sults stemming from a 'welcoming and inclusive' response, embracing maybe a greater possibility of conversion to Judaism (albeit non-Orthodox). But some may well have in mind Tevye's words from 'Fiddler on the Roof': "A fish can marry a bird, but where would they make a home?" As well as the 'danger' of a hospitable approach possibly having the effect of encouraging 'marrying out'. (Watcher knows of a time when Orthodox Jewish

stereotypical slurs and tropes on its adherents. Others may claim it's a now earlier, duly formative introduction for current assimilative effects.

Even aside from the high rates of intermarriage, other factors are also causing a diminution in the global Jewish population figures. A total of around 14 million Jewish inhabitants of this planet (with about six million or so in Israel and in the USA) is a very tiny, and still reducing, proportion (not much more



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Pilgrimage to Poland



KANTOR KING SOLOMON STUDENT **ABI MARCOVITCH** WRITES A POWERFUL ACCOUNT OF HER SCHOOL'S TRIP TO POLAND

ON 28 January, I had the opportunity to go to Poland with my peers from Kantor King Solomon High School (KKS). Although I had heard many stories about the country – whether through hearing Holocaust survivors speak or listening to people that previously had experienced the trip – nothing could have prepared me for what I was going to learn, hear, see or feel.

When we arrived in Warsaw, we went straight to the Ghetto Wall and a cemetery which showed us the extent of segregation in the years leading up to the Holocaust. We could see the effect that the Holocaust still has on the Jews in Warsaw today, visiting the only remaining synagogue. During the war, it had been used as stables, but the fact that it was refurbished and is used for daily prayers today empowered us into remembering that the Nazis did not win.

To finish off our day, we visited Januz Korczak's orphanage, where we were each given the name of someone murdered in the Holocaust – whose name was similar to ours – to carry with us throughout the trip. I was given that of a young girl who shared the same Hebrew name as me – Avigail – and who tragically died at age nine. This was an extremely powerful moment for me as I held her close to my heart throughout the entire trip. To remember that the number 'six million' is made up of individuals just like myself helped me to connect with my Jewish history and picture that every in-

dividual had a way of life, a family, a name. They were more than just victims, they were people.

On the following day, we walked the journey that hundreds of thousands of Jewish people had travelled before us. When we reached the Umschlagplatz, we tried to imagine how it would have felt to have been uprooted from everyday life and to never return. It was chilling, but was only the start of our journey.



When we reached Treblinka, the air was still and silent. Seeing how meticulous the Nazis were in creating it made it even more horrifying. When I walked around, I felt as though I wasn't alone, and that I could feel those who perished around me. A white tape surrounded the perimeter, filled with a list of thousands of names. There were so many, it was almost impossible to absorb them all, let alone to picture the journey they faced walking down the exact path that I was. The nothingness surrounded me and isolated me. Suddenly, the area was filled with thousands of stones, each one representing a town or village that the Nazis had managed to wipe out. I felt sick. I couldn't move. But I knew that I wasn't alone. I knew that, once I got back on the coach, the nightmare would be over, unlike for so many.

On Friday, we had an early start for Auschwitz. I felt as though the trip was leading up to it, but I was never going to be ready. Walking through Auschwitz overwhelmed me; I was flooded with emotion, grieving for millions of people that I never knew but felt so connected to. Seeing their possessions, hair and shoes made me weak at the knees. I had no words; I had seen true evil pushed to its full extent. I was speechless, and still am.

Auschwitz II empowered us as a group, walking hand-in-hand in and out, feeling so grateful and connected to our history in a way we never had before. Our Shabbat was so special, having held it in honour of those who couldn't over-



I was flooded with emotion, grieving for millions of people that I never knew but felt so connected with

75 years ago. We sang, we laughed, we cried, we lived. Shabbat enabled us to process the life-changing week we had and made us feel even more thankful of our lives than usual.

Our journey had come to an end but the lessons we had learnt had only just begun. We were ready to bring back all the life lessons we learnt that week and put them into our friends, family and community. Poland impacted me in a way that nothing else ever will come close to; it made me even closer with my family and friends but, most importantly, with my Jewish identity and teaching the importance of love and respect, despite our differences.

ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

ROSH HASHANAH IS COMING

Our next issue will be published to coincide with Rosh Hashanah 2020.

To send us your stories and pictures see our contact details in the panel in Page 2.

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The Masorti Roots of the Yellow Candle Project

GUY SASSON
ON THE UNIQUE SCHEME TO TRULY REMEMBER THOSE WHO DIED IN THE HOLOCAUST

THE Yellow Candle Project was initiated by the Masorti Conservative movement's Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs in 1981, in the United States and Canada, to keep alive the memory of the millions who perished in the Holocaust. It was brought to the UK in 2017.

Each Yellow Candle comes in a special bag, complete with the name of a victim who died in the Shoah – many of them children. Every victim was an individual with a life and a story, and it is hoped that this project will allow as many individuals as possible to be remembered. The candle is modelled on the traditional Jewish memorial Yahrzeit candle, but is yellow to represent the yellow stars that Jewish people were forced to wear.

The candles are lit on Yom HaShoah, the Jewish date on which we remember those who perished in the Holocaust. It was established by the first Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, in 1953. This year it will be observed on Tuesday 21 April.

As soon as I read about the project, I thought it was a great idea. I wanted to make sure New Essex Masorti Synagogue (NEMS) was part of this. Fortunately, being born in Alexandria, Egypt, my family was never subject to the Nazi atrocities and genocide. We did suffer post-Suez and left Egypt with nothing, leaving all behind. But we did still have our lives! I knew that, amongst our congregation, many had relatives who were murdered in the concentration camps. In addition, there were many men, women and children who perished, who no longer had anyone to remember them.

In 2017, 3,000 candles were brought over from the USA. NEMS requested 50 and these were quickly taken up by our members, as well as some being requested by friends of mine, both Jewish and from other faiths – Christian, Muslim and Hindu – showing the breadth of the project and how it can help with cross-community Holocaust education, as well as honouring the victims. I was pleased also to see that members' children, including our own, wanted to be part of this.

The most emotional thing was that most of the names supplied with the candles were those of children under 10. In fact, the youngest person was just one year old. I asked that our members and friends not only took photographs of their lit candles, but also posted them on social media and sent them to me to put up in our synagogue. The response was amazing, with friends from other synagogues asking us about it and how they could get involved.

