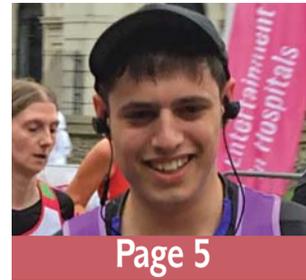


Sue's home concert



Page 4

Josh's half marathon



Page 5

Marie's Board plans



Page 19

# Synagogues vote 'Yes' to merger

BY MANNY ROBINSON

MEMBERS of Ilford United and Redbridge United Synagogues have voted overwhelmingly to merge into one community next May. The new synagogue will have a membership of more than 2,000 adults.

## NEW BOARD

Ilford Synagogue chair Malcolm Nathan and Redbridge United chair Mike Callaghan said that the merged community will have a new name, with the current building in Beehive Lane as its place of worship.

The two chairs said that, after merging, both executives would join together as a new board of management; the existing board being dissolved and reformed as an advisory committee. This would be, for the first year, to ensure a smooth merger and continuity of representation. Elections would then be held at the 2020 annual general meeting.

As part of this merger,

some refurbishments at Beehive Lane, including updating the kitchen and the toilets, will be undertaken to provide the new community with better facilities.

The honorary officers will also be recruiting a senior rabbinic couple or rabbi, as well as retaining the services of Reverend Gary Newman as the community welfare officer.

Rev Newman is currently community welfare officer at Redbridge United, having served previously as the minister at Newbury Park Synagogue for 15 years. He has also held roles at Southport Jewish Community, Higher Prestwich Synagogue in Manchester and Westcliff & Southend Hebrew Congregation, as well as working as the chaplain to King George and Queen's hospitals and as the area AJEX chaplain.

The position of rabbi of the newly merged synagogue will be decided by an eight-strong panel. It is understood that Ilford's minister, Rabbi Geoffrey Hyman, and Redbridge United's minister, Rabbi Steven Dansky, will

both be candidates.

Membership subscription rates for the two communities are not identical; and the proposal is to reduce the rates of those in Ilford at the top rate to match the top subscription rate to Redbridge, from April 2020. Other membership rates, which are fairly similar, will be adjusted over the next one or two years following the merger, with a general membership subscription rate increase of 2% in line with general rising, living costs from 2019.

As both communities have voted in favour, the United Synagogue Council will vote to ratify the proposed merger and creation of the new United Synagogue on Monday 17 December.

Addressing a special meeting at Beehive Lane, Malcolm Nathan said that talks had been going on for nearly two years. Redbridge United members held a similar meeting the same evening.

The Redbridge Jewish Community Centre, where Redbridge United Synagogue has been holding services, is

planning a major revamp but, to date, planning permission has been rejected by Redbridge Council. The uncertainty surrounding the future of RJCC, has led to this merger.

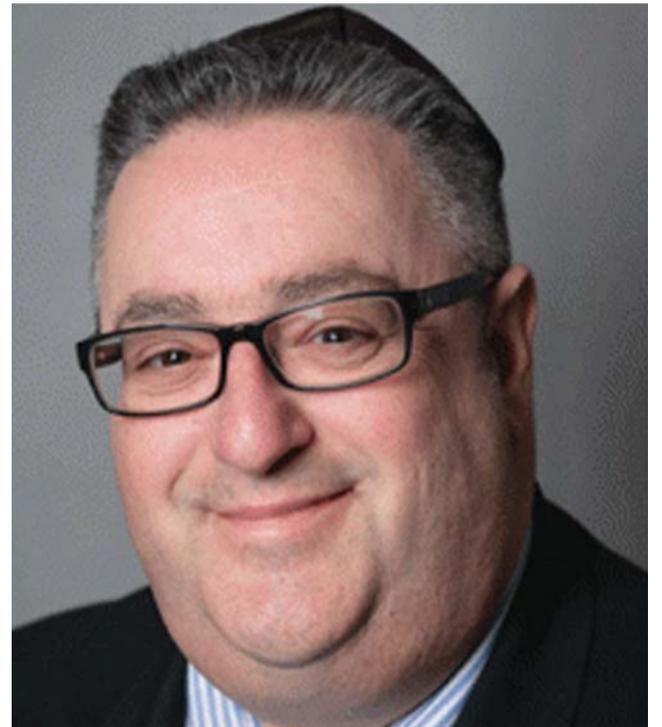
Mr Nathan said: "The vast majority of members of Redbridge United originated from Ilford Synagogue when Redbridge United was then known as Clayhall Synagogue."

## DIFFICULT

He conceded that some members of Redbridge United would find it difficult to get to Beehive Lane, just as they found it difficult when Newbury Park United Synagogue, which was in Wessex Close, merged with Clayhall and the name changed to Redbridge United.

Mr Nathan confirmed that Ilford Synagogue members would still retain their own seats.

A competition has been launched among members of both communities to find a new name for the merged synagogue.



Rev Gary Newman will stay with the merged synagogue as community welfare officer

## The synagogue merry-go-round

There have been several synagogue mergers in the area over the last few years. In November 2014, the independent Waltham Forest Hebrew Congregation, in Boundary Road, merged with Wanstead and Woodford United Synagogue, in Churchfields, to become

Woodford Forest Synagogue. In January 2015, Newbury Park Synagogue merged with Clayhall Synagogue; and most recently, in 2017, Bet Tikvah Synagogue merged with Woodford Liberal Synagogue to become East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue.

# A mitzvah as community helps asylum seekers

BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

WOODFORD Forest United Synagogue has become the first shul in East London and Essex to offer a drop-in for asylum seeker families.

A special launch event was held as part of Mitzvah Day and attended by Iain Duncan Smith MP and Redbridge Deputy Mayor, Councillor Taifur Rashid MBE.

Volunteers came to help from all over the region to sort clothes, shoes, toiletries and children's toys that had been donated by the local Jewish community, as well as the charity Goods For Good. They also served a hot lunch, distributed food vouchers and spent time befriending the 30 asylum seeker families in attendance.

The drop-in is part of the United Synagogue Chesed scheme, in which acts of loving

kindness – inspired by Jewish values – are undertaken to help both members of local Jewish communities and the wider society in which they live. The drop-in will now run on the first Sunday of every month at Woodford Forest.

Iain Duncan Smith, Conservative MP for Chingford and Woodford Green, said: "Events like this show how brilliant the Jewish community are at reaching out to all other members of society – supporting them and helping them. I was enormously proud to come here and see the marvellous work that is happening for asylum seekers, both at this event for Mitzvah Day and then every month going forward."

This year marked a decade of Mitzvah Day – the UK's biggest faith-based day of social action – with volunteers in Essex among the 40,000 performing good

deeds globally.

A special 10th birthday party was held at Jewish Care's Vi & John Rubens House, where residents were entertained by Susan Kaye, aka DJ Susie, and her fellow members of East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue. Mike Gapes, Labour MP for Ilford South, and Councillor Taifur Rashid helped cut a celebratory cake.

Elsewhere in Essex, children from Wohl Ilford Jewish and Clore Tikva Primary Schools took part in collections and care home visits; while the editors of the *Ilford Recorder* and *Essex Jewish News* united to play walking football with members of the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre.

Turn to the back page of this issue to see the full set of Mitzvah Day pictures from synagogues, schools and organisations from all around the region.



Above: Mike Gapes MP helps cut a cake at Vi and John Rubens House. Right: Young volunteers set up a play area for child asylum seekers at the Woodford Forest drop-in

PHOTOS BY YAKIR ZUR.



# ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

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

## CIRCULATION AREA

Barking, Barkingside, Cambridge, Chigwell, Chingford, Chelmsford, Epping, Gants Hill, Gidea Park, Harold Hill, Harlow, Hainault, Highams Park, Ilford, Leyton, Leytonstone, Loughton, Newbury Park, Redbridge, Romford, Southend and Westcliff, Wanstead and Woodford.

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## ADVERTISEMENT RATES

	MONO	COLOUR
Full Page	£550	£750
Half Page	£300	£430
Quarter Page	£170	£270
Eighth Page	£110	£170

**Advertising and Administration**  
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Printed by Sharman Printers, Peterborough

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<b>Alzheimer's Society</b> 020 8970 5770	<b>Jewish Women's Aid</b> 0800 591 203
<b>Beehive Lane JACS</b> 020 8550 2884	<b>Moving on (Formerly Bereaved Partners Group)</b> 020 8554 5227
<b>Board of Deputies Information Desk</b> 020 7543 5400	<b>Newbury Park League of Jewish Women</b> 020 8530 5411 or 020 8500 7832
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<b>Chigwell and Hainault League of Jewish Women</b> 0790 560 5781	<b>Redbridge WIZO</b> 020 8551 1301
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<b>Chabad Gants Hill addiction support</b> 020 8554 1624	<b>Southend and Westcliff JACS</b> 01268 771978
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<b>Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade</b> 020 8989 8990	
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<b>Jewish Care</b>	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.

# Leopards can't change their spots ...

As we approached the end of 2018, your EJN Comment writer was moved to pen what follows after attending, quite by chance, a cello and piano recital which included the Swiss Jewish composer (1880-1959) Ernest Bloch's (three-part) composition, 'From Jewish Life'. Afterwards, your writer happened to read some notes (written by cellist Brant Taylor some years ago) on this musically meditative piece, and which included the sentence: "The mood in this cycle is generally contemplative and plaintive in character, with an overwhelming feeling of melancholy ..."

When born, a baby leopard is a nondescript grey in colour and possesses no spots. Apparently, the notable distinguishing marks begin to develop when a leopard cub is around 10 days old. As the ancient idiom (intriguingly deriving from the Old Testament: Jeremiah 13:23), interpretatively applied to humans who can't change their inherent natures, characters or ways of thinking, informs us: leopards can't change their spots. But we can, and should, keep a wary eye out for such predators.

All human beings are created equal, and in the image of the Almighty; the original 'chosen' aspect of the Jewish people and its own particular covenant with Him, has – through the millennia – been con-

## COMMENT

torted and distorted by antisemites to suggest an arrogant superiority over other peoples, leading to warped feelings of resentment. The sorrowful outcome of which potential motivation (and others) has been continual discrimination, mutating tropes, scapegoat treatment, verbal and physical persecution, the ultimate cataclysmic disaster of the Holocaust – itself the unbelievable subject of continuing denial by some – and the subsequent, persistent and unwarranted concentration on demonising the State of Israel (when an authentic line of moral criticism could be, but isn't, focused on states that actually deserve such attention).

Like leopards, antisemites can't – so to speak – change their spots once acquired (whether theirs is a Jew-hate handed down through the generations or otherwise absorbed, for whatever reason). However much they seek to disguise, often pathetically, the nature of their true inclinations, their basic even relentless, antisemitism can be identified and recognised for what it is. We've heard and read so much of late about the prevailing climate in this context; and in particular quarters unnecessary to mention. Not in-

frequently, there's a reactive element of shock – at least amazement – at what's happening; especially expressed in specific light of the Shoah within existing memory and lifetimes, including those of survivors. But this expression, in itself, is somewhat surprising. A long story of antisemitism – in whatever form it has taken, or might take – sadly but indubitably tells us that this scourge is likely to be with us for all prospective time.

A recent poll, reported in the JC, indicated that a substantial proportion of UK Jews would consider making aliyah if push came to shove, context-wise. But to consider doing so isn't quite the same as actually doing so, which could be highly speculative if not doubtful; although some may point to the French Jewish experience in recent times as lending some evidential support to the proposition. In going forward, our productive efforts to survive adverse circumstances and to succeed in our Jewish lives, our indomitable fortitude, hopes and prayers must seek to counter any fears or negative thoughts about the future of our people as loyal citizens of this country. There's much support, too. Our 'Jewish Life' should strive to overcome any feelings of "melancholy", so that they don't become "overwhelming". Do have a very happy, doughnut-munching Chanukah!

# Your EJN needs YOU!



issue's WW1-centenary piece – came specifically, and perhaps curiously, to your writer's mind in another context entirely, one closer to home.

And, oddly, that last thought also brought to mind composer Ivor Novello's 1914, WW1 song ... 'Keep the home fires burning' (not that your 'Comment' writer was around to sing it at the time!). Hopefully, you – the readers of our EJN – are wondering: What's this all about? Well, actually it's about YOU, our cherished and devoted readers, and the EJN. The Essex Jewish News, which began life in 1972 as a Redbridge Jewish community magazine titled 'The Bridge' (launched by 'Fleet Street' journalist Manny Robinson and the late publisher Frank Cass), has been evolving over the decades into its present, prize-winning, tabloid-newspaper format. The EJN is enjoyed now by between 15,000 and 20,000 readers in north east London, Essex and East Anglia (and even beyond).

Looking ahead productively and contingency planning are processes that are necessary elements to ensure continuity, especially bearing in mind the current handful of enthusiasts who produce the now thrice-yearly (one time quarterly) EJN. Approaching the community newspaper's amazing half-century, we would so hope for a spectacular

100th birthday to be marked, or rather celebrated, in 2072! But predictably – or maybe unpredictably – that's some way off now!

In order for the EJN's historic story of service to go on, and for such a wonderful centenary event to ever happen one day, we invite new volunteer contributors from amongst our valued readers to join us in helping continue a lively, newsy and interesting paper. You can contribute also by sending us news of significant and newsworthy activities in your own communities. It would be good also to have a selection of photographs marking any special or celebratory occasions. And particularly, we would welcome keen young writers, including sixth-formers and undergraduates, who possibly harbour ambitions to become professional journalists. And, as our recent EJN notices have indicated, we would like the important additional assistance of an advertisement sales representative, to help carry the newspaper forward on the basis of its vital revenue deriving from such source.

So let us go forward together, and seek successfully to keep the home fires burning ...

If you would like to help us, contact either [simon.rothstein@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simon.rothstein@hotmail.co.uk) or [melpost.office@ntlworld.com](mailto:melpost.office@ntlworld.com)

## WHERE YOU CAN PICK UP THE ESSEX JEWISH NEWS

### SYNAGOGUES

Chabad Buckhurst Hill  
 Chabad Epping  
 Chabad Gants Hill  
 Chelmsford Jewish Community  
 Chigwell Synagogue  
 Chingford Synagogue  
 East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue  
 Harlow Synagogue  
 Ilford Federation  
 Ilford United  
 Loughton Synagogue  
 New Essex Masorti  
 Redbridge United  
 Romford Synagogue  
 Southend & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation

Southend Reform  
 South West Essex Reform  
 Sukkat Shalom  
 Woodford Forest  
**CAMBRIDGE**  
 Cambridge Synagogue  
 Beth Shalom Synagogue  
**SCHOOLS**  
 Kantor King Solomon  
 Clore Tikva  
 Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary  
**COMMUNAL**  
 Aish Essex  
 Redbridge Jewish Community Centre, Sinclair House  
 Jewish Care's Vi and John Rubens House  
 Jewish Blind & Disabled  
 Aztec House

Jewish Blind & Disabled  
 Hilary Dennis Court  
 Jewish Blind & Disabled  
 Milne Court  
 Spire London East Hospital  
 Holly House  
 The Shop, Southend  
 Day Centre, Cobham Road, Southend  
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 V&V, Barkingside  
 Sandra Davidson, Redbridge  
 Gary Green, Clayhall  
 Golan Bakery, Gants Hill  
 Shalom Bakery, Gants Hill  
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Delicacy, Chigwell  
 Abridge Golf Club  
 Just Kosher, Clayhall  
 Derby Stores, Cambridge  
 Kosher on Sea, Southend  
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 Sainsbury's Barkingside  
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**LIBRARIES**  
 Barkingside, Gants Hill.  
 Clayhall and South  
 Woodford

# Sharing simchas to remember Shoah victims

BY PAT LIDIKER

BARMITZVAHS and batmitzvahs at Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue have taken on a unique and very poignant dimension this year, as families are encouraged to twin their own celebrations with one of the 1.5 million children who perished in the Holocaust.

Shul board member Harvey Frankel has teamed up with the Yad Vashem UK Foundation in Hendon for this emotional project, which tries to find a connection between each participant and a young victim on their database of those who died. They could perhaps share the same surname, birth date or even have grandparents from the same area, with the ultimate aim of finding a child who tragically never survived to enjoy a simcha of his or her own.

Harvey says each girl or boy is then encouraged to become a guardian of that other person's memory. As well as including their 'twin' on their special day, they also light candles on Shabbat, Holocaust Memorial Day and Yom HaShoah.

Harvey told the *Essex Jewish News*: "I get an overwhelming satisfaction when it all comes together. The whole family become involved and you can hear a pin drop in shul each time it happens. I have been talking to Chabad and other synagogues in Essex about this and hope many of them will take up the custom, too."

A similar scheme is already in place at Woodford Forest Synagogue.



Harvey Frankel of Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue with 'twinned' barmitzvah boy Louis Kirsch holding his certificate

Sandra Gold, co-administrator at Yad Vashem UK, added that the programme gives young people a vital insight into the Holocaust, doing their bar/batmitzvah for both themselves and the young victim they have never met but feel they now know.

It costs £35 to participate, all of which goes to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem to help fund and maintain their records.



**It helps keep alive their memory and ensure they are never forgotten ...**

Each child taking part receives a study guide to research their 'twin' and a commemorative pin.

The first celebrant at Chigwell & Hainault, Emily Lenchner, was paired with Belgian-born Suzanna Apteker earlier this year. There was utter silence, but many tears, as the congregation watched Emily hold up photos of Suzanna during her Dvar Torah. Since then,

members of both families have been in regular contact.

Louis Kirsch also twinned his barmitzvah, using the occasion to remember Jenő Breuer – he was born in Hungary in 1931 and perished in the Holocaust before he could turn 13.

During his barmitzvah service, Louis told the congregation: "Jenő Breuer is particularly special for me, as I have cousins here today from Israel: Adina and Erez Breuer. It is possible Jenő was related to them."

"Adina and Erez's father, my great uncle Avraham, was a Holocaust survivor. He sadly lost many family in the Holocaust – including his parents, brother and sister – as well as being deeply scarred, both mentally and physically, for the rest of his life by the trauma he suffered."

"My grandmother Judy's

family also greatly suffered in the Holocaust, and I would like to give consideration to all our families who have been affected by this human tragedy and pray that this will never be repeated."

Grange Hill based Harvey – who is one of the synagogue's security officers and a volunteer for CST – says such projects are particularly important in the current climate of antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

Seven more youngsters in the Chigwell community are already in the pipeline to participate; and Harvey's own granddaughter Ellie hopes to twin her batmitzvah in 2020.

Harvey added: "Like all the children, she is interested in delving into what happened to the youngest victims of the Holocaust. It helps keep alive their memory and ensures they are never forgotten."



Renee Bravo, *Essex Jewish News* columnist and life president of New Essex Masorti Synagogue, unveiled a Tree of Life for the community at a special inauguration. She was joined by designer Eyal Myers. Among the leaves placed on the tree was one presented to Renee in recognition of her long service to the Masorti community and in celebration of her 90th birthday

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#PeopleOfJewishCare

## Night of music raises £2,000 for SWESRS



BY **BRENDA SOSKIN**

AROUND 130 members of the South West Essex & Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWESRS) and guests enjoyed a 'Musical Extra-vaganza', organised by Leslie Tobe to raise funds for the shul.

The music, a mixture of classical opera, bel canto and contemporary 20th century items, included many popular numbers during which the audience were encouraged to join in and even dance.

The talented musicians who accompanied Leslie (pictured) were members of the synagogue; and their instruments ranged from brass to drums and bass, augmented by

guests on strings, accordion and piano.

The well-known professional opera soprano, Teresa Karcher, who was accompanied by her husband Michael Karcher-Young on piano, thrilled the audience with a selection of opera music in Italian, French and Ladino.

It is unfair to pick out anyone from this group of talent; but we have to mention the youngest member of the company, a Redbridge Music School flautist, who accompanied the musicians with an uplifting rendition of La Donna Mobile to an applause worthy of the Royal Albert Hall – a true star in the making.

The event raised around £2,000 for the synagogue.



**Rebbetzin Chaya Faigi Bar organised a special challah bake for the women at Southend & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation (SWHC). All those taking part learned a delicious recipe and new braiding techniques. Lily Solomons, SWHC's Young Lady of the Year, lead the bracha**

## Sue tops the bill at Valentines Park Concert



BY **ALFRED LEVY**

THE Redbridge Music Lounge promotes concerts in Valentines Park monthly throughout the summer. Topping the bill in September was a lady who has been singing professionally and otherwise since she was 17.

Although not quite as well-known as her cousin Helen Shapiro, Sue Hechtman, under her stage name Sue Holliday, toured with Dusty Springfield, Petula Clark and other famous performers in the late 1960s and appeared on television in Ready Steady Go!, Thank your Lucky

Stars and other shows.

Sue retired in 1970, but nine years ago she started singing in jazz clubs and other venues. Her voice remains powerful and true; and she has lost none of her enthusiasm for a swinging jazz offering, accompanied by her excellent four-piece band.

Sue is also an accomplished painter in oils and hails originally from Clapton. She has lived in Redbridge with her husband Joe since 1974.

## Golders Green comes to Essex

BY **JAN MARTIN-ELLIS**

THE Essex Branch of the Jewish Historical Society of England (JHSE) kicked off its autumn/winter programme of talks by welcoming Dr Pam Fox, who spoke about her book *The Jewish Community of Golders Green: A Social History*.

Pam, a prominent social historian, told how she came to write the book after moving to Golders Green and realising that no one had ever documented the history of its Jewish community.

