

The Norrice Leader

A Mammoth Achievement

Operation Rescue was organised within a couple of hours of **Alyson Martin** receiving calls about possible collections to be sent to the Ukraine. Alyson contacted **David Sagal** of *Goods For Good*, an organisation which collects charitable donations and transports them to destinations in need

all over the world. One of their charity partners, HRIF, based in Weesp, Holland, takes lorry loads of humanitarian goods from Holland to Poland and had carried out a trial run the previous week. A flier was prepared and, thanks to the magic of social media and Whatsapp, within 24 hours the most unbelievable weekend event was arranged.

The response was incredible and the flier was seen everywhere. Boxes and bags kept being delivered onto the driveway of Alyson's house in Norrice Lea. "As the drive was cleared, so another delivery appeared." She says, "It was overwhelming and very emotional to see the way everyone came together."

Continued on Page 7



The Best Ever Purim Party!

Gayle Kravitz writes:

We had an amazing Children's Megilla Reading and Party this Purim enjoyed by over 220 children and their families.

An incredible team of volunteers, headed by Carly Gelley, Nadia Taylor and Yael Salem worked so hard to make this event exceptional – from individual food boxes to a silent disco, table football, popcorn, waffles, ice-cream to a bubble man. We had it all!

The event was in loving memory of Lella Yamin-Joseph ל"ה and Helen Taylor ל"ה.

Look out for future events in the HGSS newsheet, on Facebook or why not join our WhatsApp Social Group (contact the shul office for your name to be added).



Purim pictures on centre pages 20-21



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The Chief Rabbi's Pesach Message

Pesach 5782/2022



For the past two years, our Pesach experiences have been uniquely challenging while we contended with the unprecedented restrictions of the Coronavirus pandemic. Baruch Hashem, at long last, we can now look forward with fresh optimism to Pesach 2022.

The fundamental dimensions of the Pesach Seder are encapsulated perfectly in the famous words: *“Kol dichfin yeitei veyechol; kol ditzrich yeitei veyifsach”* – “All who are hungry, let them come and eat; All who are in need, let them come and join us in observing Pesach.”

This invitation makes clear that, where possible, our Seder should be celebrated with others. Yet, it also describes the two essential aspects of the Seder experience – the physical, represented by the invitation to eat, and the spiritual, represented by the invitation to observe Pesach. Neither component is sufficient without the other. The Seder is both a feast for our physical senses and a feast for the soul.

The four questions of Ma Nishtana, relating to matza, maror, dipping and leaning, highlight not only what we do at the seder but also how we do them. These two dimensions of both our physical and spiritual Seder experiences, convey to us a profound lesson about both Seder night and Jewish life in general.

Our Sedarim of 2020 and 2021 were unprecedented. The what was the same as it has been for centuries, as we proceeded from cover to cover of our Haggadot. But the how had one major difference, due to the severely restricted numbers around our tables. Now that, Baruch Hashem, we will hopefully be able to have Sedarim of pre-Covid proportions, within the timeless what of Seder night, let us not revert entirely

to our previous how. Instead, let's enrich our Seder experience by introducing fresh and creative ways to excite and inspire children and adults alike.

Indeed, we must apply this principle to Jewish life more broadly. The Pandemic has caused an upheaval in our communal life that most of us have never previously experienced and that comes with an opportunity to reimagine it in new ways. This is the rationale behind Project Welcome, which will provide strategic support and dedicated funding to communities around the country as they think anew and take bold steps to reinvigorate our congregants. In this context, I have no doubt that ShabbatUK, which will this year take place on 13th/14th May, will provide an exciting platform for extraordinary community engagement, which will be appreciated all the more following successive periods of lockdown.

Fascinatingly, the Hebrew word for crisis is mashber. The original Biblical meaning of this word is ‘the opening of the womb’, the moment of greatest human potential, because out of crises we must always seek the opportunities for renewal and regeneration. Let us ensure that this Pesach marks the beginning of a new era of Jewish community excellence.

Valerie and I extend our warm wishes to you and your families for a Chag kosher vesameach.



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis



חג פסח שמח

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On behalf of everyone who relies on Jewish Care, we wish you and your families a happy Pesach.