In 2018, Masorti in the UK increased their order to 13,000, and 25,000 in 2019. Similarly, NEMS increased our requests to 144 and 192 respectively, through our members and by involving synagogues outside the Masorti movement. I had no problem putting the candles and names in special bags at home for everyone: I was just delighted that so many people wanted to take part! Again, people were strongly encouraged to post photos of the candles with the names of the Holocaust victims on social media.

In 2019, the Yellow Candle Project was taken over by Maccabi GB. It became a cross-communal project, which saw over 60 organisations including synagogue bodies, schools, shops and communal organisations, as well as individuals, come together and remember as one community. It is now sponsored by many well-known organisations and involves some famous faces, including politicians.

The Yellow Candle Project

has given families the opportunity to speak about the Holocaust for perhaps the first time, and raise awareness of what can happen if anti-semitism goes unchallenged, something which is extremely relevant in our society today.

NEMS really embraced the Yellow Candle Project – spreading the word. Every year the candles are quickly taken up, and I am contacted by members who rarely come to synagogue as they feel so strongly about it. Donations are made and, in 2020, any donation will be sent directly to Maccabi UK to help fund their efforts.

What I find even more amazing and emotional, is that most people have kept the names from past years and add them and read them out every year, in addition to the new names they have received. Where people originally ordered only one yellow candle, they are asking for several more every year. Names have been kept and are read out at Yizkor, especially on Yom Kippur.

Although the concept is to remember Jews on Yom HaShoah, many pray for victims of other genocides that have happened since. This is a fantastic way to honour all of those people, and ensures many victims will still be remembered. Although it is still well short of the six million, I hear that Maccabi has ordered 100,000 Yellow Candles this year; and I see this just growing and growing, as not only more Jewish organisations are getting involved but non-Jewish ones, too.

I get tremendous personal satisfaction that we at NEMS were at the forefront of this amazing project, which was started on a small scale by Masorti Judaism UK and has now spread across to other sections of Judaism and is embraced by other faiths.

We must never forget those who were tragically murdered not only during the Shoah of the Second World War, but in wars since then, and we will continue to spread the word to honour the victims.



FOCUS ON: 12th Ilford Cubs

MICAELA BLITZ VISITS THE ONLY JEWISH CUB GROUP IN ESSEX

THE 12th Ilford Cubs has been running for almost 67 years and prides itself on being the only Jewish cub group in Essex. The pack was started by six sets of parents in 1953 and was originally based at Coventry Road Synagogue. Today, the pack meets every Thursday at The Rodings in Roding Lane South. Michael Mallach is the current Akela.

Colin Ormsby's parents were two of the founding members, and Colin attended the group in his youth. Having been part of the pack from the very beginning, he remained involved with the group serving in many different leadership roles until recently and has many fond memories of his time.

■ GREAT THINGS

He told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Over the years, so many of the young people that I have met have found that being part of the scouting movement has really helped them to not only achieve some great things, but gain self-respect and make new friends too."

He has been involved with the 12th Ilford Cubs for more than 30 years first as a cub and scout. He stopped attending when he was 16 years old, but a chance meeting that reignited his enthusiasm.

As he explains: "I attended a local St George's day parade and bumped into my old Akela, Sharon Harris (nee Demby), who suggested I come along as a leader to help out and I have pretty much been involved ever since!"

Sharon Harris was very much part of the scouting movement in the local area and was actually involved in scouting for over 25 years, having been a brownie and guide herself. She comes from a family of scouting, and her father Ken Demby was involved for more than 40 years. At one time, there were cub packs running four evenings a week, with Ken running the Monday group and Sharon running the Thursday group with Melanie Alicoon (Baloo). The Tuesday group was run by Sandy and Mervyn Turner and, later, by their son Laurence. Rita and the late Lou Knott ran Wednesday night. As well as this there were guides, brownies, scouts and even a Beavers group that was set up in the late 1990s by Mark and Sue Eriera.

Michael eventually took over from Sharon as Akela around nine years ago. He feels that they really try to make the group as inclusive as possible for everyone. As he explains: "We encourage the cubs to develop their own skills and interests through badges and activities. I think that cubs is very different to school, so even those who are not academic can find something that suits them, whether it is through sports, crafts or something else."

All of these were run at Roll

Gardens in Gants Hill, which was very much the centre of scouting and guiding in the area. Unfortunately, since around 1998 the venue has not been in use, but it is hoped that they will be able to get back there very soon; and plans are in place for this to eventually happen and for there to be lots more going on.

Michael recognises that with so many different activities and groups, including JLGB, in the local area, it can sometimes feel like they are all competing for the same membership, but he is confident that the cubs offers something different. As he explains: "I think that being part of cubs and the scouting movement can really set a good foundation for whatever you go on to do and can help throughout your life in so many ways."

Someone who can vouch for that is Jason Levy. Jason was a cub in the 12th Ilford in his youth, and started volunteering as a leader when his son, Ethan, became a cub two years ago. Having been part of the pack himself, Jason is really pleased that the same skills he learnt as a cub are now also being acquired by his son. He



Cubs playing games

told us: "I learnt how to cook and how to sew buttons through earning my home help badge at cubs, and Ethan now has those skills too. These are basic skills that are not usually taught at school, but are essential in my opinion."

■ BASIC SKILLS

Over the past two years, Ethan has acquired an impressive 15 badges from home help to swimming, and even a team leader badge, which has not only helped him to gain a variety of skills but, on a personal level, has helped improve his confidence. As Ethan explains: "When I started cubs, I was really shy, but being part of the pack has encouraged me to come out of my shell and to talk to new people. I have made lots of friends. Now if I see other people that may be shy I try to help them out."

Howard Temple has also acquired quite a different skill since being involved with the cubs as Assistant Cub Leader.



12th Ilford Cubs with their leaders

He said: "Learning how to build a good fire, and then also being able to toast marshmallows on it afterwards, are great things to do, and something I do with my own kids, as well as when I am

all the scouting and guiding activity in the area. We want to get it back to its former glory, but in order to rebuild the huts and make it fit for purpose, we need around £250,000 worth of investment to achieve our dream."

Joy, along with the other

likes meeting new kids, and also doing the activities each week. He has recently got his home help badge and can't wait to be able to display this on his uniform."

Aaron's mum Candice Blitz added: "Aaron is already learning new skills in the short time



Raising the flag

leaders, hopes that members of the local community will help to fund this project, particularly those who may have a connection to Roll Gardens in their youth. They are planning to organise fundraising such as quiz nights and other events.

The 12th Ilford Cub consists currently of 13 members, both girls and boys. Two of the most recent recruits are best friends Alex Keller and Aaron Blitz, who were both invested in February.