She spoke to more than 100 local people in the course of her research. Much of the book is devoted to their personal memories, some of which were beautifully read out by her husband during the talk, which took place at Clore Tikva School.

Pam told how Jews started to move to the Golders Green area in the early years of the 20th century. The coming of the railway and the

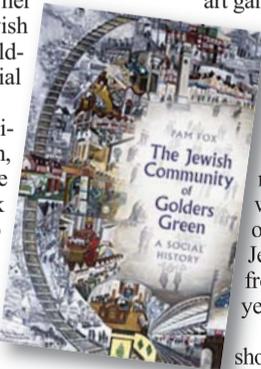
building of Golders Green station accelerated that trickle to a flood.

By the outbreak of World War I, there were some 300 Jewish families living in the area, the first of which had been the family of Sir Joseph Joel Duveen, a wealthy Dutch art dealer and benefactor of art galleries, who lived there with his wife and 14 children. He died in 1908 and is buried in Willesden Jewish cemetery.

Pam also told stories of several other well-known members of Golders Green's Jewish community from all through the years.

She finished by showing some interesting pictures, including one taken at the junction of Golders Green Road and Finchley Road when the crossroads, now so frenetic, was two country lanes among green fields, with a notice announcing the imminent arrival of the railway and new station.

For more information about the Essex branch of the JHSE and details of the winter programme, please visit [www.jhse.org/branches/essex](http://www.jhse.org/branches/essex)



**Sukkot was celebrated all across the region – including at Jewish Blind & Disabled's Aztec House where Malcolm helped put up the Sukkah**

## Churchill talk attracts more than 100

BY **IRENE WARD**

EPPING councillor and keen historian Richard Cohen captivated more than 100 guests at Ilford Federation Synagogue when delivering this year's Stanley Bookatz Memorial Lecture.

Having recently proof read Churchill: Walking with Destiny by Andrew Roberts, Richard was able to reveal little-known facts about Britain's wartime Prime Minister.

We learned that Winston's father was greatly influenced by Disraeli, and the young Winston adopted Disraeli's policy to "aim high".

Although Randolph Churchill died when Winston was just 20, he still inherited his father's appreciation of both Judaism and Christianity.

Many Jewish charities benefited from donations from the family, and Winston firmly believed the saying: "The Lord treats the nations the way the nations treat the Jews."

Andrew Roberts' book is out now, and there will be many eagerly waiting to read it.

## Josh follows in family fundraising tradition



BY **SIMON ROTHSTEIN**

JOSH CARMEL BROWN joined his father, Jewish Care chief executive Daniel (both pictured), in running the Royal Parks Half Marathon to raise money for the charity.

The pair, who live in Woodford Green, were part of a team of 12 Jewish Care racers braving the rain to run 13.1 miles through four of London's eight Royal Parks - Hyde Park, Green

Park, St James's Park and Kensington Gardens

They raised £8,500, which will help the charity support members of the community who rely on their services. Currently, around 10,000 people use a Jewish Care service each week.

This was the first time that 17-year-old Josh has run a half marathon alongside his dad.

Daniel said: "Everyone in our household has very busy lives so finding something we

could do together, which would challenge us both, was wonderful.

"It was fantastic to run together with Josh amongst a team of dedicated runners, who I'd like to thank for taking part in this challenge to support Jewish Care."

Josh is in his final year of A levels and is head boy at Kantor King Solomon High School. He has been involved with Jewish Care from a young age, and has been a participant and volunteer

in Jewish Care's MIKE youth leadership programme at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre.

He added: "Having watched my dad do the London Marathon in 2017, I was inspired to do something similar and this was my first opportunity. It was a real privilege to be part of the team raising much needed money to support the work of Jewish Care."

For those wondering, Josh beat Daniel by 17 seconds!

## Fashion website snapped up by TMG Media



**Cyndy Lessing and Jan Shure of SoSensational.co.uk**

A FASHION website for 50-plus women, set up by two Essex Jewish News columnists, has been acquired by TMG Media Limited.

SoSensational.co.uk – the leading aggregator for fashionable women over 50 – was founded by Jan Shure and Cyndy Lessing.

Jan is a former senior journalist at the Jewish Chronicle. She joined the JC in 1983 as woman's page editor and held a variety of editorial roles until 2012, when she left to be full-time at SoSensational. Cyndy is a business entrepreneur and image consultant.

The pair – who are both members of Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue – identified a gap in the fashion market for women over 50 in 2008 and launched their first websites a year later.

Jan and Cyndy will continue to be closely involved in the site, moving to an editorial role alongside the TMG team.

Cyndy, who lives in Chig-

well, said: "We are confident TMG will run SoSensational with the same focus on women over 50, and with the same passion for fashion for women over 50 that motivated Jan and I to create the site almost a decade ago."

"We are particularly pleased that TMG has plans to grow the site to reach more of its potential audience, both in the UK and internationally."

Alongside enhancements of SoSensational's technology, TMG plan to bring more brands to the 50-plus community. Other developments include the addition of new categories, such as home and beauty and a shopping app.

READ JAN AND CYNDY'S FASHION COLUMN ON PAGE 25

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# Son of Hamas helps raise funds for MDA UK in Southend



Mosab Hassan Yousef (right) in conversation at Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation for MDA UK

BY GEOFFREY PEPPER

AN audience of 120 people listened intently to the full story and gripping account of terror, betrayal, political intrigue and unthinkable choices from special guest Mosab Hassan Yousef – whose father, Sheikh Hassan Yousef, was a founding leader of Hamas.

Mosab, himself a part of Hamas, was turned by the Israeli security agency Shin Bet into a double agent. His information thwarted countless terrorist attacks and suicide bombings, ultimately saving thousands of lives.



I am here to bridge minds. I love you and continue to see beauty

He spoke about his desire for peace and democracy, his conversion to Christianity and recalled stories from his autobiography, *Son of Hamas*.

The event took place at Southend and Westcliff Hebrew Congregation (SWHC) as a fundraiser for MDA UK.

SWHC and Board of Deputies member Peter Baum conducted the interview with Mosab, who said: “Israel is a leading force in technology, science and film and a true democratic country, and there is women freedom.

“Unleashing hate is like a monster, I am here to bridge minds, I love you and continue to see beauty and we should focus on that.”

Synagogue committee member Linda Burns – who with fellow committee members

Ian Burns and Simon Belson had just returned from Israel after a 56-mile trek – told how they are raising funds for a room in the new state of the art MDA campus being built in Ramla.

Simon added: “The committee had set out to raise £30,000 in three years for a new blood room and they had nearly reached that target within the year.”

Daniel Burger, the chief executive of MDA UK, closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their support. He said: “The new centre is 17 metres deep and 26,000sq metres wide, and will protect 96% of Israel’s blood supply in the event of war.”

# Breaking the taboo of death



BY BRENDA SOSKIN

AROUND 80 people attended the End of Life Matters seminar at South West Essex & Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWESRS) in Oaks Lane.

The event was aimed at breaking the taboo of not talking about death; and how, with practical and spiritual support, we can all prepare for the end of life.

The keynote speaker was Dr Adrian Tookman, the palliative care physician and medical director of the Marie Curie Hospice in Hampstead. He described how patients with life threatening conditions, and their families, are supported by the hospice movement. Hospices deliver expert, hands-on medical care, emotional support and guidance; all with the aim of improving the end of life experience of the patient.

Various workshops took place during the morning and afternoon, which included discussions on the lasting power of attorney, organ donation, burial and Jewish rituals and practices regarding death.

Over the lunch-time period, attendees were able to join optional discussions with repre-

sentatives from Chevra Kadisha cemetery services, the Death Café, Chai Cancer Care and Haven House Hospice.

A panel session (pictured) entitled ‘what is a good death’ was chaired by Rabbi Lisa Barrett of SWESRS, with input from Dr Farrell Igielman, anaesthetist and head of ethics at the Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust, Rabbi Jason Demant of St Francis Hospice and psychotherapist Andrea Wershof.

The event was organised by SWESRS, Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue, East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue (ELELS) and the Joint Jewish Burial Society.

Rabbi Richard Jacobi, of ELELS, said: “I think this seminar will help people move forward in terms of their conversations with loved ones, and make sure they have wills and lasting powers of attorney in place so they are better prepared for death. Ultimately, that means people will enjoy their lives more.”

Because of the success of the seminar, follow-up events are to be organised by local synagogues around Essex over the next year.

# ‘This is a huge step in the right direction’



BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

ONE of the first women to be called up at Chelmsford Jewish Community (CJC) has told the *Essex Jewish News* how she hopes this will one day be seen as the norm across Judaism.

Sylvia Barnowski (pictured left), a member of the CJC council, first took to the Bimah over the High Holy Days and is now regularly involved in services.

The decision to invite



This development brings our community yet further into the 21st century

women to participate in its services was made by unanimous decision of the CJC membership over the summer and covered on the front page of the last edition of the *Essex Jewish News*. Ruth Askew was the first woman to receive an honour, on Rosh Hashanah, followed by Sylvia and others.

Sylvia told us: “I was so honoured to be one of the first females to be involved in the religious side of the Chelmsford Jewish Community.

“Women are not separated from men in CJC services, we all sit together, and the prayers are read in both English and Hebrew, so this is a wonderful opportunity to see this development as bringing us yet further into the 21st century.

“People are often misguided into thinking that women take on a secondary role in Judaism. This is a huge step in the right direction in correcting that misconception. My hope is that, in years to come, it will be totally accepted as the norm.”

Chelmsford Jewish Community has been running for more than four decades and provides for local Jewish people – and where applicable

their non-Jewish partners and families – of all shades of religious observance and background.

For more information

about times and venues, please phone the secretary Harry Franklin on 01245 475444 or visit [www.jewish-communitychelmsford.co.uk](http://www.jewish-communitychelmsford.co.uk)

# Bradley scores a big FIFA win



BRADLEY Kaye has been named as the best Jewish FIFA player in Essex.

Bradley won a competition run by Aish Essex Young Professionals to find the ultimate

competitor on the hugely popular football console game.

Bradley is pictured with his golden trophy alongside runners-up Eli Myers (silver) and Avi Myers (bronze).

# Ilford Federation inducts its new rabbi Jenny honoured with new Torah mantle

BY **IRENE WALD**

A PACKED Ilford Federation Synagogue officially welcomed Rabbi David Singer as the congregation's new minister in a rousing induction service and ceremony.

The proceedings were opened by synagogue chair Melvyn Zeff, who then welcomed Dayan Yisroel Yaakov Lichtenstein, the Rosh Beis Din of the Federation of Synagogues, along with his colleagues Dayan Hool and Dayan Posen. They were joined by the family of Rabbi Singer and the president of the Federation of Synagogues, Andrew Cohen.

Dayan Lichtenstein inducted Rabbi Singer, stressing that the synagogue had always welcomed their rabbis and accepted their rulings without fuss, resulting in a very warm and friendly community.

Rabbi Singer then told how a good rabbi should be like Nelson, sometimes putting the telescope to the blind eye. He noted that people had moved away from the area since its heyday, but added that he hoped Ilford would continue to concentrate on producing quality as opposed to quantity.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Singer joined Ilford Federation after Pesach and have proved very popular, as have their children and many grandchildren.

Rabbi Singer has previously held positions in Belfast and Birmingham, as well as spending 14 years living in Is-



**Ilford's Rabbi David Singer (centre) with Andrew Cohen (left) and Dayan Yisroel Yaakov Lichtenstein (right) of the Federation of Synagogues**

rael. He is also a trained scribe, shochet, mohel and teacher.

Ilford Federation Synagogue – which moved to Clarence Avenue from Coven-

try Road in 2014 – has a membership of more than 400 families.

**Congratulations to the local Jewish Care Angels, who were celebrating their 10th anniversary as the Essex Jewish News went to press. In the last decade, these amazing women have raised raised £275,000 for Jewish Care services in Redbridge.**



**Rabbi Richard Jacobi holds the scroll covered in the new mantle, with Rabbi David Hulbert and Jacqueline and Gilbert Herzog**

THE community at East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue (ELELS) have honoured a leading member, who died last year, with a new mantle for their Czech Torah Scroll.

The mantle was used for the first time on erev Rosh Hashanah 5779, keeping with the tradition to dress the Torah in white on the High Holy Days.

It was donated in honour of Jenny Sclaire – a popular and dedicated ELELS council member and volunteer – by her cousins Jacqueline and Gilbert Herzog. The service was led by Rabbis David Hulbert and Richard Jacobi.

Rabbi Jacobi said: "Jenny Sclaire was a huge part of our synagogue and Liberal Judaism across Essex. She is greatly missed."

The ELELS Czech scroll

originated in the tiny Jewish community of Blatná, a Moravian village 50 miles south of Prague.

The 28 gold and silver stars on the new mantle represent 28 Jews from Blatná who were deported to Theresienstadt in 1942. Three of them perished in the Theresienstadt ghetto, while the remaining 25 were all murdered in Auschwitz.

Rabbi Jacobi added: "Jenny donated a blue Torah mantle for our Czech scroll a few years ago, because the act of remembering those who were murdered in the Holocaust was so important to her.

"This new white mantle completes the pair – ensuring that, throughout the year, we remember both those Jews of Blatná and also Jenny and her contributions to our community."

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**Rabbi Singer, the Honorary Officers and Board of Management wish all readers of the EJM a Happy and Peaceful Chanukah**



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

Shabbat services are held weekly on Saturday morning at 10.30 am. Please contact the synagogue for details of Friday night services.

Visitors are always welcome to join us



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### East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue

Rabbi David Hulbert,  
Rabbi Richard Jacobi,  
the Officers and Council send warm wishes to the community and all readers of The Essex Jewish News for a Healthy and Happy Chanukah

We welcome non-members to our services. Please contact the synagogue in advance.

E: [eastlondonandessexliberal@gmail.com](mailto:eastlondonandessexliberal@gmail.com)

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

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Rabbi Davis, the Honorary Officers and Board of Management wish all readers of the Essex Jewish News a Happy Chanukah



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Mr Matthew Neat

Chairman of Governors:  
Mrs Frances Niman

Fullwell Avenue, Barkingside, Ilford  
Essex IG6 2JN

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email: [admin@cloretikva.redbridge.sch.uk](mailto:admin@cloretikva.redbridge.sch.uk)

The governors, staff and pupils wish the community a happy and peaceful Chanukah



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Rabbi Geoffrey Hyman, the Chairman, Honorary Officers and Board of Management wish all their members and the community a Happy and Healthy Chanukah

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Rabbi Zvi Portnoy, the Honorary Officers and Board of Management wish all readers a Happy and Peaceful Chanukah

Rabbi and Rebbetzen Dansky, Reverend and Mrs Newman and Board of Management of

Redbridge United Synagogue wish everyone a Happy Chanukah

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**Chag Chanukah Same'ach!**

Rabbi Lisa Barrett, Honorary Officers, Council and staff of SWESRS would like to wish the entire Jewish community a very Happy Chanukah.

Throughout the year our doors are always open, ready to welcome you to our wonderful choral, family and children's Shabbat morning services, along with our weekly Tuesday Lunch Club and regular Neshamah meditation services too.

We would be delighted to see you at any time of the year....

Why not take a look at our website for further details? [www.swesrs.org.uk](http://www.swesrs.org.uk)



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**Special meeting  
called for SWERS  
members**

SOUTH West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue (SWSRS) have called a meeting of members, on Sunday 13 January at 10.30am, to talk about the shul's future. To be discussed is whether the synagogue stays at Oaks Lane, by either selling off or renting out part of their site, or concentrate on alternatives such as to sell Oaks Lane entirely and either hire, rent or build new premises for the community.

The synagogue have told members the meeting is "arguably the most important community meeting in the last 20 years".



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Board of Management  
wish all readers a  
Happy Chanukah**

**ADVERTORIAL**

**There is no easy answer  
after a bereavement**

BY RABBI MAURICE MICHAELS

IT has now been almost five years that I have been helping people, who are suffering loss of their loved ones, through the Ahada Bereavement Support.

Being a bereavement counsellor means that the bereaved person gets a chance to talk to a total stranger who is non-judgemental, who has no connection to the family and is totally impartial. This is, for them, often an opportunity to off-load, express and share perhaps their most personal and intense emotions without fear of offending, upsetting or being judged. Sometimes, an outsider can provide unbiased and practical insights.

Every loss is irreplaceable, every story is different, every person a unique individual. More often than not, the only common denominator is the intense pain and suffering felt by those left behind.

There have been scenarios where, after the bereavement, there is a lot of family conflict and upheaval resulting from disagree-

ments with family members about possessions, the will, property, the stone-setting, the funeral and the list goes on. So, during the initial time of loss, there can be many other things that are going on that can be overwhelming, distressing and confusing. Having someone there to listen to all these issues, to provide a supporting and helpful ear, can be priceless.

Bereavement can often feel like being on an emotional rollercoaster at times, with ups and downs. To get through the toughest times it's often best to repress nothing, not to bottle things up but to give into the tears, rage, often guilt and internalised pain.

Only by expressing this can you get to the point of understanding and acceptance, so that the intense grief hopefully will subside and the pain decrease. We always explain to our clients that it's so individual, and the experience so personal when someone asks "when will it get better? When will it stop hurting?" There is no easy answer or prescriptive time frame.

There are many coping

mechanisms, starting from the point of loss to where Ahada attempts to get its clients. This is the place that they are able to cope without the dependency upon the counsellor.

All the counsellors at Ahada are very kind and have great empathy with their clients, but are also aware that their job is done when the bereaved is in a place where they can have acceptance of the situation and that they can move forwards with their own life and future. If at any point someone wants to reconnect and chat again, they can.

One of the most important qualities to being a grief counsellor is the ability to listen and often to help create good coping mechanisms. Talking about the person they have lost is, for some, not easy at first; and often impossible without breaking down in tears. And the last memories of the person lost may be distressing, of them in pain and suffering. In time and with practise, when a memory is triggered of the lost relative/friend, it can be possible to remember them, in happier and healthier times; so, the recollection can be one of them laughing at a

joke or dancing at a simcha, rather than suffering with pain during illness and the last/sadder days of their life.

Most important of all is to reach out if you need help with your loss, and talk. Ahada are here to listen and help you in your time of need.

**Wohl IJPS  
Israeli dance  
group**

THE Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School's Israeli dance group now has over 30 boys and girls who participate on a weekly basis, with more expected to join over the next few weeks. This is the largest group the school has had in 10 years.

When the group perform at events, the girls wear special skirts and the boys wear waistcoats. But the clothes the group now has are quite old and some are damaged.

The group are now looking for volunteers who would be willing to repair the old and damaged clothes or make some new ones.

To help, e-mail [deborah.harris@ijpsonline.co.uk](mailto:deborah.harris@ijpsonline.co.uk)

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Rabbi Lee and Rebbetson Lynette Sunderland,  
the Honorary Officers and Congregation  
wish everyone a a Happy and Healthy Chanukah

# Sir Ivan avoids the law at RJCC



BY **MANNY ROBINSON**

THE enterprising workaholic Sharon Imber, who is responsible for so many events at the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre (RJCC), appears to have struck gold with her 'Afternoon Tea With ...' events.

The initial success in hosting Judge Robert Rinder was followed by Sir Ivan Lawrence, the famous barrister and former MP, who defended Ronnie Kray in his 1969 murder trial over the killing of George Cornell in

the Blind Beggar pub in Whitechapel, and the serial killer Dennis Nilsen.

While I am full of praise for Sharon and her team for presenting a magnificent tea, I must confess to being a little disappointed with the talk.

Sir Ivan chose to speak – not about his illustrious career as a defence lawyer – but about his work for Jewish causes; in particular his efforts, in conjunction with the late Greville Janner, in battling for Russian Jews to be allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

Sir Ivan, who rose to be-

come chairman of the Home Affairs Select Committee and who instigated the National Lottery with a private members' bill, told his audience to use their MPs to press any cases they might have and; also demonstrated that a back-bench MP could influence decisions made by the government.

But what was his view on capital punishment or how judges are chosen? And just how did a Jewish grammar school boy, brought up in Brighton like Sir Ivan, progress so far in the heady

heights of the law? We still don't know.

The only time Sir Ivan really touched on the law was when answering a question at the end of his talk on how one deals with a client who claims to be guilty.

"What you have to say," replied Sir Ivan, "is well, let's have a look at the evidence."

Sir Ivan is articulate, has a great sense of humour and, as he himself said, could speak for hours. A pity, therefore, that his topic on the day was about Jewish causes, of which the audience already had full knowledge, and not about his legal career.

# BRIDGE

SID BARRAT

WE are once again delighted that Sid Barrat – teacher at the East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue bridge club – has provided us with a special puzzle to test your bridge skills.

Remember these are not typical problems, but ones where something 'impossible' or 'magic' will happen. You just need to look hard enough.

South is in the contract of 6 No Trumps – heaven knows what the bidding might have been – and the lead is the

King of Clubs.

Twelve tricks are needed and there are 10 immediate tricks 'on top' (four top Hearts, four top Spades and 2 more Aces).

The Diamond finesse is successful and produces the 11th trick, but where on earth can the twelfth come from?

Although the contract is seemingly impossible to make, can you, with the advantage of seeing all the hands, achieve the impossible and make 12 tricks?

**North (16 pts)**

♠ ---  
♥ AKQJ2  
♦ AQ  
♣ 765432

**West (10 pts)**

♠ 1098762  
♥ ---  
♦ KJ  
♣ KQJ98

**East (0 pts)**

♠ 543  
♥ 1087654  
♦ 432  
♣ 10

**South (14 pts)**

♠ AKQJ  
♥ 93  
♦ 1098765  
♣ A

Turn the page upside down to reveal the magic!