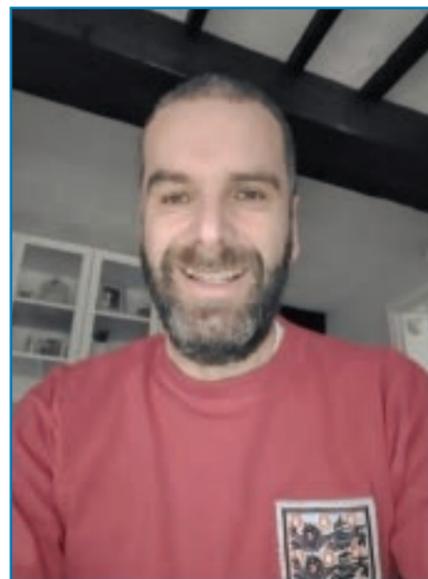
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We bid farewell to caretaker Robin Briggs who has left us after 21 years.

Thank you, Robin, for all your service to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue community – our very best wishes to you for the future.

Goods FOR Good

Global distribution of charitable donations for humanitarian aid
 If you wish to help organise other Ukraine collections contact Goods for Good at <https://goodsforgood.org.uk/>



From the Chair

A message from James Kaufmann

I want to express my gratitude to our entire Community for the way in which everyone has pulled together over the past few months as we await the arrival of Rabbi and Rebbetzen Levene. The needs of a community never stop and, with everything that’s been going on around us, these needs have been more diverse, more important and more pressing than ever.

I want to thank each and every one who has helped out, given their time or service in any way over this period. We should all feel a sense of pride in what we have collectively achieved. I will not try to name everyone who has risen to these challenges for fear of inadvertently overlooking anyone, but I would be remiss if I omitted to single out Avromi and Rochelle for special mention. You have laughed with us, cried with us and generally been there for all of us more than ever. Likewise, Sharon, Mark and the entire Office team. You see us at our best, and at our worst. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

* * * * *

Pesach will soon be upon us and, with it, Seder night(s). At the start of the Seder, before we discuss the story of the Exodus from Egypt, we break the middle matza in two. We call this “yachatz”. We hide the bigger piece (the afikoman) and return the smaller piece to the seder table.

The classic reason given for this ritual is to remind us that we were poor slaves, not knowing where our next meal would come from. We always set aside half of any food in front of us to make sure we had some food for later. This year, perhaps more than any other time in recent memory, this message resonates. That we live in uncertain times is one of the few certainties we have. But it seems that as time passes, new sources of chaos erupt wherever we look. The need to ensure

that we are as prepared as we possibly can be for what lies ahead is more important than ever.

But Rav Ron Yitzchok Eisenman has a novel take on yachatz. He suggests it symbolises the need to acknowledge our own “brokenness”. We may wish to present an outward image of certainty, confidence and self-assurance. But before we can retell, and relate to, the Exodus from Egypt and our national long walk to freedom, we must admit to all (and especially to ourselves) that we are broken. At a personal level, this is certainly an idea with which I can identify.

Rav Eisenman also applies this approach to the afikoman; searching for one of the broken pieces at the end of the Seder. We rise and go in search of the broken piece – representing the need to seek out the broken spirits around us, those in need of our attention and care. While the first broken piece of matza represents us, whom we recognise as incomplete and dependent, the second broken piece represents others, our friends, family and other people who like us are broken and need support.

Pesach is *Zman Cherutainu* (the Time of our Freedom). And to me Rav Eisenman’s approach to the afikoman (coming as it does, late on in the Seder, when we consider ourselves to be free) encapsulates what it means to be free and to what we should all aspire – as individuals, and as a Community. As Eleanor Roosevelt said “Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility. For the person who is unwilling to grow up, the person who does not want to carry [their] own weight, this is a frightening prospect.”

Wishing us all a chag kasher v’sameach and hoping that we each embrace the freedom of Pesach, heal the broken, accept the challenge of responsibility and continue to move forward together as a Community to achieve more than we thought possible.

Karina takes Gold!

As we go to print, we learn that **Karina Kaufmann** has won the British Duathlon Championships at Oulton Park

A duathlon has three stages – run / bike / run. Karina writes: Having raced this course in October 2021 when I was unable to perform as well as I had wanted, I was apprehensive about tackling it again (especially those race track hills, accumulating 250m of elevation over 38.7km in addition to having to run three spikey laps), not to mention the fierce competition on the start line.

I won't pretend that my first run was great. I hated every second of it and wondered why I ever run? I covered 8.6km in 35.58, coming into the first transition in 8th place.