Belinda Keller, Alex's mother, describes how he really enjoys cubs. She told us: "He

he has been there, like learning to sew, iron and also do cooking as part of his home help badge. He recently made us all dinner after planning it and preparing it, and he was so proud to have done these things all by himself. He feels a real sense of accomplishment and I hope that this will give him more confidence and encourage him to do other things for himself. As well as learning, cubs also gives him a chance to let off some steam and to make friends."

As a teacher at Clore Tikva Primary School, Joy is aware of the need to understand mental health and wellbeing in children, and many of the skills



being part of the scouting movement has helped them to gain self-respect and make new friends

gained from scouting and guiding really help with this.

■ CHIEF SCOUT

With Bear Grylls as the Chief Scout, the scouting movement can be seen as really trying to appeal to a new generation; and Joy is keen to also show that the more traditional views of scouting have very much changed.

She comments: "People often think of scouting and guiding as old fashioned and all dib dib and dob dob dob, but it is not like that anymore. For a start, the uniforms are far less fussy and formal and for a long time girls and boys are both able to become cubs, which shows that it is much more progressive and forward thinking than it used to be."

Joy adds: "Currently, the group is in a small hall so, because of limited space, we are limited as to what we can do. But if we could get back to Roll Gardens, we really feel the sky is the limit and we look forward to putting it back on the map for the centre of Jewish guiding and scouting in Redbridge and Essex."

If you would like to find out more about being part of the 12th Ilford Cubs or helping with fundraising, please contact ilfordcubsth12@yahoo.co.uk or call Joy on 07926 817 893.

THE Pesach festival always requires a great deal of thought and forward planning – particularly this year when it runs straight into Shabbat. Numbers are never exact until the last moment and sometimes there are extra guests that were not originally catered for!

This Pesach I have tried to find a couple of meals that can be altered in quantity, depending on the amount of guests you have, without compromising on the ingredients or the taste. You don't necessarily need to serve them for the Seder – they can be produced at any time during Pesach or, indeed, the rest of the year.

Whether you have two or 20 for dinner, these meals hit the spot for a large crowd or a cosy meal. Enjoy your Seders – Chag Sameach!

SHAKE AND BAKE CHICKEN 'N RIBS

This quantity will serve four people – if you have more, you can add sausages and drumsticks too. You can also stretch the dish further by adding some chopped red or yellow peppers and incorporate some sweet potatoes as well for variety.

4 chicken thighs
4 chicken wings
4 beef or lamb ribs
4 medium sized potatoes – leave unpeeled but scrub well
2 red onions – peeled and cut into wedges
Half a head of garlic broken into cloves – no need

Supersize your Seder

to peel them
A few sprigs of thyme or rosemary
Olive oil
Salt & pepper

Preheat the oven to 160° fan – Gas Mk 4

You may need two roasting tins for this dish as you want the ingredients to roast and crisp up rather than steam, which they will do if they are crowded together. Put all the meat into the roasting tin(s). Cut the potatoes into wedges of a similar size to the onions and add them both to the meat. Toss them all thoroughly with a good glug of olive oil and tuck the fresh herbs in between the pieces. Season well with salt and pepper and cook for 30 minutes. Then toss in the garlic cloves (if you put them in at the start they will burn), give all the ingredients a good stir and bake for a further 20-25 minutes, or until brown and crispy and cooked through.

PECAN CRUSTED SALMON FILLETS WITH ASPARAGUS

4 salmon fillets
A little butter
Mayonnaise
Salt & pepper
For the crust:
225 gr / 8 oz shelled pecan nuts (or you could use pistachios or walnuts,

COOKING FOR YOMTOV

SHELLEY POSNER



if you prefer)
Half a bunch of fresh dill
3 tablespoons butter melted
For the garnish:
1 bunch of fresh asparagus
1 bunch of radishes
Dill to decorate

Preheat the oven to 180° fan – Gas Mk 6

First make the crust; grind the nuts in a food processor until they look like coarse sand. Chop a handful of dill very finely and then, in a small bowl, mix the herbs together with the nuts and pour over the melted butter.

Arrange the salmon pieces in one layer on a well buttered but shallow tin that can hold them in a single layer. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Spread the surface of each fillet with a layer of mayonnaise and then completely cover with the nut mixture, patting it firmly into place. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until

the fish flakes easily with a fork.

Meanwhile, cut off the woody ends of the asparagus and blanch the tips in boiling water for 3 minutes only. Drain and refresh under cold water then blot any excess moisture from them with kitchen paper. Slice the radishes. Transfer the salmon to a serving platter – they can be served either hot or at room temperature. Arrange the asparagus tips into a lattice pattern over each fillet, scatter over the radish circles and decorate with dill fronds.

LEMON MERINGUE ICE CREAM

4 eggs separated
1 ¼ cups of caster sugar
¾ cup of lemon juice
Grated rind of two lemons
2 x 227 gr Riches parev whipping cream
A further ½ cup of caster sugar

Beat the egg yolks together with the sugar until airy and pale in colour. In a separate bowl, beat the cream until holding soft peaks but not too stiff. Add the lemon juice and grated rind to the cream and beat again until holding firm peaks. Be careful not to over whip it. Add the egg yolk mixture to the cream and mix well to combine.

Place in an ovenproof dish, making sure that the mixture doesn't reach the top – it needs at least an inch or two above the level of the mixture to the top of the dish. Put the dish in the freezer and freeze until solid.

Whisk the egg whites with the second quantity of sugar in a large bowl until a firm meringue is formed. Remove the frozen ice cream and spread the meringue over the top of the mixture, covering it to the top of the dish. Heat the grill to maximum and, when it's hot, place the dish on the lowest shelf away from the heat for around 30 seconds, or until the peaks are just beginning to turn a light brown. Allow to cool a little then replace in the freezer until needed. Remove to the fridge around 20-30 minutes before serving, to allow it to soften.

ALMOND MADEIRA CAKE

180 gr unsalted butter
180 gr caster sugar
4 eggs separated
½ teaspoon almond extract
250 gr ground almonds
2 teaspoons Pesach baking powder
15 gr flaked almonds
Icing sugar to decorate

Preheat oven to 170° fan – Gas Mk 5

Butter a 20cm x 5cm deep loose-bottom cake tin or line it with a parchment paper lining. In a large bowl with a hand whisk, cream together the softened butter and the sugar until pale and fluffy, then incorporate the egg yolks one at a time together with the almond extract. Then beat in the ground almonds and the baking powder.