After taking the first trick with the Ace of Clubs, play the four top Spades – and discard the four top Hearts. This is not madness! Next finesse the Queen of Diamonds, take the Ace of Diamonds and then lead the 2 of Hearts. East, to his surprise, takes his 10 – but must then lead to South's winners. So the 9 of Hearts becomes the 12 trick. Amazing.



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## Sports plus whisky equals success for Chabad



BY **SIMON ROTHSTEIN**

THE Chabad Events Team had a very busy autumn, putting on a well-received sports quiz alongside their annual whisky challenge.

The quiz was the first ever run by Chabad in Essex, and was so successful that it is already scheduled to return in June 2019.

Guests enjoyed a supper of salt beef and latkes alongside the competition, hosted by well-known local quizmaster John Jacobs. Rivalries were heated, and the debate was fierce at times, before a team captained by Barry Soraff were named as the winners.

The whisky challenge is one of Chabad's most popular events, especially as guests this year were greeted with a shawarma and sticky toffee pudding supper.

Dinner was followed by an extremely interesting and amusing talk from Katie Groves of Milroy's of Soho, a shop which specialises in single and rare malt whiskies and tastings.

Those attending learned about, and tasted, five different whiskies from Scotland. There was also a table quiz – organised by Gary Boorman and won by Rabbi Odom Brandman's table – and a successful raffle.

Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin MBE, executive director of Chabad

North East London & Essex, said: "The Chabad Events Team regularly run wonderful events that everyone really looks forward to. They raise funds for Chabad's work in the community – specifically for our addiction and counselling services – and have been very successful at this. We look forward to many more of their events in the future."

**CORRECTION:** In the last issue, we wrote that Wes Streeting MP had represented Ilford North since 2005. We meant, of course, 2015. We would like to make clear that the Conservative Party's Lee Scott served the constituency from 2005 to 2015.

# Chaps chat at the Commons



Wes Streeting MP gave the Chaps That Chat group a tour of the Houses of Parliament PHOTO BY TONY METZGER

WES Streeting MP welcomed 20 members of the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre's Chaps That Chat group for a guided tour around the Houses of Parliament.

The men's social group, which meets once a month on

a Wednesday, was set up by Sid Green as a way to combat loneliness for the older generation and provide lots of interesting talks and events.

Wes, the Member of Parliament for Ilford North, said: "It was fantastic to welcome

Chaps That Chat to Parliament for a tour. Having met them before, I knew it would be a fun evening.

"I'm really pleased that they were able to come and visit, and special thanks go to Sid and Jewish Care for help-

ing to organise it. I look forward to seeing them again in the constituency."

If you would like to go along to Chaps That Chat, please contact [asmardina@jcare.org](mailto:asmardina@jcare.org) or call 020 8922 2273.

## Help make a minyan to say kaddish

BY SIMON ROTHSTEIN

THE Levoyahs and Stone Settings Group (Essex & East London) are appealing for help to make up minyans for funerals where there are few, or no, family members and friends.

Eddie Martin and Steven Muster run the group and have around 18 male volunteers, who are called upon from time to time to help make up a minyan to enable mourning prayers to be said. But they need more help to ensure the project's long-term viability.

Steven said: "There are unfortunately many times when

people pass away without many loved ones or family able to attend a levoyah (funeral) or stone setting.

"As a community we must never feel that 'no one cares'. We are all family and should help others and ensure that they are fully supported... and it is a great mitzvah to do so!"

The group covers the Federation cemetery in Rainham, as well as the United Synagogue site in Waltham Abbey and other local cemeteries in East London.

To volunteer, please contact Eddie on 01708 378882 or Steven on 0208 500 4042 or [steven@shalom2010.plus.com](mailto:steven@shalom2010.plus.com)

## Starting the day with a service at KKS



KANTOR King Solomon High School has introduced weekly shacharit services for the first time in a generation.

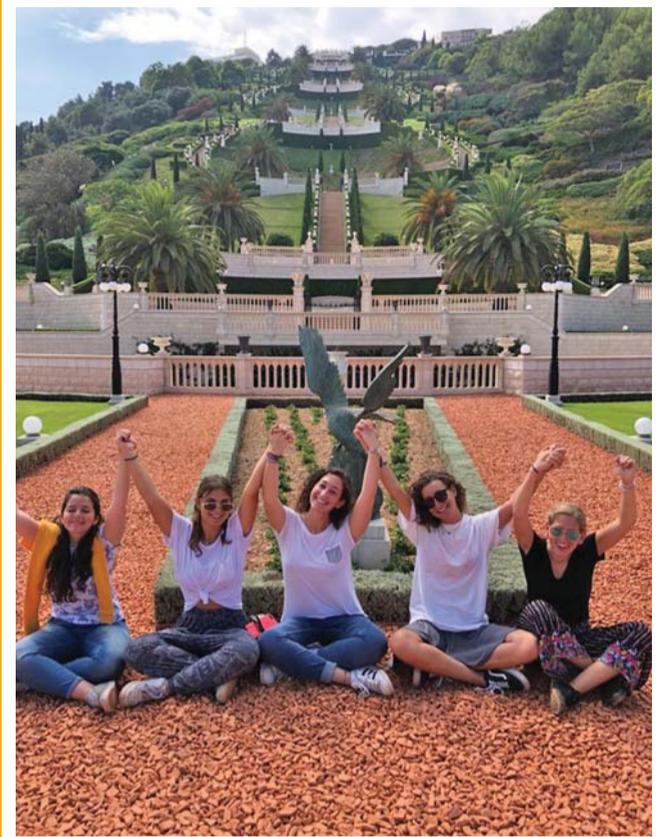
For an initial phase, separate morning prayers are held for male and female pupils. The boys are learning about laying tefillin, why we do it and morning prayers. The girls have been learning about why we pray, what we say, what it means and how it can empower us. Once the studies are complete, the services will be merged.

The male service is led by Rabbi Aryeh Sufrin MBE, the executive director of Chabad North East London & Essex (pictured), who will also take joint services. The girls are currently led by the madrichim at Chabad Gants Hill.

The services run on Wednesday mornings at 8.30am and last around 15 minutes. Boys over barmitzvah age are able to lay tefillin. A spokesperson for the

school said: "With more than 40 students now in attendance, these services have been a wonderful addition to our week. It gives our pupils time to reflect on the day ahead and unite together in prayer."

## Gold-en Israel scheme celebrates 35 years



Rhianna Bongart on her gap year in Israel

BY PAT LIDIKER

JESSICA PERSELL and Rhianna Bongart are experiencing currently an exciting, rewarding, gap year in Israel, thanks to the generosity of the Doris and Sidney Gold Trust Fund, set up by the couple's daughter, June Bradbury, in 1983.

Over the last 35 years, the fund has helped support 70 young people from Essex to spend up to 12 months on leadership-focused, gap year programmes in Israel, providing skills and experience with a lifetime's worth of benefit for the individual, Jewish community and wider society.

Former graduates who have made an important, lasting impact include the current chief executives of three of Britain's major communal organisations – Daniel Carmel-Brown at Jewish Care, JW3's Raymond Simonson and David Davidi-Brown at the Union of Jewish Students.

The Trust is now an integral part of Redbridge Jewish Care. The charity's head of PR and external affairs Lisa Wimborne, herself a graduate of the scheme, told the *Essex Jewish News*: "When Dr Sidney Gold passed away in 1987, it was agreed that the Trust Fund would support young local people wishing to spend their gap year in Israel.

"The principles most important to him were young people fostering a love of Israel and the Jewish people, as well as enhancing the concept of community service, both professionally or as volunteers."

This initiative undoubtedly ticks all his boxes. The newest recipients, Jessica and Rhianna, set off for Israel in September and are currently in Tel Aviv, before moving on to Jerusalem in January next year. The girls are firm friends who live locally and attended Clore Tikva, Kantor King Solomon and JFS.

Rhianna said: "At the moment we are volunteering. I have just passed all my exams and am now an emergency first responder for the Magen David Adom ambulance service. We also take trips each Monday to learn about marginalised communities."

Both girls say they would never have been able to do this without the invaluable financial help from the Sidney Gold Foundation, which has helped them achieve something they had been looking forward to for many years.

June Bradbury and her brother and fellow trustee Alan Gold agreed that their dear mum and dad would be delighted their legacy has helped encourage young people to go and identify with a country that was so important to them.

## Sukkat Shalom opens its doors

SUKKAT Shalom Reform Synagogue once again took part in the Open House London weekend this year.

Open House is an annual event when buildings across London, that are not normally accessible, open their doors to the general public. The synagogue's main building is Grade II\* listed.

Despite the poor weather and a slow start, by the afternoon there was mix of Jewish and non-Jewish visitors. Some were particularly interested in the architecture; and for those

who wanted to know more about Judaism, a torah scroll was taken out and shown to them. Members of the community were on hand to answer any questions from their visitors.

A warm sunny afternoon prompted a good response to the community's annual afternoon tea. There to meet and greet members were the chair Steve Wynne and Rabbi Larry Becker. Author Eric Levene was also present, signing copies of his latest book 'Fienstein's Theory of Rela-

tives'. A book and card stall was set up outside, where members could also enjoy the well-tended gardens that surround the building.

Another event that took place in the synagogue, and that was well attended, was a Dementia Awareness session run by Peggy Ennis of the Alzheimer's Society.

See what's going on. For the **CURRENT ACTION** turn to page 27

## Gingerbread Sukkah!



It was a very tasty Sukkot at the Rohr Chabad House in Cambridge as parents and children combined to make these special edible gingerbread sukkahs.

# Jews and Muslims unite against hate



People from all faiths attended the Muslims Against Antisemitism meeting at Chabad Gants Hill

THE Chabad Lubavitch Centre in Gants Hill hosted an open meeting for MAAS (Muslims against Antisemitism) which was attended by 80 people from various backgrounds.

The evening was initiated by Yusaf Patel, the community liaison officer for the London Borough of Redbridge, and attended by a number of local Labour and Conservative councillors including Councillor Jas Athwal, the leader of Redbridge London Borough



Fiyaz Mughal speaking

Council.

MAAS founder Fiyaz Mughal and Islamic scholar Imam Mamadou Bocoum both addressed the meeting, sharing their experiences and aspirations.

Questions were then addressed to the panellists and the leader of the council. They expressed, in the main, concerns that the local community have in relation to antisemitism and the hope for continued cohesion throughout the Borough of Redbridge.

Rabbi Sufirin MBE, executive director of Chabad North East London & Essex, concluded the evening with a vote of thanks to the organisers, the panel speakers and the CST for ensuring security for all.

He closed with the hope that further efforts will be made by the council and community leaders to ensure that the Jewish population continues to feel safe within Redbridge, a privilege that we have enjoyed for many decades.

# WIJPS pupils make a plea for peace

YEAR six pupils at Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School (WIJPS) marked 100 years since the end of the First World War in their class assembly.

In addition to presenting facts about the war, the students also shared some very important messages with their fellow pupils, staff and parents.

They said: "It is important to remember the past, so that we do not repeat the same mistakes in the future."

"We all want to live in a peaceful world. The tefillah we say every day in school includes prayers for peace – 'Oseh Shalom' is translated as 'He who makes peace in His high places, may He bring peace upon us and upon all Israel, and let us say Amen'."

"We pray for peace all over the world. In our PSHE lessons, we have been talking about how to have peace in our daily lives and in our own

little world of our classroom. Even our school Middah this week, linked to the Parasha of Chayei Sara, is 'making peace'.

"Hashem created a world full of differences. It is important that we are tolerant of everyone and that we celebrate the things that make us different – this makes life much more interesting. Think how boring it would be if we were all the same!"

"We have pledged to be kinder to each other. Instead of pointing out differences that make people feel sad, we are going to pay more compliments to each other and be kinder to those around us. We are going to be there for each other and look out for each other."

"Our wish for the future is that everyone lives in peace and harmony, and that our descendants are not commemorating the end of another war in another 100 years time."

# Thanks for the memories

BY ROBIN JACOBS

IF you go down to Woodford United Synagogue on a Friday morning, you are in for a big surprise ...

You will find a group of people enjoying themselves by singing golden oldies, playing percussion instruments and practising tongue twisters.

They all attend the recently-formed Singing for Memory group, whose purpose is to support people living with conditions affecting their memory together with their carers. It has been proved that such activities build on preserved memory for song and music.

These Friday sessions,

which last a few hours each week, offer those attending a chance to socialise and have fun in a friendly environment. For more information, contact the synagogue on 0208 504 1990 or email office@wfus.org.uk

As this is a new group, there are places available still. So 'wouldn't it be lovely' if you could also be 'tiptoeing through the tulips'.

**ESSEX JEWISH NEWS**  
Send us your stories and pictures. See the panel in page 2 for our address.

# The fight to unite the different strands of Jewish experience

## PERSONAL OPINION

RENEE BRAVO



AS I celebrate my 90th birthday and enter my last lap, I look back at some of the battles I have fought, and the consequences. One of the best was my fight to get orthodox women to say Kaddish.

Although I had authority from the orthodox establishment, it was all very low key, and "keep it quiet". But the new Chief Rabbi has issued a leaflet to all his synagogues stating that women should be encouraged to say Kaddish and helped to do so. A small victory.

I take comfort from the knowledge that so many women, who previously would have been denied the honour of saying Kaddish for a loved one, can now share in this wonderful mitzvah.

I am a member of the Council of Christians and Jews; served on its national executive for 12 years and, until it folded, I was the president of the Redbridge branch.

From the beginning, there were representatives of six different Christian congregations, and only one Jewish – the United Synagogue. For years we campaigned for the inclusion of different Jewish groups, and were refused. It was during my tenure that the non-orthodox were at last given equal authority. One of the rabbis told me that my contribution to the debate added to the eventual result. I had used an idea from the words of Jesus: "My father's house has many entrances."

The fight now is for the different strands of Jewish ex-

perience to come together and respect each other. The fragmentation of religious life is crippling our community.

If each area had a co-ordinated religious structure, all the information of the different synagogues on one computer, sharing all facilities and respecting each other's views, what a difference it would make to our lives. And the cost. When I first started on my journey into the religious world, I was told: "You are wasting your time. You won't change anything." How wrong they were. Girls can now have a meaningful batmitzvah. Little by little ...

At the old Beehive Lane synagogue, in 1949, I was the first married woman, who was not a widow, to insist on membership in my own right. I insisted also on my own passport, which was rare at that time. It had to be held by Reverend Black until the wedding, in case I misused it.

Then there were the fights which are still being fought. Every school should have a sign at the entrance: "Plumbers are more important than poets." We suffer from this prevalent idea that clever

means academically bright.

I refer you to the chapter in the Bible where God himself gives instructions for the building of the tabernacle, in intricate detail, to the carpenters and seamstresses, how many nails and where to put the boards, and how to sew the edges. And He uses the same word, CHOCHMA, to describe their abilities, as is used for academic prowess.

Wisdom can be in the hands as well as the brain. So if you have children who come home crying because they did not get good marks, go and find a Bible (I'm sure you've got one somewhere) and show them how God feels about manual workers.

And another of my pet fights: the use of the word MAN. "God created man in his own image, male and female created He them." So the word MAN does not mean a male person. It means a human being.

The ridiculous word 'chair' has become the norm. I have spoken to many women who have chaired meetings or organisations, and none of them objected to the word 'chairman'. So much unnecessary ef-

fort is being used trying to bring equality. Equal does not mean the same. It means different things having the same value. Like the sun and the rain, like music and art, like man and woman.

So we now have the sad sight of men benefiting from the march of feminism, relieved of the burden of being the breadwinner and given the

joy of being with their children, while women are having to bear the double burden of breadwinner and homemaker. So much still to fight for.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody who helped me celebrate my 90th. This special photo is of me at my party with my two daughters, grandson-in-law and great granddaughter.



# The full Monty

BY **MANNY ROBINSON**

IN 1932, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. Also taking off in 1932 was an eight-year-old called Monty Goldstein, making his first faltering steps as a tiny soprano in the East London Synagogue choir in Rectory Square.

Now, at the age of 94, Monty is ready to retire from the choir at Ilford United Synagogue, but he admits: "No one wants me to go."

At that grand old age, Monty could arguably claim to be one of the oldest choristers in the country – and now he wants out ... the song is ended but the chorister lingers on!

Monty moved to Ilford in 1958; he helped to start the choir at Ilford Synagogue in 1962 with David Fallman, who was the choirmaster. It included choir stalwarts Mo Joseph, Bernard Black and Avram Pearl. Monty worked with Reverend Joseph Skaletsky, Reverend Avram Levin, Rabbi Irvin Broder, Rabbi Geoffrey Hyman and Jeffrey Leader, and Reverend David Rome, who occasionally led



Monty Goldstein PHOTO BY ARNOLD ROSE



He is still singing in a choir at the grand age of 94

the services.

A lover of light opera, Monty, who was also a member of the popular Oxford Revue Group, still has a favourite synagogue piece. It is Zocharti Leh, which he sings as a solo during Rosh Hashanah in what is now a tenor's voice. Hallelujah was a favourite of David Rome when Monty sang it.

Monty's wife Adele died in 1984 and he married again in 1991 to Rhoda whose late husband, Kenny Simmons, was a chorister with the London Jewish Male Choir and was also in the choir at Beehive Lane shul.

Monty has two sons, Stephen and Martin, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

His nephews are Michael Goldstein, president of the United Synagogue, and Jonathan Goldstein, chair of the Jewish Leadership Council.

# Southend to offer sanctuary to child refugees

BY **SIMON ROTHSTEIN**

SOUTHEND & District Reform Synagogue was part of a successful interfaith campaign to convince the local council to settle child refugees in the region.

Councillors pledged to house three refugees each year for the next 10 years, following an appeal from 45 faith leaders including the synagogue's rabbi, the Archdeacon of Southend and the imam of the UKIM Southend Mosque. Councillors were also moved by hearing stories from child refugees who have fled war and persecution.

The Southend action was part of a national campaign spearheaded by Citizens UK and the refugee charity Safe

Passage. Marking 80 years since the Kindertransport rescue operations that brought 10,000 children to safety from Nazi Europe, the 'Our Turn' campaign calls on the government to honour this legacy by funding the resettlement of 10,000 child refugees over the next 10 years.

Many of Britain's leading rabbis – including Rabbi Richard Jacobi of East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue – also signed a letter to *The Times* calling for action.

The letter read: "Three years ago today, Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Kurdish refugee, drowned because he had no safe route to sanctuary in Europe. The lives of more than 9,000 people fleeing war and persecution have been lost in the Mediterranean since that little boy's death."

# CELEBRATIONS



Hilary Goldsmith and Marlon Ellis were married in October at the Renaissance St Pancras.

**SHARE YOUR SIMCHA WITH THE COMMUNITY** E-mail your pictures to [office.ejn@gmail.com](mailto:office.ejn@gmail.com) or [simon.rothstein@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:simon.rothstein@hotmail.co.uk)

# Chigwell rises to the Shabbat challenge

MEMBERS of Chigwell and Hainault Synagogue took part in a six-week programme to help them gain a better understanding on how to fully observe Shabbat.

'The Shabbat Challenge' was the idea of Rabbi Boruch Davis and David Blitz, who wanted to encourage families to learn more about keeping Shabbat through small, incremental steps.

A committee was set up and chaired by David, comprised of other shul members Danny Fresco, Raphael Am-selli, Robert Mandelstam and Ben Saltman. The shul's Rabbi Rafi Goodwin and Rabbi Mendy and Rebbetzin Gitel Brukirer, from Aish Essex, were also involved in organising the programme, which ran from the first Shabbat after Rosh Hashanah.

Twenty five families signed up to the challenge, which kicked off with a challah-making event and Friday night service, followed by dinner for 100 people. Over the six weeks, people were encouraged to make small changes each Shabbat, whether it was turning off electrical devices or learning how to prepare for having hot food and drinks by using hot water urns and an electrical hot-plate. For one Shabbat, which fell on Chol Hamoad Suktot, families hosted meals, with many of them building a sukkah for the first time.

The final stage of the Challenge was a communal Seuda Shlishit, the end of Shabbat meal, which was followed by Havdalah and live music in the shul hall from Rabbi Mendy and Jamie Raven.

David told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Being involved in the



Chigwell & Hainault members rise to the challenge

Shabbat challenge was amazing. Seeing more than 100 people turn up for the challah-make and the Friday night meal, and

then again for Seuda and Havdalah, made it all worthwhile for me.

"It shows that taking on just

one more thing can really help to gain a better understanding and help to improve your Shabbat experience."

EXPANDED & REVAMPED KOSHER SHOP IN WESTCLIFF

## Just Kosher SWHC

Our brilliant one-stop kosher shop has been revamped and expanded. Serving Southend and Westcliff Jewish Community and the many visitors and is now exclusively supplied by Just Kosher.

There is a large selection of challah, bread, rolls, cakes and pastries, all freshly made from the Just Baked bakery.

You will also find a wonderful selection of fresh poultry and meat including special value packs. A wide choice of freshly made delicatessen, and all the dry foods, non-food items and Judaica you need.

PLUS bridge roll platters, meat platters, salads, cakes and biscuits available to order for special events and simchas!