Getting onto my bike was the saving grace of this race. I had no choice but to let the fast women run off ahead, it certainly turned this into a physical and mental competition. Coming out of T(Transition)1 I knew I was about a minute behind the leader of my age group and had some hard work ahead of me! Luckily, digging in on the bike is my best bit of any race and that's what I did. Surprising even myself, I achieved sub seven minute laps (each 4.3km long) – nine of them! I had regained the lost minute and made an additional five minutes on my bike.

I went into T2 with a comfortable gap in my age group (but nowhere near the leading ladies). This gave me a comfortable buffer for what I knew was going to be a

painful second run!

Surprisingly, I managed a faster second run than in October, running the last 4.3km lap in 18.08. I was thrilled to cross the finishing line in a little under the 2hour mark.

GOLD! (I'm still grinning!) winning the 40-44 age group and achieving fifth place overall in a seriously strong line-up of superb women.

Massive thanks to Angela Joiner-Handy for the best coaching, to friends and family for their support and to Kingsport (at Kings College London) for awarding me an academic sports scholarship (where I am retraining as a Physiotherapist).

Anyone that wants to contact or follow me can find me on Instagram at Karina.kaufmann_adventures.

I am always happy to chat about sport, health and fitness. Age group racing is a wonderful environment – races are usually on a Sunday (so, finally, Jewish-friendly sport!) and there is a fun and supportive environment. There is a race for anyone (any combination of sports that you could imagine). We race in age categories (16-99!), so you can't use old bones as an excuse! Please contact me if you want to know more, or see the world and represent your country!

Well done Karina! We are proud of you.



A Mammoth Achievement

Continued from page 1



People delivering food offered to stay and help pack, saying they could help for 30 minutes and ending up staying for hours. It was bittersweet watching children with their parents sorting and packing and having so much fun preparing the boxes.

"We had incredible support from Akiva School who delivered in excess of 70 bags, Chalgrove Primary School and Southbank International School arranged collections and packing with the children."

On Monday evening, when all the boxes had been closed, the donations kept on coming. We could not turn anything away.

We had sorted and packed 180 boxes. An SOS WhatsApp message was sent for help to load the boxes at 6.45am on Tuesday and a great team of 'strong' men appeared. The boxes were sent to a warehouse owned by My 1st Years. We were storing 2.8 tonnes of goods with a value of £36,000.

A second collection was arranged on Sunday, 13 March in conjunction with Project ImpACT. Donated items were collected by HGSS members, the local community and Project ImpACT teens. An army of ImpACT teens then came in droves to volunteer and sort tables piled high with packets of pasta, tinned food, first aid supplies, dry goods and toiletries.

An amazing 620 boxes were packed, sorted, sealed and stacked in the Max Weinbaum Hall and then squeezed

into a lorry organised by Goods for Good, which headed to the Ukrainian border. The amount of goods donated to the Ukrainian refugees was estimated to be worth more than £125,000.

Chayli Fehler, Project ImpACT Founder, reports: "There was a great sense of enthusiasm as almost 200

Project ImpACT teen volunteers worked together throughout the day to pack an overwhelming amount of donations. It was incredible to see so many young people wanting to do their personal bit



to make a difference during this crisis. ImpACT youth volunteers are a credit to the community".

ImpACT teen volunteer Gil Tyderman said: "You see it on the news and you feel pretty helpless, but packing these emergency supplies is empowering and makes you feel that at least you have helped in some way."

Project ImpACT volunteers also heard from James Silverman from Goods for Good, who thanked everyone for their enormous effort in donating supplies.

Alyson Martin (L) with Women's Vice-Chair Katherine Isaacs



He said: "I was impressed by how professional and dedicated these young volunteers were. It was truly inspirational and they should be extremely proud of themselves".

ImpACT teen volunteer Ariella Bentata said: "We have heard a lot on the news about Ukraine so to be able to come together to pack food that will go to help refugees is very special. I am so happy just to be able to do something to help them and the fact that so many people have come today to donate and pack supplies together is amazing."

On Monday, David Sagal reported: "Three trucks have already departed from Weesp in Holland loaded with essential footwear, hygiene products and toiletries. Another five loads have been secured in addition. The goods will reach refugees and people in need inside Ukraine. Vital goods will also be sent to Moldova where refugees are expected to arrive. We are liaising with Ukrainian welfare centres and Embassies in Poland and The Netherlands to make this happen."