In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks then gently fold into the cake mixture in three separate goes. Transfer the mixture to the cake tin. Smooth the surface level then scatter over the flaked almonds.

Bake for approximately 40 minutes until golden and firm to the touch when pressed. Leave the cake to cool in the tin then turn it out and dust liberally with icing sugar. Wrap tightly in tin foil and store in an airtight container.

THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED BEFORE THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

ON the face of it, the latest 'less is more' beauty trends may not sound a good look after the ravages of winter, but don't panic. It's all an illusion and certainly doesn't mean leaving your face bare and flawed as nature intended. Otherwise, few of us would venture out again!

The secret is appearing effortlessly glowing, dewy, fresh and flawless. But don't be fooled, this actually needs as much care and attention to detail as for a movie star stepping onto the red carpet. Well, not quite but you get the gist.

Fifty-year-old Oscar winner Renee Zellweger's image may look astonishingly natural on our photo, but what you don't see is her lavish team of expert make-up artists.

So how to get ready for your own close-up? With the arrival of Pesach (aka Jewish spring cleaning), make sure to leave time and effort to deep clean your skin as well as the kitchen cupboards.

A pampering, salon facial makes a great start, while others will splurge on the most expensive products on the market. But there are countless other value-for-money innovations, either online or on the counters, and the most pricey aren't always the best.

Cleansing lotions, exfoliating face scrubs, peelers, lip balms and masks come in all shapes and formulas to zap impurities and dead cells, and thus create a smoother canvas. Do ask an in-store expert for advice on the best for your skin type, which may be dry, oily, patchy or a bit older than it used to be. And if you're worried about sensitivity or allergic reaction, there's an

GIVE YOUR FACE THE RED CARPET TREATMENT

BEAUTY

PAT LIDIKER

LOOKS AT SPRING BEAUTY TRENDS – AND IT'S ALL ABOUT ILLUSION



increasing choice of plant-based, chemical-free or organic products. Bare Minerals even have a vegan range and never, ever include chemicals.

Ask about eye creams to avoid using the same concentrated products around this sensitive area (10 times thinner than the rest of you face) to avoid puffiness.

So why are this spring's products different from all other seasons? Mainly because the emphasis is on lighter-than-ever but even more effective liquids, creams and serums which quickly penetrate and moisturise.

Charlotte Tilbury's Magic Cream is now the biggest seller in the UK, ingredients including serum, SPF15 and protection against the elements. For those with oily skin prone to blemishes, Clinique BB Cream

is magical too, combining oil control, UVA/UVB protection and layered coverage all in what looks like a grey putty. Shake the bottle before use to blend ingredients and it becomes a lightweight, natural, non-greasy foundation to banish winter-worn skin.

Bare Minerals, too, have a mirage in a pot, a powder that turns into liquid foundation as you brush it on and comes in 30 shades of beautiful.

This spring make-up colours are predominantly earthy, golden, bronze, creamy and pure; but remember to first use primer and/or concealer to airbrush lines, wrinkles and blemishes.

For extra luminosity, try L'Oreal's 7-day treatment using resurfacing glycolic ampoules or Boots No 7 advanced serum with peptides and antioxidants

to firm older skin and give you a flawless, all day glow. Max Factor's Miracle Second Skin does just what it says on the package and, based on coconut milk, incorporates SPF20 so you're ready for the sunshine.

Powder blushers have made way for fluid, flowing pots and palettes to swish high on the cheeks to browline and temples – Collection's Life is Peachy palette has ultra-flattering pink, gold, bronze, apricot, cream and brown to blend however the mood takes you.

Revolution at Superdrug have delicious, must-have highlighter palettes in their enticing Vintage Lace collection for face, cheeks and eyes; this season, make sure not to colour block but just sweep across each area – L'Oreal's glow enhancer adds new dimensions to cheeks, too.

You'll find lots of gorgeous eye shadow collections to experiment with, mainly terracotta, earth, bronze, peach and gold; but why not add a dash of lavender, lilac or green for extra zing or to ring the changes.

Now for that all-important splash of lip colour where once again rose, coral, bronze and peach rule the roost, al-



Oscar winner Renee Zellweger showing 'natural' beauty is all an illusion

ways gleaming, silky and dewy but never matte, which is SO last season. Look for Lauder's satin Rebellious Rose, Charlotte Tilbury Pillow Talk collection, Clarins Lip Milky

Mousse – there are so many to choose from at prices to suit everyone.

So happy hunting everyone... and enjoy a beautiful Pesach.

ALL IT TAKES IS A FEW TWEAKS

FASHION

JAN SHURE

CO-FOUNDER OF www.SoSensational.co.uk
THE FASHION SITE FOR WOMEN OF 50 PLUS



FASHION isn't disappearing, but the industry-led (and highly profitable) cycle of consume-discard-consume-discard is slowing down as more and more women realise that, with a few tweaks, they can continue to wear the clothes they already own. This, of course, is what men have mostly done for, ooh, about a century. And while the switch may be bad news for the industry and 'capitalism' (and for people like me whose role is vanishing), it is good news for the planet and our purses.

As a result of this evolution, many 'trends' are staying for another season. These include jumpsuits, midi skirts, maxi dresses, midi dresses, trainers, blazers and trouser suits. For those who wish to refresh their wardrobe in spring 2020, the new season details and tweaks include spots, stripes, monochrome, lots more print, shirt-cuts, frills, splits and asymmetry.

Plethora of colours

Colour also provides an opportunity for a seasonal update with, again, lots of options in S/S 20, meaning there's no single 'hot' shade. There is a plethora of pastels, including pink, mint, baby-blue, lemon and lilac, plus a boxful of bright shades (yellow, red, green, fuchsia, blue, orange and violet) and numerous neutrals, especially beige tones (caramel, camel, coffee, toffee, taupe). And, in addition to the monochrome trend (in which black-and-white are mixed), black and sharp white are very on-trend as single colours. (I know that neither black nor white is, technically a 'colour,' but for fashion purposes, they are).