**SWHC**  
SOUTHEND & WESTCLIFF  
HEBREW CONGREGATION

OPEN Sunday 9:30am-12:30pm Monday 10am-1pm  
Wednesday 10am-1pm Thursday 11am-5pm Friday 9am-1pm  
JUST KOSHER SWHC, TALMUD TORAH, SWHC, FINCHLEY ROAD, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA, SS0 8AD  
[justkosherwhc@gmail.com](mailto:justkosherwhc@gmail.com) | 07780 449081 | 01702 430307 (opening hours)

# Will you help us light up the lives of 10,000 people this Chanukah?



This Chanukah, the same number of people will be relying on Jewish Care, like any other week of the year. Over the eight days and nights, more than 10,000 members of our community across London and the South East will need our support. Just as a Chanukiah needs a Shamash to make the other candles come alight, we need your help to bring light to all their lives.

Please make a gift by calling 020 8922 2600 or visit [jewishcare.org/donate](http://jewishcare.org/donate) #PeopleOfJewishCare



## Thirty years on and still accounting



Stephen, Laura, Keith and Beatrice Lesser run their family business

### JEWISH FAMILY BUSINESS CELEBRATES MILESTONE

BY PAT LIDIKER

STEPHEN Lesser began his chartered accountancy practice from scratch at the age of 33 in a former colleague's garage in Chingford. Thirty years on, as the business celebrates a special anniversary, Lesser & Co is recognised as one of the most successful chartered accountancy practices in Essex. Now based in large premises in Station Road, Chingford, it has 16 members of staff and more than 800 clients from all

across the UK and even overseas. But it remains very much a family success story at heart. From the early days, Stephen's wife Beatrice has played a key role in personal tax returns and new client administration. Their son Keith joined the team as a partner seven years ago, and their daughter Laura – a digital and social media expert – devised their marketing, SEO and web strategy. Formerly members of Coventry Road Synagogue in Ilford, Stephen and Beatrice now live in Loughton where they belong to Loughton (Federation) Synagogue. Laura – who represented Team GB at the European Maccabi Games in Stirling as part of the table tennis squad – is also a member at Loughton,

while Keith has joined East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue. Stephen says the bedrock of the company has always been the results it achieves for its clients. He told the *Essex Jewish News*: "They stay with us year after year and recommend others because of the outcomes we achieve. Attention to detail is not just from a technical perspective but concentrating on each client's bespoke situation to achieve the results they want." Another great asset is investment in technology, including automation, and training in personal tax software. However, Stephen is determined that new methods will in no way change his personal relationships with

valued clients. "You can't afford to stand still as circumstances are constantly changing, particularly in technology, but we combine this with traditional methods," he stresses. Keith adds: "While my father mainly focuses on his longstanding portfolio of clients, that he has developed great relationships with, I manage staff, our day-to-day deadlines and see mostly newer clients." And Beatrice has the last word: "I don't know where the last 30 years have gone, they have flown by and I am proud of the successful business we

have grown. It's wonderful to be part of a family business and see my children develop into dependable, knowledgeable individuals capable of running Lesser & Co for the next 30 years or more." To find out more, visit [www.lessrandco.co.uk](http://www.lessrandco.co.uk)

## Southend Reform members honoured on Simchat Torah



TWO members of Southend & District Reform Synagogue were honoured for their outstanding work throughout the last year in a joyful Simchat Torah service. Led by Rabbi Warren Elf, the synagogue was filled with a wonderful, holiday atmosphere as its congregation sang and danced while parading the Torah scrolls. Synagogue members Sue Levitus and Ronnie Schwartz were bestowed Kallat Torah and Chatan Bereishit for "their outstanding work for the synagogue and wider community". The service concluded with a kiddush in the synagogue sukkah, which had been lovingly constructed by members of the congregation and children of the cheder.

**ALL THE FUN OF MITZVAH DAY. SEE THE BACK PAGE**

## Ruth's play showcased at prestigious theatre



Ruth Bayard (far right) with fellow members of the East London and Essex Playwriting Group PHOTO BY RICHARD MARGRAVE ELE GROUP

BY MICAELA BLITZ

RUTH BAYARD, a budding Jewish playwright from Brentwood, had her most recent show performed at The Queen's Theatre in Hornchurch. Ruth's 15-minute play, *Home and Away*, tells the story of a couple looking for a holiday home for their retirement. It was one of six plays to be showcased as part of the prestigious theatre's *Stories You Need to See and Hear* programme. Having spent her professional career writing reports and

referrals as a social care manager, a chance advert in her local paper led Ruth to turning her hand to something more creative. She told the *Essex Jewish News*: "I saw an ad for a six week writing course in the local area about three years ago, and thought it would be a good way to meet people as I was new to the area. I had never really written anything before, but thought it could be fun, so decided to give it a go!" The course, run by Phillip Ayckbourn, son of the famous playwright Alan, taught Ruth

many different techniques and methods about writing plays. As a complete novice, she was very nervous walking into a room of 20 other strangers but, as the weeks went on, Ruth began to gain confidence. She was thrilled when her play was one of six selected to be professionally produced and acted as part of the Course Showcase in March 2015. Ruth – who lives in Brentwood with husband Clive (both founder members of Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue) – enjoyed the course so much that

when it finished she decided, along with many of her classmates, to set up a regular writing group so that they could continue to write and share ideas. The East London and Essex Playwriting Group now meet once a month at the Queen's Theatre, where they discuss their ideas and offer each other feedback and creative input. Since starting the group, Ruth has gone on to have four more plays performed on stage, and has really enjoyed the experience of being able to bring her writing to life. She told us how she finds inspiration in everyday things, and prefers ideas to come about naturally. Ruth revealed: "I don't tend to sit at my desk and force myself to write in a regimented way, things often pop into my head and I just write them down. I guess you could say that I have 'voices in my head', but in a good way!" When it comes to further writing ambitions, Ruth has relatively modest goals. She

added: "I just want to carry on developing my writing skills, so that I can write slightly longer and more in-depth plays. Currently, I am writing something about the inner workings of local government, which is an area that I am interested in. I really enjoy writing, and want to grow as a writer. Some people say that they feel they have a book in them. I am not sure if that is right for me, but I definitely feel I have a lot more plays!"

## King Solomon pupils get legal advice



The NXT programme of Kantor King Solomon High School met with Daniel Rosenberg and Sarah Anticoni, partners at Charles Russell Speechlys law firm. The programme is run by Rabbi Mendy Brukirer of Aish Essex and gives pupils of all faiths the chance to meet successful leaders in their fields, including businessmen, accountants, lawyers, judges, politicians, entrepreneurs and magazine editors. Mendy said: "Daniel and Sarah spoke of the importance of remaining flexible, constantly learning and loving what you do."

# A Jewish life by the seaside in Southend

## PAT LIDIKER PAYS A VISIT TO JEWISH CARE'S SHEBSON LODGE

**S**OUTHEND is fast becoming a favourite venue for Jewish Londoners of all ages dreaming of swapping the grime, noise and hassle of the capital for a less stressful life with sea air and wonderful views. And not to forget the famous pier.

For those looking for a place for retirement, the affordable studio apartments in Jewish Care's Shebson Lodge on the seafront have recently been redecorated and are much in demand.

Stylish and modern, and with Jewish communal life on tap at the Southend & Westcliff Community Centre in the same building, there's nothing not to like.

With its full programme of varied activities attracting people from the surrounding area, the Centre has its own kosher shop and café, where a major attraction each month is salt beef night. Staff regularly serve up to 100 hungry customers for sit-down, salt beef dinners and almost as many takeaways, getting through around as many kilos of this must-have Jewish delicacy every time.

Shebson Lodge's one and two bedroom studio apartments have fully-fitted kitchens and bathrooms, a lounge, and green communal gardens to sit out with friends to soak up the views.

Myra Blayer, 91, has been living at Shebson for seven years, having moved from Leigh-on-Sea after a bad fall, and knowing she didn't want to be on her own anymore. She knew already about the develop-



Shebson Lodge resident Myra Blayer relaxes in her Southend home PHOTO BY BLAKE EZRA

ment, as she was a regular member of the community centre.

Myra says: "I've loved it here since I arrived and couldn't wish for anything better. The flat is spacious and I was able to bring my own furniture, so it quickly felt like home. I can see the sea from my window, it feels like a hotel and everyone here gets on so well. It gives my daughter peace of mind knowing I'm here, while I still have my own front door but with the security of know-

ing help is available if I need it."

She adds that being above the community centre means there's always company whenever she wants it, saying: "I love going to the bingo and the entertainer with music, and it's nice to know I can eat there, get a takeaway and enjoy the Shabbat meals on Friday nights."

Naomi Creeger of Jewish Care says that, while Shebson Lodge has no minimum sup-

port requirement for tenants, it has a 24-hour support team on hand if needed, with care provision available or the option to bring in a private carer.

Tenants can also enjoy the wide range of activities at the Centre, including clubs and outings for anyone who would like company and fun.

Michelle Davies, Jewish Care housing services manager, told me: "Shebson Lodge is ideal for older people who want to enjoy living independently

with peace of mind, knowing support is available should they need it. The flats offer a warm, friendly and welcoming environment, thanks to our trained staff and dedicated volunteers.

"There is a full calendar of activities and events to cater for a wide variety of interests and the community comes together to celebrate Shabbat and festivals, meaning people keep connected to Jewish roots and customs in a way that suits them."

Just don't forget your bucket and spade!

For more information, please contact Hilary De Martino, manager at Jewish Care's Southend & Westcliff Community Centre, on [HDeMartino@jcare.org](mailto:HDeMartino@jcare.org) or 01702 334 655.

## One-stop shop in Southend shul

**S**OUTHEND & Westcliff Hebrew Congregation (SWHC) have revamped and expanded their on-site kosher shop. The new store, specifically redesigned with the community in mind, is more than twice the size of the old one with double the amount of choice in stock.

The one-stop shop – re-branded as JUSTKOSHER-SWHC – sees all the stock comes from Just Kosher in Borehamwood. It will sell bakery, fresh meat and delicatessen items, alongside dry and household goods.

The new proprietor, David Law, has many years of culinary experiences and will also offer home deliveries, if required. David will be supported by SWHC community volunteers.

The shop will accept pre-orders for Shabbat and festivals, and can also cater for events and simchas.

Synagogue chair Michael Nelkin said: "This is our commitment to ensure kosher supplies on site. It is important the shop is supported by the community wherever possible."

## SOMEWHERE TO GO? SOMETHING TO DO?

A DIRECTORY OF REGULAR EVENTS, ACTIVITIES AND GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY

### A

#### AISH ESSEX

Jewish education and experiences for young Jews 16-32 in the UK  
Contact: 07791 220774 or e-mail: [mendy@aish.org.uk](mailto:mendy@aish.org.uk)

#### ART FOR ALL

Mondays 8pm-10pm at RJCC. Contact: [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

### B

#### BEEHIVE LANE JACS

Thursdays 1.30pm - 3pm Ilford United Synagogue

#### BRIDGE LESSONS

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 10pm  
Wednesdays 7.15pm - 9.15pm. Contact: [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

#### BOY'S CLUB LUNCH

Monthly at RJCC. Contact: Alison or Sharon 0208 418 2116

### C

#### CARERS COFFEE AND CHAT

First Thursday of the month 10.30am - 12.30pm. Costa Coffee 688-690 Chigwell Road, Woodford. Contact: Lorraine Fine 0208 418 2153 or Joan Selby 0208 418 2161

#### CHAPS THAT CHAT

Speakers and natter  
Wednesdays monthly at RJCC. Phone: Alison on 07827 982110

#### CHIGWELL AND HAINAULT LEAGUE OF JEWISH WOMEN

Phone: 0208 501 1661

#### COMPUTER DROP-IN CLASSES

10.30am at RJCC. Contact: [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

#### CONVERSATIONAL YIDDISH

Sundays fortnightly 10am - noon at RJCC. Contact: [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

#### CHIGWELL AND HAINAULT JACS

Thursdays 1.30pm - 3pm at Limes Avenue

### F

#### FITNESS FOR ALL

11am - noon with Tracy Jacobs at RJCC. Contact: [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

### G

#### GANTS HILL JACS

Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm. Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. Phone: 020 8550 9450

#### GRAND ORDER OF ISRAEL AND SHIELD OF DAVID LODGE

Monthly entertainment on Mondays. Contact Paul Cross 07973 202940

### I

#### ISRAEL DANCEFIT

At Woodford Forest Synagogue (Women only). Phone: 0208 504 1990

#### ILFORD FRIENDLY CIRCLE

Tea and entertainment at Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue  
Sundays 1pm-3pm

### J

#### JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Essex Branch)

Meetings monthly at 8pm at Clore Tikvah School. Phone: 0208 599 1324

#### JLGB

Fabulous activities for all youngsters. Phone: 0208 989 8990

#### JUST PAINT

No age limit. Meetings are twice a month in Barking-side from 7pm. email: [marianmyers@btinternet.com](mailto:marianmyers@btinternet.com) or phone 07958 749477

### L

#### LADIES THAT LUNCH

Last Wednesday in the month at RJCC. Contact [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

#### LET'S MOVE ON

For divorced and single people. 7.30pm - 10.15pm at RJCC. Contact: [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

#### LINE DANCING

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#### SOUTHEND JACS

Wednesdays at Southend Hebrew Congregation Synagogue. Phone: 01268 771978

### T

#### TABLE TENNIS

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#### THREE FAITHS FORUM

Jewish-Christian-Muslim. Contact: [www.eastlondon3faiths.org](http://www.eastlondon3faiths.org)

### W

#### WANSTEAD JEWISH LITERARY SOCIETY

Sunday afternoon monthly. Phone: 0208 505 0063

### Y

#### YOGA

9.45am - 11am at RJCC. Contact [simber@jcare.org](mailto:simber@jcare.org) or phone 0208 418 2116

# CAMBRIDGE DIET

MARK HARRIS



ASIDE from this university city's annual student festivities of one sort or another (including the famed and illustrious 'May Balls' – now held in June), Cambridge affords its citizens, permanent and temporary (and, of course, its tourists) a happily disproportionate and eclectic spectrum of festivals throughout the seasons (as compared to many urban areas outside London and other UK capitals).

These range from the inevitably highbrow events to the inexorably enjoyable from a basic human viewpoint – with talks, performances and other cultural activities led, produced or involving internationally renowned academics, technologists, novelists and other writers, musicians, artists and chefs etc. And they significantly cover subjects from literature, music, theatre, film and art; through science, history and philosophy; to special open-house days at colleges, museums and galleries; and also traditional river activities on the Cam. But not forgetting the agricultural shows – the animals can be so cute – as well as the very popular food and drink Fairs (ethnic, international or local in character).

Many of the annual events take place in and around Cambridge's ancient and architecturally magnificent edifices. One example of such is the Shakespeare Festival – the bard's tragedies, comedies and histories are played out across July and August evenings amidst the beautifully manicured grounds of several university colleges like King's, Trinity and St John's. Ingredient music and drama performances are presented at the city's prominent theatres and concert venues, including West Road Concert Hall, the Corn Exchange and the Cambridge Arts Theatre. Or perhaps at the less well-known ADC and Mumford Theatres, the latter in the main Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) building.

Aficionados of 'real' or 'craft' ales, and similar beverages, can imbibe to their hearts' (or livers') content the pleasurable extensive array available from an 'intoxicating' variety of East Anglia brewers, set up in and about a huge marquee in the tree-sprinkled parkland of Jesus Green, beside the Cam. This is the CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) Festival, held three times a year now! And, in the usual early summer warmth here, drinkers can socially sup their cool samples or pints (there's also wine, and other drinks) with friends whilst reclining in a deckchair or stretched out on

the dry grass. Other celebrations revolving round the alcoholic or the comestible – including farm and market garden produce – generally spread over the expansive, tree-fringed and verdant space in the town centre known as Parker's Piece. (It was there, apparently, that the basic Football Association rules were first established, in the 19th century.)

Across recent years, it has been noted, some topics or aspects falling within the context of certain Cambridge festivals can be of particular interest from a Jewish perspective. And I'm not talking necessarily about possibly accessible refreshments, such as falafel in pitta and smoked salmon bagels! But, over time, several of the events – especially maybe in the literary, history, music and film fields – have caught one's 'Jewish' eye and encouraged attendance. There were a number of illustrations of such in some of the city's festivals this autumn.

One of those so held during the University's Michaelmas Term was the 38th and week-long Cambridge Film Festival, with feature movies and documentaries being screened largely at the Arts Picturehouse. There were two films of Jewish interest that attracted my attention. One – The Waldheim Waltz – was featured also in November's UK Jewish Film Festival. Directed by Ruth Beckermann, it concerns former UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim's controversial but successful election bid for Austria's Presidency in 1986, while various allegations were being made about his involvement in Nazi war crimes during WW2.

Another film, From Cairo to the Cloud – The World of the Cairo Geniza, by director Michelle Paymar, relates to more than half a million medieval and other manuscripts discovered by scholar Solomon Schechter in the storeroom of a very old Cairo synagogue in 1896. The astounding Genizah collection, which illustrates a 1,000 years of Jewish life in the Islamic world, is housed in a special department of the Cambridge University Library (CUL). In one of the early 'Cambridge Diet' columns I wrote about this amazing story, including an interview with Professor Dr Stefan C Reif, professor emeritus of Cambridge University and a fellow of St John's College who now resides in Israel. He was the founder-director of the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit at CUL. I've spoken often to him at the

# Cambridge is a truly festive city ...

OFTEN WITH ASPECTS OF JEWISH INTEREST



## Trinity Street, Cambridge

Cambridge Synagogue, when he returns on a fairly regular basis from Jerusalem. He has referred to the documentary as "a remarkable new film".

The annual, two-week Cambridge Festival of Ideas was held in October at venues around the city too numerous to mention specifically; however, they extended across colleges and institutes, museums and galleries, libraries and laboratories. As usual, this year's intellectual offerings covered a multitude of subject-matters; though one main theme focused on 'extremism'. The 65-page programme brochure's brief introduction asked: "What do we consider 'extreme' in religion, politics, economics, art or health? And how can we make sense of what we currently perceive as extreme in the context of the past?"

Amongst others, two particular sessions had caught my attention: 'Rethinking Religious Fundamentalism' (at St John's College), which discussed fundamentalism in Jewish, Muslim, Christian and non-religious contexts; and 'Extreme Texts' (at the Woolf Institute), which debated the question – "To what extent might we consider the sacred texts of Christianity, Islam and Judaism to be extreme?" The basic aim of the Woolf Institute – whose new building in Cambridge was opened formally by the Princess Royal earlier this year – is "to improve relations between religion and society through education".

In November, Cambridge

hosted its fourth International Jazz Festival (lasting a fortnight) and the 10-day Cambridge Music Festival, both at multi-venues (the for-

mer including trendy bars, taverns and cafes; and the jazz-devoted 'Hidden Rooms' in Jesus Lane). I noticed that one concert during

the latter event was given by the 'Brodsky Quartet'. The name sounded Jewish; but I wasn't aware that any of the string quartet's members were of the faith. The name (which, apparently, has been adopted by previous music groups) is, I learned, based on that of the Russian Empire violinist Adolph Davidovitch Brodsky, who was born in 1851 to an assimilated Jewish family at Tagarog beside the Sea of Azov. One of the pieces performed, at ARU's Music Recital Hall, was Shostakovich's 'String Quartet No. 8', which the composer dedicated "in remembrance of the Victims of Fascism and War".

**ESSEX JEWISH NEWS**

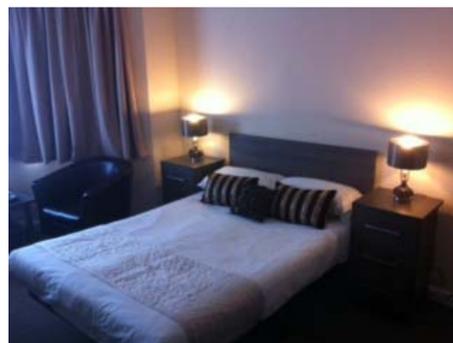
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# Helping those following in our great-grandparents footsteps

**KATIE ROSE TELLS E/JN HER REASONS FOR HELPING THOSE SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE UK**



As you will have read on the front page of this newspaper, the United Synagogue (US) has opened the first drop-in centre for asylum seekers in East London and Essex at Woodford Forest Synagogue.

The project came about after a similar drop-in was opened at Hendon Synagogue and the US saw how many of the families attending came from our area. A 'soft launch' was held at Woodford Forest in October to gauge interest – with asylum seekers attending from Ilford, Romford, Bark-ing, Dagenham and even as far as Northolt and Hayes – followed by the official launch on Mitzvah Day in November. It will now run on the first Sunday of every month.

It is funded by generous donations – of time, items and money – from the local Jewish community.

The centre helps locally-based asylum seekers by providing food and clothing, a hot home-cooked meal, a supermarket voucher and travel money to people who need it most. It can also help to find items for clients with specific needs – buggies for pregnant women, suitcases for clients being relocated around the country and bedding for asylum seekers in hostels.

The children's play area, manned by schoolchildren including my daughter Sadie Rose, age 11, a pupil at Wohl Ilford Jewish Primary School, and Jeanette Jacobs, a retired teacher, has proved particularly popular. As well as arranging arts and crafts activities and giving the parents a short break, they give away soft toys donated by the charity Goods for Good.

## ■ STRUGGLE

Another particularly important aspect is medical and legal advice for clients who may struggle to access these services on a regular basis. There's also help with filling in free prescriptions forms – complicated enough even when English is your first language – and sometimes even more holistic therapies like counselling, reiki and nails. Women's hygiene products were donated by the charity Bloody Good Period, and there were also nappies and toiletries to give away.

I've always been particu-



**I've always been interested in the plight of refugees and asylum seekers**

larly interested in the plight of refugees and asylum seekers here in the UK. It's only 100 years ago or so that my great-grandparents came here. In current times, would we class them as refugees, fleeing from the tightening grip of the repressive and antisemitic Russian regime, or economic migrants in search of a better life for themselves and a future for their children?

Regardless, they would have found themselves far from home and away from their established support networks, friends and family. It would have taken time for them to establish themselves and become integrated into the wider society. Many in our community have family who came here much more recently than mine.

The fact that I have freedom to work, travel, practise my religion and live free from war is only a fluke of the time, place and era into which I was born. I also enjoy the fact that volunteering for a few hours allows me to get out of my own head and understand what life might be like for other people less fortunate than myself.

## ■ CONFUSION

I know that there's some confusion around what a refugee or asylum seeker actually is: upon arrival at the UK border, people claim asylum. They are either given refugee status and leave to remain, usually for a fixed number of years (five), or classified as an asylum seeker, whilst their claim for asylum is reviewed.

As an asylum seeker, if you don't have family to support you, you're placed in Home Office accommodation, often sharing a damp, cockroach- or rat-infested room with a stranger from another country and a different conflict. If you are lucky enough to know someone and have family here, they can offer to support you; but they may be stretched already, with no space for another mouth to feed; and their rented accommodation might not allow for another adult on the tenancy, especially if a claim goes on for longer than anticipated.

Asylum seekers have no right to work and no recourse to public funds, so no money even for basics like food and clothing for themselves or their children. They are expected to report to a central reporting centre (currently London Bridge and Croydon) on a regular basis, and can be relocated to another city at any time without much warning. If their claim to asylum is rejected, they can appeal; but only by presenting themselves, in person, at an office in Liverpool – which is hard

to get to with no money or access to transport.

One common misconception is that people arrive with nothing, but that's not always true – if they had initially come here as if they were going on a trip, they might bring clothes, a passport, a mobile phone. They might also have their own savings, although they won't go far in London!

During training for one project, I heard about a man who was the ambassador to Sweden for a Middle Eastern country. When the regime changed, his life would have been endangered had he returned home; and so he claimed asylum in the country in which he was residing currently. There are plenty of doctors, lawyers, journalists and engineers – 'respectable' middle class, educated people with homes, families and careers who find themselves, suddenly and unexpectedly, in situations beyond their control.

## ■ SURPRISING

The countries that people come from are surprising, too. I've met asylum seekers from Eritrea, Iran and Iraq, Russia, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Congo, Sri Lanka, Senegal and Albania.

One challenge that asylum seekers face is integrating into society, arriving in a foreign country, often without the language skills and information to integrate into society.

Another thing that has particularly resonated with me is their initial struggle, both to accept help from anyone and to accept help from the Jewish community specifically.

Clients from wealthy families might be more used to giving than receiving. And many people have been taught that Jews are bad. So imagine arriving here and discovering that they're actually kind and benevolent and offering the most help.

## ■ CHALLENGING

Things that we take for granted can be particularly challenging. Imagine something as simple (and annoying) as a toddler bedwetting ... if you were sharing a bed with that toddler, couldn't afford nappies and didn't have access to a washing machine.

So what can you do to help today's refugees, as others once helped our families? Most synagogues will be collecting items so that you can donate clothes, shoes, toys and games for the drop-in; and if your synagogue doesn't have a collection yet, please do start one. This is a truly cross-communal endeavour.

And please think about giving us your time – helping out on the first Sunday of every month to provide advice, food and, above all, friendship to the asylum seekers of today.

*To get involved with the Woodford Forest drop-in for asylum seekers, please contact Yael Peleg on [ypeleg@theus.org.uk](mailto:ypeleg@theus.org.uk)*

## ADVERTORIAL

# Cycling to remember the Kindertransport

By **REBECCA SINGER**, Head of Communications and Community Engagement, World Jewish Relief

ON a warm Sunday morning in June, a group of 42 cyclists gathered by Frank Meisler's statue, dedicated to the Kindertransport, which stands outside Friedrichstrasse Station in central Berlin.

We were about to set off on a 600-mile bike ride to commemorate 80 years since the Kindertransport. We had been planning this journey for many months; and although most of us had anticipated how physically difficult it was going to be, we may have underestimated the emotional impact the following days would have, and the strength of support from people at home.

The ride was organised by World Jewish Relief, whose predecessor The Central British Fund, alongside other faith organisations, was integral in helping to arrange and fund the extraordinary rescue effort, which saved 10,000 children from Nazi Europe between 1938 and 1939.

Our route would trace the journey made by the children on the trains – following the tracks across Germany and into Holland. We would catch the overnight ferry from Hook of Holland to Harwich before finishing at London Liverpool Street Station, the final destination for many of the children before they were sent to their new homes.

Before we set off, representatives from the British and German governments urged us to speak openly about our cause, and reminded us that our ride was a ride for tolerance.

We heard from a rabbinic student about the importance of remembering through a physical act, and how we would be carrying the weight of history on our shoulders. The sunglasses we were wearing couldn't disguise the welling of emotion that swept over the group.

Then we were off. Over the following six days we cycled in sunshine and in rain. The winds blew, but there was no stopping us. And whilst the ride was demanding and challenging, the terrain was generally flat – apart from one very welcome hilly day – and the cycle paths and roads in Germany and Holland were a delight.

As continually we crossed or caught sight of the train tracks, we were reminded of the children who



Start of the ride in Berlin

had left their homes and families and were heading for a foreign land. Crossing from Germany into Holland felt significant, as it was at this point that the children would have been able to start feeling a sense of relief at their escape from Nazi Germany.

Some of the riders had a direct connection to the Kindertransport; and over the six days we heard about how their parents or grandparents had escaped, and about the life they made for themselves in the UK.

One of the cyclists, Paul Alexander, was just 19-months-old when his mother put her only child into the arms of a stranger to be taken to safety on the Kindertransport. Now 80 and living in Israel, he cycled alongside his son and grandson as a celebration of his life.

Our arrival at the second of Frank Meisler's 'Kindertransport' statues, at the Hook of Holland, felt momentous and emotional. As we stopped for a picture, it reminded us of the terrible dilemma facing many parents after Kristallnacht. The strength they must have had to put their children on trains and say goodbye, not knowing whether they would ever see them again, is a truly heroic part of the story. It prompted difficult questions about whether we could have done the same.



Paul Alexander with his son and grandson

We crossed the North Sea to Harwich just as the children had done 80 years before, and our final day's cycle was euphoric – we were on home soil, whizzing along the Essex lanes, through Redbridge and heading towards an overwhelming welcome at Liverpool Street, our families and friends greeted us with open arms and warm embraces.

The medal ceremony felt especially poignant, as it took place next to the third and final Kindertransport statue, which had been commissioned by World Jewish Relief and the Association of Jewish Refugees.

What a magnificent and unforgettable experience it has been, bringing this important historical event to life through the ride and the stories it revealed. The support has been amazing; and we have raised more than £170,000 towards World Jewish Relief's work, saving lives today, just as it did all those years ago.

If you are a descendant of a Kindertransport child, or of older refugees who came from Germany or Austria in the 1930s or 40s, World Jewish Relief has an incredible archive relating to these people. It is a treasure trove of information, and you can find out if they have documents on your family members by filling out an enquiry form at [www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives](http://www.worldjewishrelief.org/archives)

# ‘We will continue to fight loudly and publicly against antisemitism’

**MICAELA BLITZ**  
SPEAKS TO THE  
ESSEX-BORN NEW  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
BOARD OF DEPUTIES

SINCE taking on the role of president of the Board of Deputies earlier this year, Marie Van Der Zyl has had to hit the ground running. After a summer that saw high anxiety, uncertainty and an undercurrent of antisemitism, Marie quickly began to understand the expectations and responsibility involved in leading the British Jewish community.

As she told the *Essex Jewish News*: “I certainly picked an interesting time to start. When I first got elected, I think I had about 10 minutes to appreciate the honour before I had to start replying to hundreds of requests for interviews and quotes. There is definitely not much room for

■■■■■  
downtime.”

Although things may have settled down a little since she started, Marie recognises what a tremendous challenge she has before her, but is happy and excited to take this on. She said: “I pursued a leadership role because I wanted to make a difference and give something back to the community so that Jews can feel safe, secure and free from hate and antisemitism in their own country.”

The fight against antisemitism was a key part of Marie’s election campaign, where she vowed to tackle it “every single day”; and it is something that the Board of Deputies takes very seriously. Through working closely with the government, police and other public authorities, they ensure that the British Jewish community is not only protected from these threats but also have the resources available to be able to defend themselves when an issue emerges.

In the much-publicised, current situation within the Labour Party, under Jeremy Corbyn’s leadership, Marie



vows that, “Mr Corbyn will not have a moment’s peace from us until he takes the steps that we feel are sufficient to eliminate antisemitism from his party.” She goes on to say; “While I am president, we will continue to fight loudly and publicly until the antisemites are dealt with.”

Whilst antisemitism is a major consideration for the Board, as the voice of British Jewry, they also work across a range of other issues relating to government, the media and wider society. Recently, they were involved in the case of Mary Hassell, a north London coroner, who hit the headlines when she imposed a ‘first come, first served’ system when it came to releasing bodies. For many Jewish families, this meant that they were having to wait weeks to bury their loved ones. The Board stepped in, and together with the Adath Yisroel Burial Society, campaigned to change this. The outcome was that the High Court ruled the policy to be unlawful, and the coroner was forced to change her practice.

■■■■■

Marie grew up in the Redbridge area. She attended Woodbridge High School in Woodford Green where, she says, she was “literally the

only Jew in the school” and experienced regular antisemitism first-hand from other pupils as a result. She recalls: “One of my classmates used to ask me why I was not in the gas chamber. He later apologised when we got to the sixth form, but it definitely stayed with me.”

As a result of her own experiences, Marie recognises the importance of education; and this is something that she also referred to in her election campaign. As well as the importance of Jewish schools and education within the community, there is also a need to strengthen understanding between different faiths. As a trustee of the Inter Faith Network, Marie has been very much involved in creating an environment of co-operation between the faiths.

This is reflected also in an educational initiative organised by the Board called the Jewish Living Experience exhibition, which helps to inform those in the wider community about Judaism. As she explains: “Hatred often springs from ignorance, and through this initiative we have been able to educate thousands of non-Jewish children and adults alike, and change their attitudes towards Jews and Judaism in a positive way.”

During her time growing up in the area, her involvement in many of the local youth movements such as B’nei Akiva and the Jewish Lads & Girls Brigade – where she learnt to play Hava Nagila on the bagpipes – helped her to develop her strong Jewish identity.

Many of the leaders currently working in Jewish organisations, and elsewhere within the community, have also come from Essex; and she feels that local Jews should feel proud to be from an area that seems to have such a strong Jewish identity.

Marie jokes: “There must be something in the water in Redbridge that has made so many of us get involved in helping the community. I went to Bnei Akiva as did Michael Goldstein (president of United Synagogue) and Adrian Cohen (chair of Labour Friends of Israel and the London Jewish Forum). I think Jonathan Goldstein of the Jewish Leadership Council went to BBYO!

“Being involved in communal organisations when I was growing up in Redbridge has given me, along with so many others, a lifelong sense of community which I have carried with me throughout my career.”

Despite now living in

North London, Marie still has a connection to the Redbridge area and in her new role is keen to work closely to develop relationships with the area. She feels that it is important to recognise the many individual segments that make up the Jewish community across London and the rest of the country, rather than clump them altogether, and to understand the individual challenges and issues that face them.

As she explains: “I believe that Redbridge will always be part of me. I want us to deepen our relationship with Essex and with all of London’s different communities, which is why we are running programmes such as our Invest in Peace project in local synagogues and why the headteacher of WIJPS is addressing our London councillors seminar. As I continue in this role, there will more to come in the future.”

■■■■■

Marie is only the second woman to hold the position of president of the Board of Deputies, and follows in the footsteps of the late Josephine Wagerman who was president for three years from 2000.

Jo was not only the first female president of the Board, but also the first female headteacher of JFS and was very much a trailblazer of her time. Marie said: “I knew of Jo Wagerman more by her reputation than personally - but she showed women like me in this community what can be achieved, and I hope to be able

to live up to her example.”

One thing that Marie is keen to do is to redress the balance within the Board of Deputies, so that it reflects the Jewish community as a whole. As a woman, she is keen to see more women getting involved as deputies and making decisions within the community.

It seems that things are moving in the right direction; and for the first time in the Board’s 258-year history, the majority of honorary officers are actually women, including two of the three vice-presidents. Also involved is fellow ‘Essex Girl’, Gillian Merron, who is the Board’s first female chief executive.

■■■■■

As well as women, Marie also recognises the importance of encouraging younger members of the community, who may not feel affiliated, to get involved and to take an active role. Before the elections in May, the Board ran a social media campaign to persuade young people and women to stand.

Marie is really determined to make a difference, and is thankful for the support she has received so far. She concluded: “Above all else, my main concern will be to continue to champion Jewish life across the UK. I have a huge amount of work to do, but I have a superb team behind me and we are focused on making this country a place where we are able to live freely and happily as Jews.”

## Phil’s 25 years as a driving force

BY **SIMON ROTHSTEIN**

A JEWISH black-cab driver from Chigwell has been honoured for spending the last 25 years organising trips to Disneyland Paris for children.

Phil Davis runs the annual Magical Taxi Tour, which sees a convoy of licensed London taxis take more than 200 children on the three-day holiday of a lifetime.

Phil has chaired the group since it was set up 25 years ago, and is the driving force behind the fund raising needed to meet the costs of the trip and the complex logistics and negotiations it requires.

In September, Phil was installed as Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers for the second time in honour of this quarter of a century of charitable work.

He also spoke at a special event to mark the 25th anniversary, which was held at Mansion House and attended by the Lord Mayor.

Phil told how the trip was planned initially as a one-off event to create special memories for very sick children, as a charitable focus for the members of the then Fellowship of Hackney Carriage Drivers, and to celebrate 350 years of the continuous licensing of London taxis.

It was such a success that the drivers – who all give their time for free – wanted to continue. Sadly, Disney who fully funded the first trip as they wanted to promote their then struggling theme park, were not keen to support again now that their business had picked up.

Fortunately, the late Lord Winchelsea won the backing of P & O Ferries, who have since do-



nated more than 3,000 crossings and counting. Corporate and livery companies and individual donors came on board, which together with other fundraising activities, allowing the trip to be self-financing every year since its inception.

The Magical Taxi Tour also have the support of the City of London Police, the Gendarme Nationale, London Ambulance Service and the medical staff of all the hospitals involved, as well as the AA.

This year’s trip involved 420 people, including 174 children and a convoy of 125 vehicles.

Phil said: “The benefits the children derive from this trip are well documented, and doctors have said how their conditions improve as they approach the event.

“This year was a very exciting and memorable one, as Disneyland Paris invited us to take part in the afternoon parade as we did in year one. We had three taxis with children in the parade.

“The parents had not told the children where they were going; just that it was a special taxi ride. The characters came along and made such a fuss of the children that one girl just burst into tears as she was so excited to see one of her Disney favourites, who picked her up and cuddled her. A memory we hope that she will have for a long time just as we will.”

As the Magical Taxi Tour heads into its 26th year, Phil has taken a step back. Alan Roughan is the new chair and there is a very hard working Disneyland committee in place to continue the well tried and tested formula.

However, Phil has promised: “I will still be in the background supporting Alan and the committee, who I know will ensure this event carries on for as long as there are children to benefit from the trip, which sadly appears to be never ending.”

For more details on the annual trip, please visit [www.magicaltaxitour.com](http://www.magicaltaxitour.com)



Marie with Metropolitan Police commissioner Cressida Dick CBE and London mayor Sadiq Khan. BOTH PHOTOS BY JOHN RIFKIND

# Essex inventor solves the problem of spilt milk ... and beer



Barry Freeder and his CouchCoaster PHOTO BY DANIEL HANBURY

BY PAT LIDIKER

WHEN Barry Freeder knocked over his beer while watching Match of the Day back in 2010, who could have guessed a light-bulb moment would evolve into a global multi-million pound seller?

Today, Barry's company, Hit Products, has gathered international acclaim for its handy CouchCoaster, a deceptively simple gizmo to keep your hot or cold drink in the cup rather than on the carpet.

An avid inventor since childhood, when he spent time experimenting with cornflakes packets and other household items, Barry's early ambitions seemed doomed when he shot himself in the hand with a barbecue skewer and ended up in hospital.

## ■ BACK-BURNER

Growing up in Gants Hill and a former pupil at Kantor King Solomon High School, his creations were further put on the back-burner when he qualified as a chartered surveyor working for a property developer.

"Then, in just three months, my life was turned upside down," he remembers. "I was made redundant and got divorced, which was an awful time."

But call it serendipity or bashert, the outcome was a return to his first love of invention and design, initially to solve the matter of his spilt beer.

Barry told the *Essex Jewish News*: "There was no coffee table nearby and the curved sofa arm didn't seem the safest platform for drinks either. So I made a mock-up container from a pizza box, which I found rested perfectly around the arm.

## HOW BARRY FREEDER WENT FROM ROCK BOTTOM TO TOP DOG THANKS TO THE COUCHCOASTER

"As the idea progressed, I developed more sophisticated prototypes using silicone moulds, learning the basics by watching videos on YouTube."

With the help of some of his redundancy pay-off, Hit Products was born as a one-man concern operating from the spare room in his flat. Barry spent a full year developing CouchCoaster which is weighted for optimum support and has an integrated mug handle slot.

He flew to China to appoint a manufacturer, initially ordering 2,000 units to demonstrate and sell at trade fairs. As sales snow-balled from orders placed by UK shops and stores, it wasn't long before he brought on distributors in Japan, the Middle East and America.

The time had come to move his floor-to-ceiling stock from the spare room to a warehouse in Watford, no doubt to the relief of his partner Shosh, originally from Melbourne and a social worker at Jewish Care.

## ■ DESIGN

Barry, now 35 and living in Finchley with Shosh, says: "I spend a few weeks mulling over each new idea with Shosh and anyone else who will listen to me, prototyping before moving on to further design and development.

"It is a lot slower than I would like as I work alone, but taking my time hopefully

means they are hits, not misses."

An appearance on Karen Brady's TV show about his first year in business did Barry no harm at all. He is in the process of sharing his experience via a website, advising on licensing and collaboration with other people who may not have the knowledge or means to develop their own ideas.

He also hopes to help existing owners market their products around the world through the various selling channels he has used with his own.

Barry says that three-quarters of the sales for CouchCoaster come through Amazon. The attraction of something which fits snugly over the arm of a chair or couch to act as a non-spill drink holder is obvious, but doesn't end there.

## ■ CHOICE

The gadget, retailing at under £18 and in a choice of black, brown, grey, cream and red, is equally useful for keeping pens, remotes, phones, specs or keys close at hand... which means you may want more than one.

So no more crying over spilt milk, tea, coffee, beer or whatever else you've ruined your carpet with, or hours hunting for your glasses or remote control.

Like the man who invented the Cats-eyes on dark roads, you wonder why nobody came up with this idea years ago.

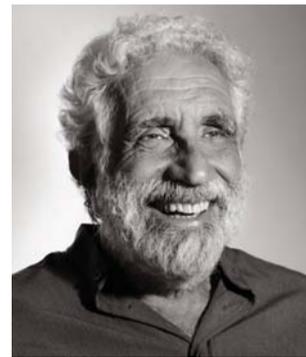
Of course, Barry Freeder is delighted that nobody did!



WOHL Ilford Jewish Primary School pupils and staff participated in the London Borough of Redbridge road

safety team's 'Glow Day', which brings awareness to the importance of being seen with it getting darker earlier.

# A sixty second shmooze with ... author Eric Levene



IN each issue of the *Essex Jewish News*, Micaela Blitz brings you a bitesize chat with a prominent member of the local community. Here she speaks to Eric Levene, whose new self-published book on the Jewish East End – titled *Feinstein's Theory of Relatives and Other Hessel Street Stories* – is out now.

## What made you first start writing your book?

I had always written just as a hobby, but never really did anything with it. When I showed a friend an example of some of the stories I had been writing, he suggested that I write more. Somehow, that developed into around 15 stories and that is what led to this book.

## What made you write about the East End?

I was born and bred in the East End, and lived in Hessel Street. Some of my fondest memories are from that time, so I wanted to share those with others who may have had similar experiences. Although the stories themselves are fictitious, many of them are based on characters and situations I have known.

## Which characters in particular?

The kosher butcher was based on my own grandfather. Many of the yachners and gossips are also an amalgam of many of the women with whom I grew up, who would spend their time chatting about everyone and anyone. This is reflected in one of my stories, 'Oi'. When a group of yachners hear that someone has a son who is 'ambidextrous', they have no idea what it means, but they are all very worried that it is something very bad and are concerned about the boy's health as a result.

## What is your favourite story in the book?

There are a few I like for different reasons, but I would have to say that my favourite is one entitled 'The New Hen Berg Trial', which is about a shochet being interrogated by three chickens because he is on trial for mass murder.

## What made you decide to publish the book yourself?

I sent it to a couple of publishers, but it didn't seem to get the kind of response I

had wanted, so thought it might be better to publish it myself. It was something I had never done before, and it was definitely a learning curve.

## How did you find the whole self-publishing experience?

It was a lot of trial and error to get it right. The first attempt was not great, so I had to find a new printer to do it again, but I am really pleased with the final outcome and it has been very well received. I think that an important part of self-publishing is to find a good, tough but sympathetic editor, because you can't edit your own writing. It's amazing how many simple mistakes a good editor will find.