Varieties of print

As a key 'trend' in spring 2020, 'Print' is crafted into dresses, tops, blouses, skirts and jumpsuits. There can be no definitive, must-have print because, as with colour, there are so many varieties that any print works. Options include ladylike florals with a vintage vibe as seen at HVN, Monsoon, Laura Ashley and M&S; bold, exotic blooms (Roman Originals and Betty Barclay); geometric prints (at Ganni, Warehouse and Harpenne); ditsy florals (Oliver Bonas, Hobbs and Miss Selfridge); spots (Roman Originals, River Island, Oasis, George, Pure); gingham (Emilia Wickstead, Rixo and Oliver Bonas); placement print (Debut and Zimmermann); florals-mixed-with-geometrics (Hobb's, Studio by Preen, Joe Browns and Rixo); Paisley (JW Anderson and M&Co) and wild, clashing hues (Rixo and

The Kooples). In addition, dotted around the High Street, you can find Pointillism, Ikat, animal-print, scarf-print, abstracts and heart-prints. Stripes, though not strictly speaking 'print' are also around. Striped dresses, skirts, shirts and trousers are around from Emilia Wickstead, Joseph, Boden and River Island; while stripy knits are available across the High Street and online, including from M&S, River Island, Roman Originals and Boden.

Flattering jumpsuits

We are, understandably, keeping jumpsuits, because they combine comfort, practicality and an ability to flatter. Thus, most brands and designers are again offering them for S/S20 in all kinds of fabrics, sleeve lengths and cuts. Depending on how they are styled, they can be appropriate for work, weekends, occasions or resort-wear.

For S/S20 they are available from High Street to High End collections. At designer level, Emilia Wickstead has a stunning long-sleeve red crepe jumpsuit, while Roland Mouret has a sleeveless one in hammered silk, also in red. M&S have them in denim and in monochrome and floral prints, while Rixo has long-sleeve ones in denim. Joe Browns has them in plains as well as in alluring jungle prints. Oliver Bonas and Dorothy Perkins have strapless versions for beachwear. Hobbs, Hush, Whistles and the John Lewis own-brands Kin and Somerset have lots that are perfect for daytime, workwear and weekends; while Vera Mont and Gina Bacconi have them for occasion wear.

Midi skirts & dresses

In midi skirts, knife-pleated are, again, widely available (at Reiss, Warehouse, Somerset and Whistles). Mid-calf A-line midi skirts are available from Hush, Rixo and Selected Femme; while White Stuff, Hush, M&S and Rixo offer asymmetric or frilled midi skirts.

There are no definitive 2020 details on dresses, but look out for V-necklines, boat necklines and shirt necklines. Brands are trying to wean us off wrap-fronts but they are just too flattering, so they are staying around. Find fabulous midi dresses in plains and prints, and in a variety of silhouettes at Mint Velvet, Hush, Warehouse, Boden, Rixo and many more; and find fabulous maxi dresses, again in plain or print and a variety of cuts, from Whistles, Hush, Oasis, Jolie Moi, Max Studio, Maxmara and, again, many more.

Useful trenchcoats

The trench coat revival began early this millennium, and trench coats have returned every spring season since; probably because they are useful, versatile and – if you choose the right colour and the right cut – flattering, too. Over recent seasons, they've been embellished or crafted in vibrant hues, but this season's are again fairly classic. My favourites are the 'Pixie' from Reiss, which exudes military precision at the front while flaunting soft pleats at the back; and the classic 'Saskia' from Hobbs.

Stylish blazers

Blazers are back, too. You can almost certainly wear any you already own; but if you want a new one, you can choose from cropped, mid-length and long-line blazers in checks, plains, linen, wool-crepe, lightweight flannel and, of course, polyester. There are single-breasted and double-breasted blazers; and blazers with decorative sleeves, such as the M&S ruched-sleeve beauty in luscious mint green at £45 or a white double-breasted version with puffed-sleeves at River Island for £75. Many brands, including Reiss, M&S, Hobbs, Dorothy Perkins and River Island, offer matching trousers, so we may create a trouser suit which is another trend continuing for the new season. River Island has blazers in caramel at £50 and at £60, with matching trousers at £40.

Boucle jackets that channel Chanel are also back for Spring 20. Find them at River Island in tweed, and at M&S in tweed and plain.



1. Pleated midi skirt £59.50, lemon jumper £55, both Oliver Bonas

2. Pleated midi skirt £139, White jacket, from a selection, both Hobb's

3. Pink blazer £40, and ankle-grazer trousers, £20 (worn as a trouser suit), Dorothy Perkins

4. Dark green/navy floral print jumpsuit £59, Marks & Spencer

5. Polka-dot jumper £55, White Stuff (Please crop at waist if possible; no info available on shorts)

6. Animal-print midi dress £55, Wallis

‘Even Winston never managed to get a majority like Boris’



PAT LIDIKER WAS AT WESTMINSTER TO TALK TO SIR IAIN DUNCAN SMITH ABOUT LEAVING BEHIND RECENT POLITICAL ANGST TO EMBARK ON A, HOPEFULLY, ROSIER FUTURE. THIS INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED BEFORE THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

WHEN I interviewed Sir Iain Duncan Smith at Westminster, shortly after the election, the Tories were firmly in power with a massive majority and the first steps of ‘Brexit’ were signed, sealed and ready for delivery at the end of this year.

Closer to home, the MP’s personal influence was key in ensuring the future of Whipps Cross Hospital, with a pledge from the Prime Minister of £400million to help rebuild it into a state-of-the-art hospital.

So is it business as usual in these magnificent corridors of power after three turbulent, resignation-littered years?

In his office overlooking

the Thames (it has number 10 on the door) and after 28 years as MP, the member for Chingford & Woodford Green explained to me that he is not an angry person by nature, preferring to argue and fight for and against ideas and actions rather than personal attacks. But this election, he maintained, was very different.

He said: “The election was ghastly, worse than I can ever remember. While canvassing, we encountered threats from Labour supporters. It included death threats, spray painting abusive messages on our office and elsewhere in public places. They posted vile messages about us on social media. Some of our female workers even had to face threatening behaviour laced with threats, from young men sporting Labour

stickers, as they canvassed after dark in the evening. All this was passed to the police who have been investigating.

“But it didn’t work. For despite the hundreds and hundreds of ideological Corbyn supporters – mostly from outside my constituency – we won!”

The MP then turned his attention to something that has greatly worried our Jewish community in recent years, the rise of antisemitism on the far left. He added; “I have been horrified to watch as several Labour MPs have been forced out of the party by antisemitic and other attacks from the hard left, which Jeremy Corbyn did little to stop.

“Corbyn should have sacked every antisemite and apologised but, under his leadership, Labour dragged their feet and seemed to tolerate the antisemitism.”

Iain has previously visited Auschwitz, where the true horror of the Holocaust overwhelmed him. He made it clear that, knowing as we do where such antisemitism led in the 1930s, it is horrifying to see similar language being used on social media today.