## What kind of responses have you had to the book?

There have been some nice comments and reviews on line, and people seem to really enjoy reading these stories. Earlier this year, I was part of a fringe event at Jewish Book Week; and have also done talks and readings at various places, including Jewish Care, and it has really had a good response. I think it really resonates with a lot of people who grew up in the area, and also have fond memories. There are also people that have not been brought up in the area, but really enjoyed the stories. One review said it made him 'laugh out loud', which is a great compliment to have.

## What advice would you give to anyone thinking of writing a book?

Make sure you get your work properly proof-read, and that you edit it properly. Don't be precious about your writing, and be brutal when it comes to editing. Also give it time, don't rush it if you don't have to.

## Where can people get your book?

I have managed to get the book in some local bookshops as well as the Jewish Museum, and it seems to be doing well. It is also possible to buy it online through Amazon, either as a Kindle eBook or regular paperback.

## What is next for you and your writing?

I believe that most people have a specific time in their life when they do things and I think this is my time. If I would have done it when I was younger, I probably could not have sustained it. I would like to maybe do another book and develop some of the characters from this book further and tell more of their stories, as many of them have a lot more to say... especially the yachners!

If you would like to purchase a copy of Eric's book, *Feinstein's Theory of Relatives and Other Hessel Street Stories* (ISBN: 9781973230892), please visit [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

# FOCUS ON: Meals On Wheels

**MICHAELA BLITZ**  
LOOKS AT THE  
SERVICE WHICH  
GIVES AN ESSENTIAL  
LIFELINE TO SO  
MANY

**J**EWISH CARE's Meals on Wheels service not only offers a chance for many elderly people to receive regular, hot, kosher meals to their doors, but it can also be an essential lifeline providing a connection to the local community and an opportunity to see a friendly face.

The service, which is run from the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre (RJCC), started more than 40 years ago. But with an ageing population, and the cutting of the local authority run service in 2017, demand has risen greatly recently.

Between 60 to 70 meals are currently delivered daily in the Redbridge area and all of these deliveries are done by the volunteers who form the backbone of the service.

Currently, there are around 100 volunteers who regularly help out. Meals on Wheels coordinator, Melodie Driscoll, works closely with all of them. Having started originally as a volunteer herself, Melodie now oversees every part of the service from creating daily delivery sheets to organising payments and orders from clients, as well as liaising with the catering team.



It can often be a delicate balancing act, as Melodie explains: "Whether it's a volunteer unable to make their shift or a client being taken to hospital and at short notice not needing a meal, I often have to respond to things and think on my feet. Every element is essential and needs the other parts to operate. The volunteers, the catering team or the clients, one side would not work without the other, and it is my role to make sure that they all work together for the good of the service."

Many of the volunteers have been involved in the service for a significant period of time, covering the same route on a regular basis, and getting to know the clients to whom they deliver. This not only allows friendships to develop, but means that someone is regularly checking in on them and is concerned for their wellbeing.

For some clients this may be the only visit that they receive all day. Martine Groman-Marks has been volunteering for 20 years, having started originally when her children were at nursery. She really enjoys being involved, and thinks that it is something that benefits all involved. "I feel that it is definitely a two-way thing. The clients are always very grateful to the volunteers who deliver their

meals, but I feel that I also get so much from the experience as well."

Peta Cohen is a mobile beauty therapist, who manages to fit her monthly Meals on Wheels rota around her working life. She first got involved with the service partly due to the influence of her father, who was also a volunteer for many years. Having grown up in the area, she felt it was a good way to give something back to the community, and enjoys the chance to meet with people that she would not ordinarily have met.



Someone is regularly checking in on them and is concerned for their wellbeing

Peta told us: "For some of the clients I deliver to, I may be the only visitor they have all day, so I try to have a chat and check that they are ok. It's really fascinating talking to them and finding out about their lives."

The majority of Meals on Wheels clients are in their 80s and 90s and often live alone. Although many may be housebound, there are many different reasons why people benefit from the service. Some may have been widowed recently or struggle to cook for themselves; and it allows them to not have to worry about from where their next meal will be coming.

The service costs £7.50 for a three-course, hot, kosher meal and clients can have this delivered regularly Monday to Thursday, when the service runs; or just once or twice a week, if preferred. Clients can also opt to receive frozen meals that can be used over the weekend and on Yomtovs, when the service doesn't run.

Sidney Kac is one such client. He is 92-years-old and lives alone since his wife, Betty, passed away 20 years ago. He uses the service to ensure that he receives regular, nutritious, kosher meals without having to worry. As he explains: "Betty did all the cooking and she never let me in the kitchen. I get Meals on Wheels every day, and without them I would be totally reliant on ready meals from the supermarket."



A key part of the Meals on Wheels service is obviously the meals themselves, which are all freshly prepared by a dedicated team in the kitchens at RJCC. Cecilia, one of the chefs responsible for preparing these meals, starts early to ensure that everything is done in time for when the volunteers arrive.

Preparation starts at around 7.30 each morning, when Cecilia, along with another chef and two kitchen assistants, set about creating a nutritious, three-course meal: consisting of a soup, a main and a dessert. The menu changes on a daily basis and, as well as a meat option, it is possible to get a vegetarian or fish alternative if requested by clients.

Between 9.40am and 10.20am is what Cecilia calls 'rush hour', when they have to ensure that all food is portioned out in foil containers, labelled with cooking instruc-

tions and ready for when the volunteers arrive.

When it comes to the most popular meal on the menu, salt beef and latkes is a firm favourite with the clients of Redbridge, with roast chicken a close second. Cecilia enjoys being able to help the local community through her cooking, and appreciates it when clients pass on compliments for the food that she makes.



Over in Southend and Westcliff, Meals on Wheels offers a more bespoke service to members of the community.

Hilary de Martino, manager of Jewish Care's Southend and Westcliff Community Centre, explains: "At the centre, we prepare around 50 meals per week, and which are delivered by volunteers in the area. As well as delivering to older people at home, we also provide meals to local rehabilitation and respite homes so that temporary residents can enjoy hot, kosher meals during their stay."

"In addition, if a person who usually prepares the meals at home is unwell or goes into hospital, the service will help support them and their partner so they can continue to eat well."

Richard Shone, Jewish Care's manager of community engagement and volunteers, was keen to praise all those who make Meals on Wheels work and to appeal for more help to keep the service strong.

He told the *Essex Jewish News*: "Without the hard work and dedication of the volunteers, the service would not be able to run. We are grateful to all of those who give up their time to help, and are keen to try and find others within the community who may want to be involved."



**Top: Volunteers Peta Cohen and Martine Groman-Marks with Jewish Care's Meals on Wheels coordinator Melodie Driscoll**

**Above: A team of chefs cook up hot, three course, kosher meals with meat, fish and veggie options**

**Right: A Meals on Wheels delivery is sometimes the only visitor an elderly person will have that day**



"We are in real need of more volunteers to make sure the deliveries can be made on time to those who rely on our hot and frozen meals in both Redbridge and Southend."

"If you are able to give a couple of hours of your time, even just once or twice a month, it would make a huge difference and ensure that this worthwhile service continues to be available to those who need it."

**To find out more about receiving Meals on Wheels or volunteering in Redbridge, please contact Melodie Driscoll on [mdriscoll@jcare.org](mailto:mdriscoll@jcare.org) or 0208 418 2113. For Southend, please contact Luke Witkowski on [LWitkowski@jcare.org](mailto:LWitkowski@jcare.org) or 01702 334 655**

WHEN going through the now many previous columns of 'Watcher in the Rye' and their telling Jewish ironies (what an in-word for the UK Jewish community nowadays) and idiosyncracies, Watcher couldn't believe that the subject of 'Jewish people and food' hadn't been one of the first topics featured.

Watcher likes food; and, fortunately, food likes Watcher. Though the latter comment, sadly, cannot be applied generally these days to every Jewish – or, indeed, other faith or no faith – individual who maybe likes his or her food rather too much! Maybe (no ... definitely, Watcher feels) the ongoing plagues of obesity and being excessively overweight have got something to do with what food – and how much of it – is put onto your plate then into your digestive system!



Much that amounts to a traditional food intake in the Jewish Diaspora of today originated in the Russian and East European shtetls of yesterday's 'der Heim'. Early immigrants needed not only to learn new languages, but also the cuisine indigenous to their sanctuary countries' own home-grown, agricultural and horticultural produce. But they did bring their former lands' Jewish recipes and dishes with them, as an important and continuing reminder of their families' (not always happy and non-persecutory) histories there.

In that connection and perhaps naturally, being from Ashkenazi stock, Watcher thinks primarily of 'cholent' – of whatever ancestral variety, and with or without a kugel; but also of similar overly fatty, and arguably unhealthy dishes if eaten in quantity. And a cholent (needing to simmer in the oven overnight) is hardly an example of questionable 'fast food'! Watcher appreciates, of course, that a diversity of Sephardi cooking also travelled, or escaped, to

# We are what we eat!

## HERE'S SOME (JEWISH) FOOD FOR THOUGHT

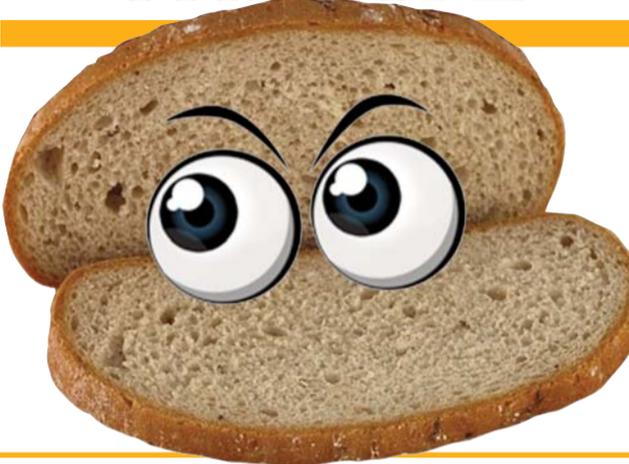
pastures new in Europe and the New World.

But Watcher considers there's also a matter (or problem) of the not insubstantial size portions that many brethren seem inherently to demand; and invariably from the obliging kitchens of many a kosher restaurant in N W London, and elsewhere! The story is almost apocryphal of the two Jewish women, very long-time friends, ordering a single main course dish to share from one such eatery's menu. When it arrives at their table, there's a large and a small chunk of meat on the plate. One of the women quickly selects, and begins eating, the bigger piece. Seeing this, the other woman ... well, if looks could kill!

Watcher isn't advocating that certain customary Jewish foodstuffs should be abandoned for nutritious or other reasons. That wouldn't be right because, undoubtedly, they've helped considerably towards preserving Jewish identity and continuity. Though could be Watcher is thinking also (proportionately, logically and possibly understandably) about preservation in another sense! And Watcher is conscious of the fact that, in the 21st century, creative if not revolutionary culinary ideas are infiltrating – with some significant success – the kitchens of post-modern Jewish folk. Egged on by some celebrated, if not trendy Jewish chefs, food stylists and writers from the UK and overseas. Though, unsurprisingly, classic recipe volumes (sometimes with appealingly updated editions) retain a not merely nostalgic place on the active bookshelves of Jewish households.

Watcher has heard about the article by Denise Phillips,

## WATCHER IN THE RYE



in the EJM's Rosh Hashanah issue, on cooking with dates. Watcher wishes (not realising the romantic aspect) to read the piece because of "a love for the flavour of the tastily chewy fruit sourced from Israel"! Of course, foods (and, for sure, particular foods) have been – and remain – integral to the ritual, custom and practice of Judaism; and to the life and culture of its adherents.



The Holydays, Festivals and not least Shabbat are more than significant catalysts in the Jewish food equation. Watcher only has to think of mohn-filled hamantaschen on Purim, oily doughnuts at Chanukah, cheesecake on Shavuot, Seder charoset and matzot for Pesach, challah on Shabbat etc; as well as chicken soup with lokshen, kneidlach or kreplach, chopped herring or liver and gefilte fish (with its little carrot slice atop) at any appropriate time. Even Yom Kip-

pur's Fast is shaped somewhat by its ritualistic, book-end meals!

And needless to state, Kashrut has been the overall defining, Judaic food principle since Leviticus, as expounded upon (rabbi-wise) in the Talmud. Though, as Watcher appreciates, huge numbers of Jews do not eat kosher food as a matter of course now. It's accepted widely that this outcome would've stemmed – in the main – from mid-19th century, central European Jewry's widespread adoption of the 'Emancipation' concept, which

led to comprehensive assimilation; and, eventually, to a statistically growing element of inter-marriage (now around 50 percent or so in the USA!).



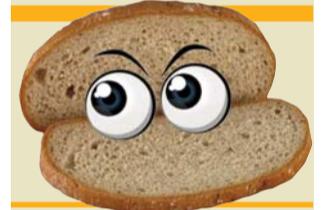
But Judaism isn't unique – in the theological, ethnic or national context – when it comes to readily identifiable or characteristic food consumption. Watcher is thinking particularly of Islamic, Chinese, Italian and Indian cooking amongst global culinary offerings. But Watcher is concentrating gastronomically here on the specifically Jewish relationship with food, and considers (albeit humbly) that does have its own special take in the cuisine milieu. The old chestnut, "They tried to kill us, we won, now let's eat!" maybe encapsulates the essence of a Jewish attitude to the subject. Bagels and lox (smoked salmon, for the unlikely uninitiated) are as ubiquitous in today's world as the word 'chutzpah' is in English dictionaries!

Watcher has mentioned Israel; and Diaspora Jews making aliyah have, across the seven decades since the State's establishment in 1948, brought with them an array of different Jewish culinary delights. Gradually – Watcher has noted – an ex-

clusively defined, Israeli cuisine is developing, based notably on the ancient Jewish homeland's natural and excellent produce. And today, apparently, Israel proclaims 'falafel in pitta' (as England does 'fish and chips') its premier national dish! Intriguingly, Shalva Weil (at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) says: "There's a growing literature on cuisine among Jews from a sociological and anthropological viewpoint. It has become a fashionable and legitimate academic pursuit." Wow! Watcher thinks. Who in the old, cholent-noshing shtetls could've imagined it would come to this?

Watcher admits that a personally favourite dish is a well-done steak. Not very Jewish maybe. Certainly, Watcher hasn't yet come across a filet mignon (? shouldn't that be 'mignon')!

## 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)

# Chabad Epping event is picture perfect

BY TINA HINE

CHABAD Epping hosted their second major fundraiser in October, an event that delivered a superb interview with Gants Hill born David Katz, aka 'the blind photographer', most famous for his photos of the Royal Family and celebrities.

The interviewer, film critic and radio star Mark Kermode, asked direct questions in a softly spoken way and listened well, which led to David speaking candidly and honestly.

Around 200 people attended the event. Some were there to support the charity, some to see David, some to see Mark, some because of an interest in photography and some for a good night out. What was evident, from the chatter around the tables, was the great atmosphere of Jewish people coming together to support the growing community.

The evening was opened by Steve Klein who four years ago, along with wife Arlene, became a leading force behind the creation of Chabad Epping.

The interview then started with a short film of David's life, including photos of his family, which was touching and captivating. The crowd learned how just after he was born, in 1966, David's grandma noticed that there was movement in his eyes. His parents managed to get an

appointment with a professor, via a relative, and after several tests they were told in a blunt, rude and abrupt way, that their child was blind and would need to be enrolled into 'blind school' and that his future would be bleak, including that he wouldn't play cricket or football as he wouldn't be able to see the ball.

But through his life, wherever possible, David hasn't allowed his condition to be a disability. At age seven he got his own camera. He also went on to play football and cricket. A woman at the event who had known David since he was a child told how she was shocked when she found out he was blind.

David got a job as a press photographer and hid his secret. He did this by getting in close to his subjects. This created a reputation of him being fearless and enabled him to be able to compete against other photographers, who would often use long lenses, so wouldn't be able to capture what David could.

Some of his famous images include 1989's 'cricket stalker' which was published on the front page of the *Daily Mail*. He managed to capture the incident when he heard laughter and automatically snapped. In that moment, which he describes as luck and skill, he even managed to catch Ian Botham looking bemused.

He also had a reputation for 'good behaviour' and etiquette, which led to him being allowed by Buckingham Palace to get close to the Queen and get the spectacular photo that was shown in the background as he spoke.

One of David's other greatest achievements was being able to photograph at the Olympics on a mountain top, despite his vertigo. There are so many things that are wonderful about his shot of visually impaired skiers – athletes who skied being led by someone else – captured by a visually impaired photographer, at the moment they realised they had won the gold medal.

David concluded by telling how he'll be working with these athletes as part of his charity – The David Katz Foundation – which aims to help young people who are struggling with disabilities, and to show them what is possible. Along with trustees Marc Silver and Eric Evans they want to make sure that no parents are ever treated as his parents were when they learned of his condition.

The evening was rounded up by Rabbi Aryeh Sufirin MBE, executive director of Chabad North East London & Essex, who was beaming and clearly very proud of what has been achieved at their newest community.



# War and Peas (Chickpeas) that is!

I HAVE been reading about the conflict in the Middle East involving Israel and some of her Arab neighbours, and have come to the conclusion that there will never be a winner.

But before you all rush to castigate me for being unpatriotic, or not accepting my Jewish identity, let me hasten to assure you that the conflict I am writing about has nothing to do with planes, guns, soldiers or bombs.

It's simply about hummus! You can't describe how to make hummus. There are so many different recipes, but the dish does contain chickpeas as one of its main ingredients. Others, according to your taste, include garlic, tahini, olive oil and a host of other things.

Take my word for it: there is a 'war' simmering under the surface, particularly now that a paragraph appeared in the Jewish press stating that hummus was one of the foods that kept your heart healthy.

The assertion was made by a team led by Andrew Freeman, a cardiologist at National Jewish Health in the United States, and, because it appeared in the Jewish press, one

## VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

MANNY ROBINSON



has to assume that hummus is an Israeli food.

But is it? Hostilities over who invented hummus began in 2009, when a Lebanese delegation at a French trade fair claimed to have heard that Israeli exhibitors were promoting the dish as an old Israeli speciality. They angrily organised an assault on the world record for the largest dish of hummus.

According to cookery writer Felicity Cloake, writing in the *New Statesman*, the then Lebanese minister of tourism was reported as saying: "We want the whole world to know that hummus is Lebanese and by breaking into the Guinness Book of Records the world

should know about our cuisine, our culture."

Guinness presented the Lebanese with its award, but it didn't last long. According to the BBC's Diana Spechler, in a programme called Food and Drink, Jawdat Ibrahim, a famous Arab-Israeli living in Abu Ghosh, retaliated with a hummus served in a satellite dish – about 4,000kg of hummus.

The Lebanese retaliated with 10,452kg of the dip which is – the number of square kilometres of land in Lebanon, and they have held the record for the past eight years.

At one point, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists even announced plans to apply

for protected status for Lebanese hummus within the European Union. This is the same status that prevents English wine growers from calling their best fizzy stuff 'champagne' or German cheese producers using the name 'feta'. But these ambitious plans with the EU never got off the ground.

Jerusalem-born chef Yotam Ottolenghi said: "When push comes to shove nobody seriously challenges the Palestinian hegemony in making hummus, even though both they and us like calling it our own."

And others have come into the fight, too. The Syrians say that the traditional way of serving hummus through much of the Middle East is in a particular red clay bowl with a raised edge. And that was started by the Turkish rulers in Damascus. Yet another theory is that hummus is neither Lebanese nor Syrian but Egyptian.

So the conclusion is clear ... hummus is a Middle Eastern food claimed by all and owned by none.

Now, what about chicken soup?

## BOOK REVIEW

### A First at Cambridge

A VIRTUAL REALITY  
By Mark Harris

Published by Matador, an imprint of Troubador Publishing Limited  
Paperback (368 pages)  
£8.99

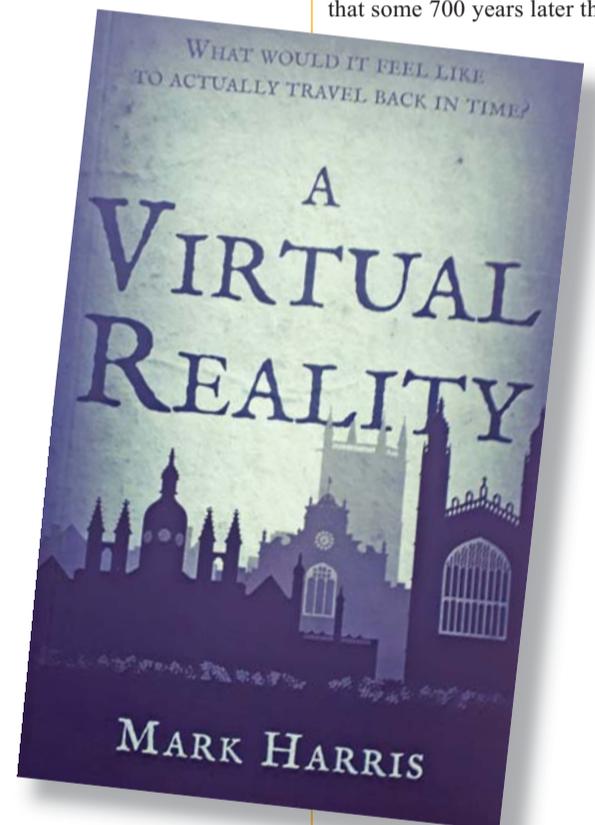
Review by Manny Robinson

TIME travel is not a new genre for authors and film makers. I can think of movies like 'Back to the Future', 'Groundhog Day', 'The Terminator', 'Somewhere in Time' and 'Midnight in Paris' to name but a few. But to misquote Lt Nyota Uhura in 'Star Trek': "My colleague Mark Harris has boldly gone where no Essex Jewish News writer has gone before." He has let his leading character go back in time to the Jewish community living in and around Cambridge in 1275.