Serving in Winston Churchill’s old heartland, where the great man’s statue takes pride of place on the Green, must surely give him a buzz, even though the area has changed considerably since then?

Of course it does, even though he happily points out: “Even Winston never managed an 80-seat majority like Boris!”

The first Scottish-born party leader since Balfour and the first Catholic in the

Scots Guards, serving in Northern Ireland and Rhodesia, Iain was knighted this year for political and public service.

As a Catholic, he attends services every Sunday; although he was keen to point out, “my sister-in-law is Jewish” and that he has always had a deep affection for the Jewish community and way for life.

“I have a huge admiration for strong Jewish sense of family,” he said. “Such values and support for each other and the elderly are attributes which contribute enormously to our society.”

Iain and his lovely wife Betsy have four grown-up children; and he understands and values that strong sense of the importance of family life.

His own considerable knowledge and understanding of Judaism was apparent throughout our conversation, and he is on good terms with local Jewish leaders; and he stressed his enormous admiration for, and friendship with, the former Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks.

Turning back to the election, was he worried when it looked as if everything could come crashing to an end for both him personally in his seat and the Conservatives generally?

He replied: “I never doubted that we would win, for ours is a strong cause, to deliver on the referendum by getting Brexit done and by stamping out antisemitism. After all, if you believe in something you go for it, and this majority has given the party a huge psychological confidence. Boris has always had confidence, but this makes him a stronger leader to get things done in the next five or even 10 years.”

So, what about future effects of ‘Getting Brexit Done’, a topic that has split both the country and our community.

As a long-term Brexiteer, Iain stresses the future is looking very bright indeed. Before we part, he promises: “Europe needs us far more than we need them in many ways and figures show we have a £100 billion deficit in trade with the EU, which means they sell far more to the UK than we sell to them, yet we run a trade surplus with the rest of the world. London is the global centre for financial services, and the EU gets most of its capital from the London markets. We are now back on the world stage as a full voting member of the World Trading Organisation (WTO), for the first time in 40 years, which governs all world trade and I’m confident it will be a huge success.

“I for one now buy excellent Australian and English wines.”

PJ Library gets kids ready for Pesach

A MEGILLAH, the Haggadah and, of course, the Torah – Jews love a good religious book. However, it can be challenging for younger members of the community to relate to some of the stories.

PJ Library, an organisation that gifts free monthly books to almost 8,000 children across the UK, including many in Essex, celebrates Jewish values and traditions through colourful and creative stories.

Shiran Sapir, PJ Library parent ambassador for Essex, lives in Ilford with two young children. She told the *Essex Jewish News*: “Most kids love finishing the day with a story – whether it’s the chance to step into another world and learn something new or just have five minutes with a parent, in an otherwise hectic day. We hope that our stories spark Jewish conversations in the home and make bedtime meaningful for everyone, whatever their age!”

This Pesach, PJ Library are distributing these four titles to inspire both children and parents alike.

Where is the Afikomen? – Someone’s hidden the afikomen. Where could it be? Look up, down and all around in this delightful book for babies and toddlers.

Welcoming Elijah – A heartwarming story of a boy, a lost cat and Seder night.



Shiran at the Yeladisco PJ Library event

Who will ask the Four Questions? – Eitan always asks the Four Questions at his family’s Passover Seder ... but this year, his younger sister Evie says she’s old enough to do it.

Miriam at the River – When Miriam places her baby brother Moses in the Nile, she is filled with fear and trepidation. But she also has courage and faith, which this beautiful telling of the story explores.

If you know a child aged eight or under, then sign them up for their free monthly book at www.pjlibrary.org.uk If you would like Shiran to visit your community, then please email info@pjlibrary.org.uk

Ilford MP Wes vows to build bridges



Wes Streeting at the Limmud Festival

BY **PAT LIDIKER**

ILFORD North MP Wes Streeting is uncomfortably aware of the strong new bridges needing to be built with the Jewish community after the recent virulent spread of antisemitism within the Labour Party.

Speaking in an exclusive catch-up with the *Essex Jewish News*, he said: “I recently attended the Limmud Festival in Birmingham, where it was lovely to see so many from Redbridge and the surrounding area.

“Everyone wanted to discuss the fraught relationship between the Labour Party and the Jewish community. I hope this is just the first step in listening, leading and rebuilding trust and faith in Labour. We know we have so much work to do.”

Wes and his fellow MP Jess Phillips also joined Rabbi Miriam Berger and Reform Judaism’s Senior Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner in lighting the menorah for the second night of Chanukah.

The following month, he attended the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony at Ilford’s Valentines Park. Obviously contemplating recent events, he told us: “Given the antisemitism in our politics and society, I hope people are reflecting on whether they’ve been bystanders or allies in the fight. Although today concentrates on the unique crimes of the Nazi Holocaust, we should never avert our eyes from the most uncomfortable truth of all. Its perpetrators were not unique, they were ordinary men and women carrying out extraordinarily evil acts.”

Wes adds that he was particularly heartened to see so many children and young people taking part in the event. “They did themselves, their schools and our Borough proud. As the number of survivors left to bear living witness to the Holocaust diminishes, with every new generation comes an even greater responsibility to ensure the warning from history is never forgotten.”

Shedding light in Southend

FURTHER to the new porch and front entrance that was installed at Southend and District Reform Synagogue, Rabbi Warren Elf MBE recently fixed new mezuzahs at the shul’s entrance and inside the building.

A short ceremony took place, attended by members of the congregation and children from the cheder, during which Rabbi Elf explained about the significance of the mezuzah.



The song is ended, but ...



LOU FREEDMAN FROM REDBRIDGE IS 103 YEARS OLD AND DESCRIBES HIS LIFE AND TIMES IN THE 1920s, 30s, 40s AND BEYOND

AROUND 100 years ago, the early 1920s to be exact, the days long before radio or TV, everyone used to sing and literally every Jewish house had a piano. Somebody could always bump out some of the latest tunes of which there were new ones almost every day. Most children had music lessons at home, girls mainly piano and boys

mainly violin; and, in school, singing was encouraged with the aid of Tonic-sol-fa, using hand signals for the eight notes of an octave. I took to piano... but that's another story.

I obviously was very young at the time but clearly remember the excitement when a near neighbour bought a gramophone, and invited the family in to see this new wonder of the age.