The main character is David, a divorcee and an early-retired investigative journalist living in Cambridge, who

lous researcher; and (in this his latest novel) rather than go on a Cook's tour across 13th century Cambridge, he tells the story of the suffering of the Jews at the hands of antisemites in the first person, making his principal character part and parcel of the narrative. There is little doubt that David would have loved a cup of his favourite Americano, or to get rid of his stubble with an electric razor or to have unrestricted use of his smart-phone, tucked under his medieval clothes. Such things, of course, were not possible.

As the antisemites run riot, David experiences – alongside the community – the actual horror of hearing about a royal edict proclaiming the eviction of all Jews from Cambridge, and their 'resettlement' in the nearby town of Huntingdon. And that experience is heightened with his knowledge that 15 years later the Jews would be expelled completely from England; and with knowing, too, that some 700 years later there



meets Diva, a beautiful woman – you could say she was out of this world – from another star system, Alpha Centauri, in our Milky Way galaxy; and is given the remarkable opportunity to travel back in time. His choice is the Cambridge of 1275. And although it takes around 100 pages before David is ready to be beamed up, the book presents a fascinating picture of what life was like for the Jews of Cambridge – who were, in the main, of French extraction – in medieval times; and who made their living as money lenders, merchants and artisans, amongst other occupations.

Landing in 13th century Cambridge, but at an unintended drop-off point, David is confronted immediately by aggressive antisemites. A serious threat to his life or, at the very least, a severe beating is avoided when he is rescued by a well-to-do Jewish family who take him into their home and heart.

Mark Harris is a meticu-

would be the Holocaust.

Entwined with the terrors of antisemitic abuse and assault, there is also a tender love story that lifts the plot from the usual time travel tales. 'A Virtual Reality' will be of particular interest to readers – with the inevitable knowledge of what was to come later – who would like to know what life was like in the 13th century. I wish the book well. Or, as ambassador Spock said in 'Star Trek': "May it Live Well and Prosper."

\*Readers can order the book online direct from the publishers at <https://www.troubador.co.uk/bookshop/contemporary/a-virtual-reality/>

And if the reference '1275 virtual' is quoted by E.J.N. readers, they will receive a £2.00 discount on the cover price.

The book can be acquired also via any good bookshop and retail internet sites including Amazon, Blackwells, Waterstones and W H Smith.

## It's time to blow our own trumpet

THIS column has never commented on the political situation in Britain nor, for that matter, events in Israel. The reason is simple: by the time the article has been written to the time it appears in the *Essex Jewish News*, the whole situation could have gone topsy-turvy and the writer is left with egg on his face.

But one event simply will not go away. That's the anti-semitism abounding in the corridors of power in Parliament.

One has to say that many of the Jewish organisations involved in fighting anti-semitism have been impressive, particularly the powerful words of former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks.

But what does Joe Public think of it all? Has there been widespread condemnation from the man or woman in the street about these attacks on Jews? No, I didn't think so, either.

So in addition to the official approach to those in office, we need another way; and that is to educate the public at large of the tremendous contribution that the Jews have given to the world in medicine, culture, arts, sport etc.

A poster showing a neo-Nazi being treated for a heart attack could contain the lines: "You might have died had it not been for the Jews who invented the defibrillator or the pacemaker." Both were invented by American Jewish cardiologist Paul Zoll.

And Jonas Salk, a Jewish medical researcher, developed the first vaccine to treat polio.

A skinhead starting to write his hate mail might be re-



● An antisemite could have died had it not been for a defibrillator ... invented by a Jew

● An antisemite can't use a Biro pen ... it was invented by a Jew

● An antisemite can't use a computer mouse ... it was invented by a Jew

minded that the Biro pen he is using was the invention of Laszlo Biro, a Hungarian Jew. And when those on the far left rush to their computers to spew hate, let them know that without the Jewish discovery of the computer mouse they would be hard pressed to write anything.

They won't want to rely on Google either – the world's most popular search engine was founded by two Jews, Larry Page and Sergey Brin.

The contribution that the Jews have made to the world, which is nowhere in propor-

tion to the number of Jews living, is immense.

But does Joe Public know this? By telling the public of the Jewish contribution, it is possible that antisemitic views from both the left and the right would be contained to a handful of extremists, who would be despised by the general population.

Of course, the antisemites could spout their hatred through a microphone ... except that the microphone (and indeed the gramophone record) were invented by another Jew,

Emil Berliner, while he was helping Thomas Edison.

The Jews have made a contribution to the world that is completely out of keeping with their number in the world. Wagging fingers and sending letters to those in authority has been one way of trying to combat antisemitism.

But a campaign showing the ordinary man in the street just what Jews have achieved could be the third way.

### Friday is chicken day

ONE of the hidden gems at the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre is the Friday lunch, but as Michael Caine would have said: "Not a lot of people know that."

If you go to the Centre from noon you can have a starter, roast chicken and vegetables and a dessert for the remarkable price of £7.00. The meals are served from noon and session lasts until around 1pm.

If you want a great Friday lunch time meal, pop along. You won't be disappointed.

And, if you wish, you can order your Friday meal in advance and collect it to take home with you.

SORRY to read about the accident at the Nestles factory where one of the workers was hit by a dozen or more boxes. But every time he called out 'The Milky Bars are on me' everyone laughed!

# Light up your kitchen this Chanukah

There is no better way to start off Chanukah than to see your table glowing with candles. There is something about the chanukiah candlelight, in the depths of winter, that creates warmth and an inviting ambience for family and friends.

It's the perfect time to invite guests and share the joy of this special festival. The tradition is to eat foods laden with oil to commemorate the miracle of the Temple Menorah.

However, the traditional latkes and doughnuts are also heavy with calories and sugar, which do not feature highly in today's health conscious society. Therefore, I have tried to create lighter dishes which still transmit the message but without so many calories.

So light some candles, invite your nearest and dearest and enjoy this wonderful time of the year. Happy Chanukah!

## PASHTIDA WITH COURGETTE FETA AND MINT

Pashtida is an Israeli pie rather like a cross between a quiche and a frittata. This recipe uses a base of shortcrust pastry and is filled with lovely fresh vegetables and herbs and wonderfully sharp feta. You don't have to use my choice of vegetables – you can substitute with your own preferences.

1 x 375gr pack of shortcrust pastry  
Flour for rolling out  
1 tabspn olive oil plus extra to grease the tin  
1 onion  
1 large courgette  
8 asparagus spears  
A handful of peas – defrosted if frozen  
1 small leek

3 eggs beaten  
150ml/5fl oz milk  
3 tabspn double cream  
100gr/3½ oz feta cheese crumbled  
1 packet of fresh mint  
Salt and pepper  
2 tabspn grated Parmesan cheese (Vegetarian)

Grease a 23 cm (9 inch) flat tin with the oil and line the base with baking paper.

Roll out the pastry onto a lightly floured surface thin enough to cover the base and sides of the flan tin. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C fan/Gas Mk 4.

Line the tin with the pastry and then cover the base with screwed up greaseproof paper and fill with baking beans (or rice). Bake the pastry case for 15-18 minutes until it is lightly browning at the edges. Remove the paper and the beans and bake for another 5-6 minutes until the base is dry and golden. Set aside until cold. Reduce the oven temperature to 160°C fan/Gas Mk 3.

To prepare the vegetables, chop the onion finely. Use a potato peeler to slice the courgette lengthways into ribbons and trim the woody ends from the asparagus. Wash the leek well and cut in half lengthways, then into half circles (you may not need it all if it is a large one).

Heat the oil and gently cook the onion and leek until soft, then add the courgette ribbons and cook for another five minutes until they begin to soften. Bring a pan of water to the boil and throw in the asparagus spears and peas for two minutes only, then drench in cold water.

Mix the eggs and milk

## COOKING FOR YOMTOV

### SHELLEY POSNER



with the cream and feta. Tear the leaves from two stalks of the mint and chop finely, then add to the milk mixture with the seasonings – not too much salt as the feta is already salty. Arrange all the vegetables in the bottom of the pastry case.

Pour the milk mixture into a large jug. Put the flan case on the oven shelf with the door open, then take the jug and pour the mixture into the flan case until it reaches the top. This is the easiest way to fill it. Don't do it first and then transfer it to the oven as it is likely to slop all over the place!!

Slide the flan into the oven and bake for 30-35 minutes or until the filling is set and is starting to colour. Grate over the Parmesan cheese when it comes out of the oven and is still hot, then scatter with extra mint leaves before serving.

### A DISH BY ANY OTHER NAME – IT'S YOUR CHOICE

This is a warm and comforting vegetarian dish perfect for cold winter days. It's something that I have developed over the years into a meal that has a greater flavour and deliciousness than the sum of its parts. You can look at it in two ways – it's either Cauliflower au Gratin with pasta or, alternatively, it can be Macaroni

Cheese with Cauliflower. What's in a name... you choose!

4oz/110gr macaroni or any other short pasta  
1 small head of cauliflower  
2oz/50gr butter  
1½ oz/40gr plain flour  
1 heaped teaspoon dried mustard  
¾pt/425mls milk  
1 tub of crème fraîche – you can use low fat here  
4oz/110gr grated mature cheese – I use half Cheddar half Parmesan  
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
4 dashes of Worcestershire sauce  
Bunch of fresh parsley  
A couple of tablespoons of golden dried bread crumbs – optional

Boil the macaroni in plenty of salted water according to packet instructions – usually around 10-12 minutes. Drain thoroughly.

Meanwhile, remove the cauliflower leaves and the hard stalk and break the florets up into bite-sized pieces. Refill the pasta pan with water, bring to the boil and throw in the cauliflower pieces. Cook them for 4-5 minutes or until just tender. You don't want them

soft or falling apart.

To make the sauce – put the cold milk, butter and flour into a pan and place on a medium heat. Add the mustard and keep whisking until the ingredients are amalgamated, the butter has melted and you have a smooth sauce.

Add the Worcestershire sauce and the seasonings, turn the heat right down and just bubble gently for a couple of minutes to cook out the flour. Remove from the heat and stir in most of the cheese, keeping a handful back for the topping. Add a couple of heaped tablespoons of crème fraîche and stir in well. Check the seasoning and adjust if necessary.

Put the pasta and the cauliflower into an ovenproof dish. Pour over the sauce and mix gently until fully covered. Strip the leaves from 3 or 4 stalks of parsley and chop finely. Sprinkle over the top and scatter over the rest of the cheese. If you like a crispy topping, add a couple of tablespoons of dried breadcrumbs too.

Bake in a medium oven at 180°C fan/Gas Mk 4 for around 20-25 minutes until hot and bubbly, and the topping is crispy and browning.

Cooks note: This dish can be made well in advance, or even the day before, and just run into the oven at the last minute. It also freezes well.

### CHOCOLATE AND VANILLA CHEESECAKE

This is a no-bake cheesecake that can be prepared the day before and seems to improve overnight. It sets in the fridge and is really delicious. Don't use less than a medium-fat cream cheese – the low-fat version doesn't set as well.

Base:  
150gr digestive biscuits  
50gr butter, melted

Filling:  
200gr milk chocolate  
150gr cream cheese  
200ml whipping cream  
25gr caster sugar  
2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
Chocolate shavings to decorate

Line the base of an 18 cm round loose-bottomed cake tin with parchment paper.

Crush the biscuits in a plastic bag with a rolling pin – you can use the processor if you prefer. Mix the crumbs with the melted butter. Spoon into the base of the tin and smooth down with the back of a spoon, pressing hard right up to the edges. Leave in the fridge to set.

Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water until it's smooth. Remove and leave to cool a little.

Whisk the cream cheese and the cream together until thick, then add the sugar and vanilla. Divide the mixture in half. Add the melted chocolate to one half, stirring well to combine.

Take the biscuit crumb base from the fridge and spread the vanilla cream mixture over it. Then spread the chocolate mixture over the top and gently swirl the two parts together with a knife to create a marbled effect. Replace in the fridge to set. Before serving, remove the outer ring of the tin.

Place on a pretty serving plate then decorate with chocolate shavings made from a bar of chocolate with a potato peeler.

# The beauty of Chanukah past and present

## BEAUTY BY PAT LIDIKER

WHEN I wrote my first beauty columns back in the past, the now familiar American and French brands were just arriving in the stores. Now there was a real incentive to entice us away from Woolworth's less thrilling choice of make-up and scents.

Columnists like me were invited to every glamorous product launch; and at one shindig I interviewed Estee Lauder's Jewish, right-hand executive (the only thing I've forgotten is her name). Enveloped in a waft of the fragrant, new Youth Dew, she was achingly chic, confident, coiffed and classy – but also, shock horror, proudly showed every wrinkle, frown line and bags under her eyes.

So did this mean, alas, that investing in all this expensive magic wouldn't keep us looking young forever after all? Her words of wisdom were that Estee Lauder wanted to help every woman of any age make the very

best of herself and look as good as she possibly could. As for encroaching age, she advised me to cleanse, nourish and moisturise to within an inch of my life; but added that the only sure way to iron out future creases was a full facelift!?!?

I tried to pass this on to readers, along with news of new creams, foundations and colour trends to keep up appearances, all the time trying not to be swayed by oodles of lavish free samples that came every lucky, beauty editor's way.

Today, this would be a waste of time with the advent of super-creams (at super prices), serums, collagen, fillers, botox and lunchtime facelifts.

With the approach of Chanukah, and assailed by adverts and must-haves on-line and on every counter, I've done the preliminary rounds on your behalf to find out what's in and what's not. A horrid job, but somebody had to do it.

The following are eight tips and ideas, one for each candle on the chanukiah, so have a beautiful Chanukah:

**1** You really do need perfectly clean skin before applying make-up and Liz Earle's Cleanse & Polish is one of the best, with its natural plant oils and foaming agents working to reveal soft, smooth and sparkling clean skin.

**2** Then apply serum, a brilliant way to create a smooth base for make-up, so fine it penetrates much more deeply than most normal creams. Boots No 7 Protect and Perfect famously caused a national shortage the moment it hit the shelves, but now they also have Lift and Luminate Triple Action, Advanced and Pore Minimising versions. Ask for a demo on the counter before deciding.

**3** Clarins have another winner with their Double Serum which, billed as a complete age control concentrate, has no less than 21 plant extracts to achieve radiant, firmer skin. This company doesn't bamboozle you with hype or technology, but stays timeless while keeping up with innovation. Again,

ask for a demo from the experts.

**4** Nobody's face is perfect, but a good concealer works wonders to disguise the bits you hate, like blemishes, pigmentation, lines and dark circles under the eyes. One of the hottest this season is Charlotte Tilbury's Magic Away with its inbuilt foam applicator and enough shades to blend with any complexion. Dab on, blend and hey presto, magic!

**5** Now the tricky question of which foundation to use in winter. Lancôme's Teint Idole Ultra Wear concentrate should be blended into a dash of eye cream, with a brush before application over a primer. Then set your make-up with a light spray and it should last all day, feeling as fresh as when you first applied it. Whichever foundation you choose from your favourite counter, make sure it gives a matte finish so you don't need powder, too; once a stalwart, this can make skin feel and look dry.

**6** Now the lip colour, and again there are countless colours and textures on offer. Many top companies (though not all) say the matte look is definitely the one for which to aim. Boots No 7 do almost 50 shades of lip colours; and their Moisture Drench matte and Stay Perfect are both must haves for the party season. Try a darker colour like Cinnamon Spice but never overdo it, less is always more. Estee Lauder, too, have a stunning range of colours in their high pigment Pure Colour Envy Matte sculpting lipstick. It costs a bit more than most of their others, but they promise that it lasts for ages, as one swipe will give eight hours of opaque coverage, instantly hydrating and plumping the lips. Ask the consultant for advice on the perfect colour for you.

**7** There are eye shadow palettes everywhere at every price, but how many of the colours will you ever actually use? So visit the Laura Mercier counter and indulge in a slimline Caviar stick;

just one from over 20 gorgeous shades is all you'll need – or maybe two. Buttery soft, shimmering and so easy to use, you just slick it on from the stick and, hey presto, instant smoky eyes with no messing! It will last all day but for extra evening glam, add a little more.

**8** Finally, I refuse to give advice on any of the zillions of fragrances arriving for the festive season. Whether buying for yourself or dropping hints to your nearest and dearest, don't get sidetracked by the likes of Julia Roberts simpering in front of the cameras. Can you actually smell what she's wearing? The only way is to spritz and sniff your way round the groaning counters to seek out the one you're happiest wearing.

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**I**N the new world of ageless wearable fashion, with its kaleidoscope of colours, patterns, fabrics and silhouettes, what should the chic woman over 50 (or any age) wear in Winter 18/19?

For starters, this lavish buffet of winter fashion offers us lots of colours. Some publications may declare that a single shade is the hot winter colour, but the reality for winter is an entire paint box of shades from bold primaries and warm autumnal tones to soft pastels and wardrobe-building neutrals. The season's 'hot' colours include yellow, mustard, winter-white, purple, teal, green,

**FASHION**



BY **JAN SHURE** AND **CYNDY LESSING** OF [www.SoSensational.co.uk](http://www.SoSensational.co.uk) THE LEADING FASHION SITE FOR WOMEN OF 50-PLUS

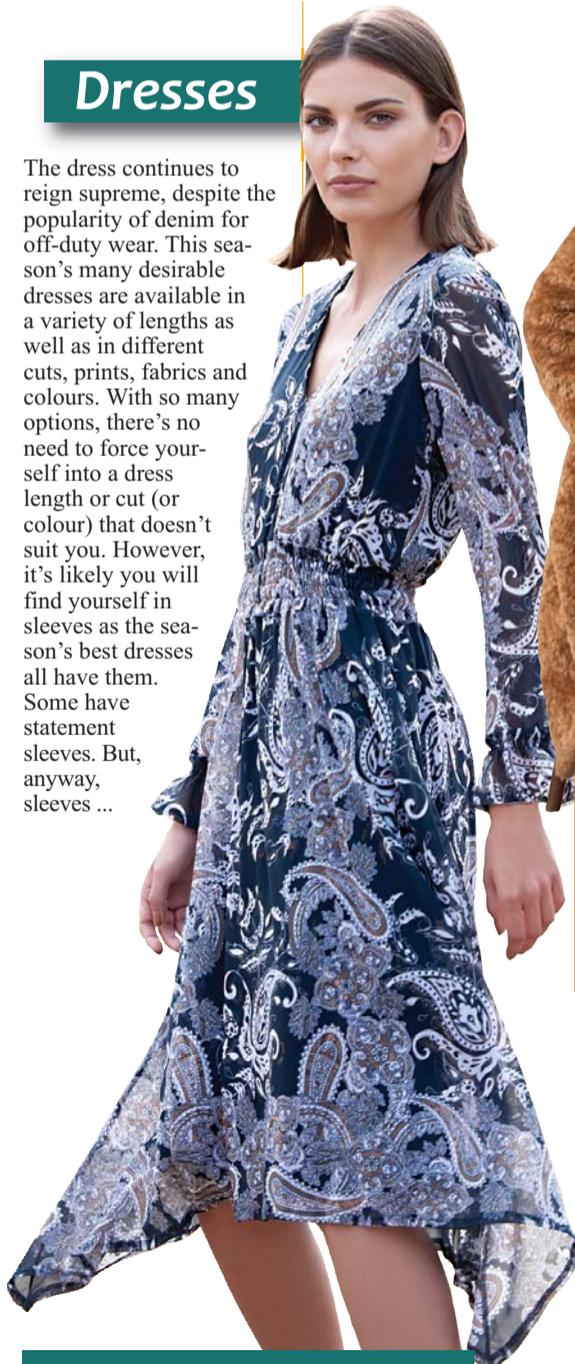
burgundy, pink, pale-blue, lilac, red, orange, fuchsia, brown, camel and navy.

The winter collections also offer an almost infinite choice of silhouettes and cuts, from 'bodycon' to 'boyfriend' to oversized. There are also lots of options in lengths, from mini to maxi; and also in fabric, from sheer chiffon and shimmering jacquard to tweed, tartan, cord and velvet.

There are also endless options in print and pattern, from delicate florals to digital prints; from bold blooms to business-like checks; and from paisley and patchwork to a jungleful of animal markings. So how to choose? Here's a more detailed run-down of all the fabulous options for winter 2018

# All the COLOURS of WINTER

**Dresses**



The dress continues to reign supreme, despite the popularity of denim for off-duty wear. This season's many desirable dresses are available in a variety of lengths as well as in different cuts, prints, fabrics and colours. With so many options, there's no need to force yourself into a dress length or cut (or colour) that doesn't suit you. However, it's likely you will find yourself in sleeves as the season's best dresses all have them. Some have statement sleeves. But, anyway, sleeves ...

**Black paisley-print midi dress £55. Wallis**

**Faux-fur & animal print**



Faux-fur crept on to catwalks as scarves, tippets, collars and cuffs. Then in 2015, entire coats in faux-fur appeared. If you bought a faux-fur coat then (or any time since, or kept yours from the 90s), congratulate yourself on your fashion foresight because faux-fur coats remain perfect for Winter 18/19. This season's are in pastels, primaries and, of course, in animal print, notably leopard and zebra.

Animal print is not limited to faux-fur coats, however. Oh no. Leopard spots and zebra stripes are everywhere this winter; across dresses, knits, bags, shoes, boots, scarves and much else, so you can choose to wear animal print head-to-toe or just as an accent.