■ **NEEDLE**

There it was, sitting in the centre of the table with its big horn staring at us. He inserted a handle and carefully wound it up, following inserting a needle into the soundbox, placing a record on the turntable and setting the speed to 80 rpm. Finally releasing the

brake, the turntable took off, the needle contacted the record and we heard a man singing. HOORAY! it works.

Throughout the 1920s, to me, the main entertainment with young people seemed to be ballroom dancing; and the general interest was the popular sing-along songs, new ones appearing every day, mainly imported from America: beautiful tunes with wonderful lyrics. There were also novelty dances like The Charleston, Black Bottom and Blues; but the end of the 20s, when silent films burst into sound and the big American musicals took over, was as if a revolution had taken place.

Can you imagine the thrill of seeing that great star Al Jolson singing Sonny Boy in that first "talkie" film The Jazz Singer? Even the word 'Hollywood' seemed like dreamland magic; although when visiting there many years later, I found the area not much different to anywhere else. We had also the great Bing Crosby who created crooning, the new way of singing softly using microphones; and he was responsible for a new enthusiasm in singers over here. Almost every High Street had a music shop selling pianos, sheet music and records which, unfortunately, doesn't exist today.

■ **DANCING**

At this time, we entered the 1930s and many things started to change. I mentioned earlier on that children were having music lessons, but none that I knew had achieved anything and had given up. They had, however, learned to read music and many of the boys, now starting work and earning money, were buying and learning to play saxophone, trumpet and drums, becoming professional musicians and forming dance bands, as ballroom dancing was now well established. Many West End hotels and restaurants employed dance bands, and the most popular public dance halls in London were the Astoria, the Hammer-smith Palais and the Locarno at Streatham. Additionally, there were many privately organised dances held almost everywhere.

■ **UNIFORM**

Sadly, the 30s ended with war; and it wasn't until well into the 1940s that the war years ended, and things seemed to start picking up again and carrying on as before. But musically nothing changed until the mid-1950s, when today's style of pop music, with its noisy heavy beat, took over.

Now please understand that I don't like today's music, and these comments are just my own. Perhaps it appeals to you, and I respect that. But, to me, today's pop music means singers who can't sing, musicians who cannot play an instrument and often wear a guitar like a uniform. The music they produce seems just a tuneless noise. Ballroom dancing now? Forget it.

I started this missive with a question. Now, what's your opinion?



Fashions in the 1920s. PICTURE COURTESY OF GLAMOUR DAZE



The Astoria in Charing Cross Road, a magnet for ballroom dancing enthusiasts



'When singers were singers ...' Al Jolson (left) and Bing Crosby were the stars that Lou admired

... and Lou joins in Beehive Lane JACS milestone

LOU FREEDMAN will be one of the special guests when Beehive Lane JACS celebrates its 30th anniversary with a luncheon at Cranbrook United Synagogue on Thursday 2 July. Lou, who founded the group and became its first chairman, looked back fondly before the event when, he said: "Beehive Lane JACS attracted more than 200 people on a Thursday afternoon – with others on a waiting list."

After Lou gave up the position, others took over the reins including Polly Davis, Lou Haberman and Jean Finn. The current chairman is Arnold Rose.

Today, the average number of people attending is around 40; and this is due, mainly, to members getting older and frailer. But, thanks to Dial-a-Ride, there is always a reasonable crowd.

Three Faiths annual Holy Land tour



The group on steps of al-Jazzar Mosque in Akko.

IN EARLY December, 24 members of the East London Three Faiths Forum went off

for a week's tour of the Holy Land, visiting many religiously-significant places in Is-

rael and Palestine, including Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Jericho and Hebron.

This was the eighth annual tour organised by the Three Faiths Forum. The group included 10 Muslims, eight Christians and six Jews, inspiring led by Reverend Ulrike Bell (United Reform Church), Imam Dr Mohammed Fahim (South Woodford Mosque) and Rabbi David Hulbert (East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue).

Rabbi Hulbert said: "The week-long tour was an immense success, packed with unforgettable experiences. Many new and deep friendships were made amongst the participants."

'Thinking of you'

AS the Essex Jewish community dealt with the impact of the coronavirus, pupils from Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School made amazing 'thinking of you' cards for residents in Jewish Care homes, tenants in Jewish Blind and Disabled buildings and those in receipt of Meals on Wheels. They also made 'thank you' cards for the staff working in Sainsbury's and Tesco stores in Barkingside.



The school's Jewish studies lead Deborah Harris said: "We are a community school and it means so much to all our staff that we

have such dedicated and caring children who care about others each and every day, even in extremely difficult circumstances."

TRAVEL

MARK HARRIS



A Swiss city not to be Miss'd!

ON a really mild weather, sunny sojourn in the Rhine-straddling, German-speaking, Swiss city of Basel last December, it was a nostalgically retrospective moment for me when again observing the magnificent exterior of its orthodox Great Synagogue (Switzerland's largest shul) after some decades. It stands a relatively short walking distance from our hotel – the charmingly structured, late 19th century 'Rochat' on the convenient periphery of the 'Old Town' area. Also, it's opposite the 15th century (the country's oldest established) university's extensive campus, which includes a botanical garden. I was once more to be impressed by the synagogue's huge, twin-domed and neo-Romanesque edifice.

The interior of this imposing house of worship, dedicated in 1868, is equally awe-inspiring, with stately columns rising to its double rotundas, a lofty ladies' gallery, lovely stained-glass windows, a striking Aron Ha'Kodesh (Ark) and bimah (reading desk) and many rows of fine wooden pews, built to seat up to 800 worshippers.

Being a (literally) long-standing chorister – for the last 12 years with The London Cantorial Singers – I was in e-mail contact, before our arrival in Basel, with the president of

proportionate to the dimensions of the synagogue.

After the service, tasty Kiddush refreshments were available in the spacious, ground-floor hall of the adjoining, modern community centre (which is very active on weekdays – for all age-groups – and houses a restaurant, too). We enjoyed especially the piping hot barley soup, which apparently alternates fortnightly with cholent, as well as the notable variety of alcohol on offer. The vodka shots went down well! The community is very friendly, and I didn't need my German to communicate. Almost everyone speaks English perfectly! I had a chat also with the youngish, community rabbi. Several congregants invited us to their home for Shabbat lunch; but we kind of felt it would be invidious to choose between them.