**Faux-fur coat, £99, Jeans £45, nude loafers, £65, all Autograph. Snake-print blouse, £29.50, M&S Collection. Marks & Spencer.**

**Footwear & boots**

As always, the key to looking on-trend lies in accessories, especially footwear. This season, chunky ankle boots, white trainers and white ankle boots are footwear's hottest daytime trends. Other footwear to bring your winter wardrobe bang up-to-date includes flat riding boots, leopard-print ankle boots or courts, cowboy boots, loafers and brogues. After six, choose jewelled pumps or sandals or jewelled boots or anything with attitude!

**Party wear**



We are approaching the party season, so you'll be glad to learn there are endless stunning dresses for partywear, mainly crafted in lace, chiffon, jacquard, crepe, lurex or velvet. Long/maxi, midi and knee-length party dresses are all around for Winter 18/19. Naturally, the Little Black Dress – or LBD – makes its annual appearance, in a variety of cuts and lengths and even colours. The LBD could be the Little Dark-green Dress or the Little Navy Dress. The principal requisite is instant glamour, chic and flattery, all of which is readily available in all colours on the High Street. Whatever dress you choose, look for details such as sequins, feathers, fringing, off-the-shoulder neckline, embroidery, statement sleeves and asymmetry.

In party wear, there are also head-turning alternatives to dresses, such as jumpsuits, palazzo trousers and trouser suits.

A jumpsuit or trouser suit in a dark neutral, ideally in a luxe fabric, works best for party- and evening-wear. Style a trouser suit with a silky top (sleeveless or strappy if you might remove your jacket and don't mind showing your arms or with sleeves if you do).

Palazzos, in luxe fabric, are perfect for party wear paired with a glamorous top ...

Styling is the key to looking properly 'party' with any of these. Add sparkly jewellery, a bijou bag and strappy or jewelled footwear, perhaps with sky-high heels.

**Off-the-shoulder party dress, £60, Roman**

**Coats**



There's a glorious pick'n'mix of fabulous coats ... Choose from sharply-tailored Crombie-style coats in plain cloth in pastel, primary or practical neutral, or in knobbly tweed, tartan or check. Also look out for oversized shapes and classic or wrap shapes in plains and tweeds (some with faux-fur trim) and, of course, faux-fur ...

**Blazers & trouser suits**

Blazers and trouser suits are key items. There are, as you can probably guess, lots of blazer cuts, from fitted to slouchy. In fabrics there is tweed, plain, check, tartan, cord and velvet. A great blazer

can add pzazz to denim; it can bring a dress bang up-to-date and can transform a midi skirt into a serious workwear outfit.

And if you wish to embrace the season's trouser suit trend, you can nail two trends in one by picking a blazer that has matching trousers!

**Skirts & trousers**

There's a dazzling number of styling options here, too. In skirts, the midi pencil skirt is a 'hot' new look, but any midi skirt, straight full or A-line,

will look on-trend...

In trousers and denim, there are skinny ankle-grazers or boot-cut ankle-grazers; full-length skinny trousers and wide-leg trousers. All are current, so pick the shape and cut that most flatters you.

While discussing skirts and trousers, we will mention layering, which has become a vital element in everyone's wardrobe. Layering is not going away, but is evolving slightly to incorporate asymmetry, tunic-length tops and skirts... Watch this space!



**Animal print cross-body or clutch bag, £19, Accessorize**

All brands pictured are available from [www.sosensational.co.uk](http://www.sosensational.co.uk)

## TRAVEL

MARK HARRIS



# Peeling away Toledo's layers is appealing!

WE'VE explored most regions and cities of the Iberian peninsula over the years (especially from a Jewish viewpoint and usually in the – to us – comfortably dry heat, and constantly sunny skies, during August). But only having visited Toledo on the odd day trip by 30-minute express train from Atocha main station in Madrid (to the north-east), we felt it was time to dwell for a while in one of Spain's most historic and dramatically situated towns.

Spread amazingly across a plateau high above the encircling, parkland-flanked, Tagus river gorge in the fertile plain of Castilla y la Mancha province – Cervantes' legendary 'Don Quixote' country – the extraordinary old city of Toledo inevitably takes rather more than a hurried few hours (spent by many daily groups of coached-in tourists, fortunately more often in cooler spring and autumn) to absorb and comprehend fully. Not least regarding its succession of rulers – and the admixture of cultures and religious faiths ... From the ancient Roman settlement, through the Visigoth era to the period of the Moorish/Muslim Caliphate then the Christian (Catholic) re-conquest; with the Sepharad Jewish presence extending across the centuries of change until the 'Expulsion' in 1492.

To gain maximum insight from the city's distinct medieval character and ambience, especially in the neighbourhood of its old Juderia or Jewish Quarter, we chose to enjoy our extended Toledo sojourn in the charming and friendly 4\* boutique Hotel San Juan de los Reyes. It occupies a 19th century flourmill build-

and alleyways, old stone houses with typically tiled roofs, barred or shuttered windows and hefty, frequently ornate, wooden portals with splendidly crafted, ironwork hinges, locks and doorknobs. But strolling about its atmospheric maze of streets (by day or night) helped instil a sense of closeness to the Jewish past.

What also assisted us in that connection are the two surviving Sephardic houses of worship, now sadly museum pieces, each standing close by on either side of our hotel in Calle de los Reyes Catolicos: the synagogue of 'Santa Maria la Blanca' and the synagogue of 'El Tránsito'. The former dates from 1180, and can be seen as a symbol of three faiths cooperation. In that it was designed by Moorish architects



de San Martin, both 'guarded' by impressive towers. Indeed, Toledo preserves extensive, perimeter stretches of medieval defensive walls and battlements with some really striking gateways, such as the 16th century Gate of Biagra, the Gate of El Cambron and the Mudéjar-style Gate of El Sol. One of the excellent facilities available now in Toledo is a very convenient series of escalators that will take you from the northern edge of the main city area, high on the plateau, to that section situated on the plain below. And, of course, back again after your explorations!



## ■ A panoramic vista of Toledo

Blanca'. Headed "Kol Nidre" (also in Hebrew), it was advertising a "prayer vigil" in the building for Saturday evening, 15 September (not Kol Nidre night) as "a symbol of the unity and love for Israel". The event was organised by the "Fraternidad Maria Estrella de la Magnana" ("Fraternity Maria the Morning Star"), a Catholic order.

One evening during our stay, we went to a free "educational concert" at the Sephardi Museum. With a full house attendance by local Toledanos, it was performed by ethnomusicologist and singer Judith R Cohen PhD from York University, Toronto. Her 90-minute programme comprised primarily Sephardic music, sung by Dr Cohen self-accompanied on a variety of traditional timpanic instruments. The next day, I caught up with her at our hotel; and (as a long-standing chorister) was delighted to engage in a brief, but very interesting, conversation with her about Jewish music.

quite as magical as Ayuntamiento. The largest is Zacodover, at the other end from the cathedral of the aptly named Calle Comercio (and its side streets) boasting numerous cafes, bars, souvenir and other retail emporia. Ubiquitously, these sell swords and knives of famed Toledo steel, ladies' fans of every description, Spanish porcelain and brass figures of Don Quixote, his sidekick Sancho Panza and model armoured knights of one kind or another, the city's

In the space here, it's impossible to do justice to the town's varied array of museums, especially that of the master artist El Greco (sited in the Juderia), and of the Visigoth Councils (housed in the Mudéjar-designed Church of San Roman); notable churches like that of Santa Tome (with its notable El Greco painting of the 'Burial of the Lord of Orgaz'), of Salvador and of Los Jesuitas; amazing monastery and convent edifices, such as San Juan de los Reyes and Santa Domingo El Antiguo; mosque conversions, exem-



## ■ Music Festival performance in Toledo's Plaza del Ayuntamiento

renowned marzipan concoctions and much else besides. Buzzing Zacodover (a one-time Moorish marketplace) is partially flanked by the Santa Cruz Museum (on Toledo); and, maybe more significantly, by the tremendous Alcazar (now home to the multi-faceted Army Museum), the distinctively huge, four-towered, former fortification that dominates Toledo's skyline.

Best spot for a breathtaking vista of the city is the high ground on the south bank of the Tagus. There are quite a few antique, arched stone bridges spanning the river, including the Alcantara (first built in the 9th century) and the 14th century Puerta

plified by that of El Cristo de la Luz (the only remaining mosque – Bab-al-Mardum – of the 10 which existed during the city's medieval epoch); Roman baths, and also Roman circus ruins (located near the Plaza de Toros, Toledo's bull ring).

For a relaxing alfresco drink – alcoholic or otherwise – I can recommend the trendy roof terrace at the 'Mercado de San Augustin' restaurant complex (near its namesake plaza), and 'Terraza Miradero' (overlooking the lower city area and countryside to the north), where you will enjoy lulling warm evenings with your favoured tittle while watching some glorious sunsets!



## ■ Above: Sign in the medieval Jewish Quarter Left: Interior of the Synagogue Santa Maria la Blanca

Samuel Ha-Levi Abulafia; his sculpted bust stands on a plinth not far from the entrance. Again, Mudéjar design is conspicuous in its tie-beam ceiling, horseshoe arches and decorative stucco plasterwork of the large main hall and upper (ladies') gallery. Some Hebrew-inscribed tombstones are located in the north courtyard. It was converted into a church in 1492.



My earlier researches failed to reveal a current 'minyan' in the city. But we were intrigued to notice a poster (in Spanish, of course) on an outside wall of the synagogue 'Santa Maria la

in the Almohad tradition – including arches and pillars – on Christian land for Jewish prayer. The latter (also Toledo's Sephardi Museum) was founded in 1356 by King Pedro I's treasurer – Don

ing, with a classic Mudéjar facade, at the heart of that fascinating area. The Juderia isn't the only part of Toledo to evidence narrow, sometimes fairly steeply inclined (or stepped), cobbled lanes



Dr Cohen's event was actually an item in Toledo's annual August Music Festival. Happily, we were able to attend several of its principally free, sit-down concerts and recitals, largely held late evening in the wonderful Plaza del Ayuntamiento. This expansive space is surrounded by Toledo's magnificently illuminated, 13th century, High Gothic-style Cathedral of St Mary, the attractive City Hall and the austere majestic Archbishop's Palace. Performances included the town's symphony orchestra, various bands (one playing many 'Pasedoble') and some mixed choirs (one singing Leonard Cohen's popular 'Hallelujah').

There are a number of other plazas to linger around in Toledo; though they're not

# WHAT'S ON

THE EJN'S COMPREHENSIVE DIARY OF EVENTS TAKING PLACE IN YOUR AREA

## DECEMBER

### MONDAY 3 DECEMBER: FIRST DAY CHANUKAH

#### Sunday 2 December

Menorah lighting at the top of Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill, including the world's largest cake Menorah, followed by community Chanukah party. 5pm.

#### Sunday 2 December

Menorah lighting in Westcliff. 7.30pm.

#### Monday 3 December

Menorah lighting in Westcliff. 7.30pm.

#### Monday 3 December

Chanukah party with Kenny Charles entertaining at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178 at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact chairman Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Monday 3 December

Menorah lighting at Fullwell Cross roundabout, Barkingside. 6.30pm.

#### Tuesday 4 December

Menorah lighting in Westcliff. 7.30pm.

#### Tuesday 4 December

'Whitechapel mayn Vaytshapl!' Speaker Freddy Shaw describes being a GP in the East End, at the Tuesday Luncheon Club, South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue, Oaks Lane, Newbury Park. Lunch from 12.15-1pm. Talk from 1.15pm-2.30pm. For further details, phone 0208 599 0936 or e-mail admin@swesrs.org.uk

#### Tuesday 4 December

Menorah lighting at Loughton (Loughton High Road, opp. Marks and Spencer). 6.30pm.

#### Wednesday 5 December

Menorah lighting at Epping. 6.30pm.

#### Wednesday 5 December

Menorah lighting in Westcliff. 6.30pm.

#### Wednesday 5 December-

Some favourite songs from Jacquie Dean, at Southend and Westcliff JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 6 December

Menorah lighting at Chigwell Village Green. 6.30pm.

#### Thursday 6 December

Klezmer Band and Chanukah lighting at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. Doors open 7pm. £12.00 entry. Booking essential. Contact Sharon on 0208 418 2116 or e-mail simber@jcare.org

#### Thursday 6 December

Gala night after the Menorah lighting at Southend and Westcliff Synagogue, with doughnuts and dignitaries. 7.30pm.

#### Thursday 6 December

Steve Galler entertains with banjo and songs at Beehive Lane JACS Chanukah party. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 6 December

Gants Hill JACS Chanukah party (for house members only) at Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 6 December

Geoff Bowden on the Life and Times of Irving Berlin, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Friday 7 December

Menorah lighting in Westcliff. 3.15pm.

#### Saturday 8 December

Menorah lighting at Gants Hill

roundabout followed by community Chanukah party. 7pm.

#### Saturday 8 December

Menorah lighting in Westcliff. 6pm.

#### Tuesday 11 December

Richard Cohen speaks about 'Churchill and the Jews', at the Essex branch of the Jewish Historical Society, Clore Tikva School, Fullwell Avenue, Barkingside. Entry £4.00 including refreshments.

#### Tuesday 11 December

Mystery History and other Evocations (part 2). From Kohelt to Hawking – there is nothing new under the sun. Speaker Hugh Noble, at the Tuesday Luncheon Club.

South West Essex and Settlement Reform Synagogue, Oaks Lane, Newbury Park. Lunch from 12.15pm-1.00pm. Talk from 1.15pm-2.30pm. Phone 0208 599 0936 or e-mail admin@swesrs.org.uk for further details.

#### Wednesday 12 December

'Jewish lip reading and deaf awareness teaching' is the subject of Ingrid Stelman's talk at Southend and Westcliff JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 13 December

Dr Freddie Shaw talks about his years of working in Whitechapel, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 13 December

Nigel Coleman on the film star Spencer Tracy, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 13 December

Robert Wright entertains, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Sunday 16 December

Singer Gary Benjafield entertains, at Ilford Friendly Circle, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue from 1pm-3.30pm. Entry £3,50.

#### Monday 17 December

Another performance by Gary Benjafield, this time at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact chairman Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for further details.

#### Tuesday 18 December

Christmas/Chanukah/Prophet's Birthday concert and party. Contact Rabbi David Hulbert at david.hulbert@whsmithnet.co.uk for further details.

#### Tuesday 18 December

Enjoy an hour of singer Geoffrey Strum, at the Tuesday Luncheon Club, South West Essex and Reform Settlement Synagogue, Oaks Lane, Newbury Park. Lunch from 12.15pm-1pm, entertainment from 1.15pm-2.30pm. For further details, phone 0208 599 0936 or email admin@swesrs.org.uk

#### Wednesday 19 December

A belated Chanukah party with singer Gary Benjafield, at Southend and Westcliff JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 20 December

Martin Moss plays for members of Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 20 December

Razzmataz entertains at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 20 December

Nick Dobson talks about the travels of Agatha Christie, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federa-

tion Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Wednesday 26 December

Fish and chips dinner at Chabad, Buckhurst Hill. Phone 0208 279 2987 for further details.

## JANUARY

### MONDAY 21 JANUARY: TU B'SHEVAT

#### Thursday 3 January

Diane Moore entertains at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 3 January

Ros Barclay's exciting New Year quiz, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 3 January

Sarah O'Shea entertains at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Monday 7 January

Anne McDonald entertains, at the Grand Order of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Thursday 10 January

Keeley Smith sings some popular songs, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 10 January

'Antisemitism Today' is the subject of Johnny Levavitch's talk at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 10 January

The History of Sainsbury's described by Alison Foster, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 17 January

Martin Phillips entertains at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 17 January

William Byrne sings some popular songs at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 17 January

Lynne Bradley on the making of musical movies, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 24 January

The swinging 60's with Frankie Dean, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 24 January

Leigh Russell describes his work as a crime writer, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Lime Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 24 January

Derek Spicer remembers the 3 March 1943, the Bethnal Green tube disaster, when 300 people were crushed. Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Monday 28 January

Robert Wright entertains, at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Tuesday 29 January

'Planning a holiday' with David Jacobs, at the Essex branch of the Jewish Historical Society. Entry £4.00 inc. light refreshments. Clore Tikva School, Fullwell Avenue, Barkingside. An exploration of where men and women have travelled to in the 20th century, including advertisements placed in the

Jewish Chronicle. Holiday pictures welcome.

#### Thursday 31 January

Nigel Coleman on the life and times of John Le Mesurier at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 31 January

Jazz with pianist Keith Nichols at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

## FEBRUARY

#### Thursday 7 February

Peter Padwick, the music hall speaker, is at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 7 February

Ian Leigh entertains, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 7 February

Vivien Rose describes the many activities available for older people in Redbridge, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Monday 11 February

Paul Jerrom entertains, at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Thursday 14 February

Kate Poole and 'The Ghosts Who Walk On Fridays' – the ghosts who apparently visit the theatres in London and other places. Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 14 February

Eleanor Bloom speaks about the River Thames, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 14 February

Sarah O'Shea entertains at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 21 February

Richie Milson sings, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 21 February

Nigel Coleman on the life and times of film star Lana Turner, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 21 February

Jef Page from the Ilford Historical Society speaks on the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Monday 25 February

Angie Gaye in full voice, at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Tuesday 26 February

Rabbi Michael Pertz speaks on 'From Jerusalem of the North to Babel-Litvak Jewry', at the Essex branch of the Jewish Historical Society, Clore Tikva School, 115 Fullwell Avenue, Barkingside. Entry £4.00 inc. light refreshments.

#### Thursday 28 February

Fiona Harrison sings, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 28 February

Vocalist Jodie Beth Mayer entertains, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 28 February

Brian Billings with part two of 'Essex Smugglers', at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.



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## MARCH

### THURSDAY 21 MARCH: PURIM

#### Thursday 7 March

Dean Weedon from Las Vegas entertains, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 7 March

Paul Ross entertains at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 7 March

David Swinden, author of 'Behind The Blue Lamp', describes the history of police stations, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Monday 11 March

James Bernard entertains, at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Thursday 14 March

Classical singer Grayathie Patrick entertains, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 14 March

Diane Wynne-Fitzgerald gives some advice on arthritis care, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Tuesday 19 March

Professor Gil Toffell, from Queen Mary University of London, speaks at the Essex branch of the Jewish Historical Society on 'Jews, Cinema and Public Life in interwar Britain', at Clore Tikva School, 115 Fullwell Avenue, Barkingside. Entry £4.00 inc. light refreshments.

#### Thursday 21 March

Nigel Coleman on the life of Peter Sellers, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 21 March

Gants Hill JACS annual general meeting – and a Purim event, at Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Monday 25 March

The popular Steve Dunnett sings at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Thursday 28 March

Musical duets from David Price and Maralyn, at Beehive Lane JACS. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 28 March

'What A Carry On' with Geoff Bowden, at Chigwell and

Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 28 March

James Morton gives an insight into the Kray Twins and how they ruled the underworld in the 50s and 60s, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

## APRIL

### FRIDAY 19 APRIL: FIRST SEDER NIGHT

#### Monday 1 April

Gilda entertains, at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Thursday 4 April

Kenny Charles entertains, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 4 April

'Music For All The People' with Gayathrie and Bill Patrick at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 4 April

Mark Smith, military expert on the Antiques Road Show, tells the story of the Victoria Cross, at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

#### Thursday 11 April

The Dagenham Girl Pipers story by Linda Rhodes, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm

#### Monday 15 April

Sarah O'Shea sings, at the Grand Lodge of Israel and Shield of David Lodge No 178, at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre. 8pm. Contact Paul Cross on 07973 202940 for details.

#### Thursday 18 April

Richard Dodd describes his life in radio and television, at Chigwell and Hainault JACS, Limes Farm Avenue. 1.30pm.

## MAY

### WEDNESDAY 8 MAY: YOM HAZIKARON

### THURSDAY 9 MAY: YOM HA'ATZMAUT

#### Thursday 2 May

Dr Helen Fry, who has written several books on the Second World War, talks about 'The Jewish Secret Listeners', at Gants Hill JACS, Ilford Federation Synagogue, Clarence Avenue. 1.30pm.

What's On is compiled by  
Manny Robinson.



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# Mitzvah Day 2018 in pictures

Muslim Council of Britain Secretary General Harun Khan took part in the collection for Linkey at the RJCC with Redbridge United Synagogue



WIJPS Pupils collected for Lupus UK, Camp Simcha, Onechild Ghana and Redbridge Food Bank - and then danced at Jewish Care's Vi and John Rubens House



Jewish Blind & Disabled tenants and staff collected items for GIFT to help those in need around the region



East London Mosque hosted the flagship event in the record breaking Mitzvah Day and Muslim Aid #ChickenSoupChallenge for the homeless



Members of the new Aish young professionals programme delivered food and essentials to homeless people



East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue and Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum joined in the #ChickenSoupChallenge



Harlow Jewish Community cheder organised a tea party and collection at the synagogue for the local homeless



Iain Duncan Smith MP at the launch of the Woodford Forest Synagogue drop-in for asylum seekers



Year six pupils at Clore Tikva Primary School helped the younger reception children in the dinner hall during lunchtime



East London & Essex Liberal Synagogue members entertained and served tea to residents at Jewish Care's Vi and John Rubens House



The editor of the Essex Jewish News (bottom right) joined a game of walking football at the Redbridge Jewish Community Centre

PICTURES PROVIDED BY PHOTOGRAPHERS INCLUDING KEITH GOLD, DAVID SOLOMON, YAKIR ZUR AND KAREN ZETTER