Earlier in the week, I'd dropped into Basel's 'Feldinger Chabad Jewish Center' to meet with its welcoming and affable director, Rabbi Zalmen Wishedski, for some intriguing conversation over coffee. Sited about a mile from our hotel, it was opened by USA-based, Chabad Lubavitch sponsor, philanthropist and international businessman Sami Rohr in 2009. I think the



■ Basel's Great Synagogue

Rabbi Wishedski about anti-semitism in Switzerland, and particularly in Basel. Unsurprisingly, he said it existed – as in many other countries and cities nowadays – but that it wasn't so bad in this city of about 1,500 Jewish residents. Zurich and Geneva have most of Switzerland's estimated

the damage was caused by a teenaged Jewish lad with a problem.

Jews have been residing in Switzerland since at least the medieval era, with Basel having one of Europe's largest communities during that epoch. As elsewhere, and across the centuries, there were good and – sometimes seriously – bad periods for the country's Jewish inhabitants, including wholesale expulsions. In the second half of the 19th century, they were accorded emancipation. And there's a Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities. Numbers are reported to have declined in recent years, with some 14,000 (mostly younger) Swiss Jews settling in Israel. In a broad connect, it can be recalled that Theodor Herzl's First Zionist Congress was held at Basel in 1897. (In his diary, he wrote: "In Basel I have founded the Jewish state.")

Right: Display of Chanukiahs in Basel's Jewish Museum



Much about the history, culture and faith of the Swiss community is to be found in the Jewish Museum of Switzerland, which occupies two separate buildings not far from Basel's city centre. One of them focuses on the religious traditions and ritual practices of Judaism. With Chanukah then imminent, it was interesting to study the superb display of historic Chanukiahs; and also a ring, etched atop with a menorah, that has been the only Jewish archaeological find from the country's Roman times. The second building, a brief stroll from the other, holds temporary exhibitions. The exposition we experienced told of the Swiss underground network that had obtained South American passports for thou-

sands of Jews seeking to flee Nazi Germany.

But Basel isn't short of museums. There are almost 40 of them, ranging from antique and modern art, architecture and culture, through history, zoology and archaeology to music, sport and toys. Also there's an 1874-founded zoo. All visitors staying at hotels in the city receive a 'Basel-Card' which, amongst other benefits, offers half-price admission to all museums and galleries with free travel on the town's trams and buses. You can spend some appealing and relaxing, viewing time on them. Best picked up at the transport nodal point in the city centre – Marktplatz, dominated by the old Rathaus (City Hall) with its distinc-

tive and redbrick architecture – you may journey from one end of any line to the other, taking in the attractive, hill-rimmed, surrounding countryside.

Close to the Swiss borders with Germany and France (EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg is just a 20-minute ride away by bus number 50 or taxi), the city boasts a delightful combination of rather harmonious, medieval and contemporary edifices. There are a number of fascinating walks alongside the Rhine (and its parallel cobbled lanes) with fine vistas (notably from the northern bank) of the picturesque Altstadt, its double-spire Romanesque and Gothic Munster plus other venerable churches and structures ... as well as of



■ View across the Rhine to Basel's 'Altstadt'

the shul's choir and its musical director. A choir has existed for 90 years; and there was a tempting possibility of my singing alongside its current 16 male members, who would be accompanying the excellent-voiced chazan. On reflection, however, I decided it would likely be better if I just enjoyed listening to them during the Shabbat morning service (which begins, invariably, at the quite early hour of 08:30). I was privileged to be given an 'aliyah' and for which I felt the need to increase my normal volume of 'musical' rendition

then octogenarian, born in Berlin in the 1920s, must've become quite emotional when naming the building in memory of Shlomo Zalman and Recha Feldinger. The couple had taken teenager Sami into their Basel home following his escape from Nazi Germany after 'Kristallnacht'.



Having noticed a couple of young Jewish men, conspicuously wearing black kippot, walking unconcernedly around the downtown quarter, I asked

18,000 Jews – an exceedingly small percentage of the nation's around eight million total population (including approximately 450,000 Muslims) – with the former being home to virtually all of the country's 3,000 or so Charedi.

I inquired specifically about antisemitism because, during my pre-visit researches, I'd read of an incident affecting Chabad House the previous December. Evidently, its ground-floor picture windows had been smashed with a hammer one night, and which seemed like a possible antisemitic act. Sadly, however, the rabbi explained that

the several river bridges.

And there are many buzzing squares and pedestrian thoroughfares of bustling shops, department stores, designer boutiques and varied restaurants, cafes and bars (with even a few Irish pubs ... handy for a Guinness or two). But not forgetting the ubiquitous host of December's seasonally decorative lights enlivening the old town with its spirited and Germanic, 'Weihnacht' markets spreading most significantly over expansive Munsterplatz and Barfusserplatz. One evening, we attended a premiere performance of Puccini's opera La Boheme at the 'Theater Basel', one of the many cultural venues in – you might say – a quite 'Bohemian' city!

Thank you

This issue was produced in some very unsettling circumstances, as our community and country moved into lockdown in order to fight the coronavirus.

We would like to thank our volunteer team, contributors and advertisers who made this online edition possible.

We look forward to producing a bumper edition to coincide with Rosh Hashanah and would welcome your news and pictures so that we can bring you a full round-up of life in the communities of North East and East London, Essex and East Anglia. See the panel in page 2 for our contact details.

If you would like to advertise in our next issue and future editions contact Deborah Mulqueen at office.ejn@gmail.com

The Editor and the team at EJM hope you all have an enjoyable, safe and healthy Passover.

ESSEX
JEWISH NEWS

PURIM IN PICTURES

SOME of our Essex communities and organisations were able to celebrate an early Purim before the coronavirus changed Jewish life as we know it. Here are some of the lovely pictures from a very fun festival ... and hopefully everyone can come together and enjoy next year.



CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to **PAMELA and EDDIE MELNIKOFF** of Clayhall, who celebrated their Golden Wedding in March.

Pamela is an author and journalist, including many years as the film critic for the Jewish Chronicle, while Eddie spent his career as a GP.

They were married 50 years ago in Edgware and are long-term members of what is now Cranbrook United Synagogue.



Gavriel Sher was Barmitzva at Chabad of Buckhurst Hill
PHOTO: ANDREW H WILLIAMS



Elijah Gerald Michael was blessed and named at East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue



Gilda Melnick from Hainault and **Ron Lyons** from Chigwell marked their 80th and 90th birthdays respectively

1. Jewish Care's Redbridge Jewish Community Centre
2. Jewish Blind & Disabled Aztec House
3. Jewish Blind & Disabled Milne Court
4. Chabad Buckhurst Hill
5. Kantor King Solomon High School
6. Loughton Synagogue
7. East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue
8. Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School