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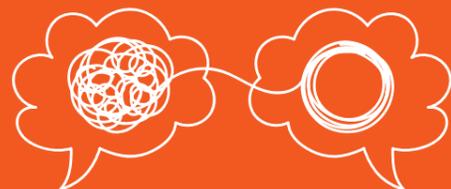
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A Pesach message

from **Michael Goldstein**

President of The United Synagogue



A United Synagogue Rebbetzen shared a wonderful anecdote with me recently. She was learning with a member of her community, a mother of three children. One of her children went to Tribe camp last summer and had such a wonderful time that the child came home and told his parents that he wanted to go to a Jewish school.

The child said that he had really enjoyed the davening on camp and the special atmosphere Tribe creates, and so he wanted to go to a school where he would get that feeling every day. In January, he – and his two siblings! – moved to a Jewish school. As a result, the family feel much more connected to the Jewish community than they did beforehand.

There are many reasons for choosing a school of course, and we know that our younger Jewish generation thrives in many different educational settings. But my point here as we approach Pesach is how special our tradition is. How unique our festivals are. How powerful the touchstones are that keep our children connected to their faith and make them want to be part of our people's 4000-year-old story.

Pesach – and Seder nights in particular – is perhaps the quintessential opportunity to connect with our past and forge indelible positive Jewish experiences. With its distinctive rituals, songs and foods, Pesach creates memories of special Seder nights from years ago which seem as fresh as if they'd happened yesterday. Not by chance is Seder night the most observed Jewish ritual, even by those who wouldn't consider themselves to be that observant during the rest of the year.

But my message this Pesach, isn't specifically about Pesach, strange as that might seem. It's about what we do after Pesach. It's about how you can help us keep

the younger generation of our community connected to their tradition and keep that spark alive for them to pass on – please God – to others.

We are role models in everything we do. If people see us take our Judaism seriously, they are more likely to do the same. If they see us coming to shul regularly, enjoying our warm, welcoming services and programming for all ages or volunteering to help the community, they are more likely to continue going themselves.

So as we move to the summer months and hopefully better weather, please join us back in shul. We need you. And if you've already come back, please invite your friends and family to join you. If there is a service or event at your shul that you have not attended before or for a while, why not give it a go? And if you'd like to make something new happen, please let us know: now is the time not just to do what we always have but to refresh what our communities offer.

Earlier this year we launched Project Welcome, an initiative which does exactly what it says on the tin. We want to – and we must – welcome back people we've not seen for some time. In partnership with the Office of the Chief Rabbi, Project Welcome aims to boost community participation and enable every United Synagogue community to build an ambitious long-term strategy.

As the Chief Rabbi said when he addressed our lay leaders recently: "Let's never take shul for granted. Let's never take community for granted."

With your help, we will ensure that's not the case.

Wishing you all a chag kasher v'sameach.

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Migration – the story continues

In our last issue, Seema Noori told us that she and her family left Taliban-controlled Afghanistan to start a new life in this country. She kindly agreed to tell me more about what life was like in the country of her birth, what drove her and her family to leave and how they escaped.

Seema, eighth of nine siblings, was born in Kabul in 1972 when Afghanistan was under the control of the Mujahidin. Life for families was normal and children, both boys and girls, attended school and university.

However, one day the Mujahidin arrived to take possession of the family's home. That evening, they moved to a safe house – all, that is, except for her father who refused to leave. He did not believe that they would carry out their threat and stayed on by himself. Once a week, he would look in on the family when they would give him clean clothes and food. Four months went by without incident until, one week, he did not arrive. They were understandably worried but comforted themselves with the thought that it was probably difficult to make the journey and that he had been forced to abandon it. However, they never heard from him again. Nobody knows exactly what happened. They asked the neighbours but nobody had seen anything.

In 1979 the Russians invaded and, after a bloody conflict, took over government of the country.

Seema attended university, studying History and Philosophy and, while still at university, she became engaged. She married at 21 and her first child was due

at the same time as her finals were scheduled. She therefore asked for the date of her exams to be brought forward. This was agreed and she had completed all but one when her daughter



Seema with her brother



Seema, then a university student, in the orchard of the family home in Kabul

arrived – one week early – during which time everything changed . . .

Gone were the Russians and enter the Taliban. Overnight, schools and universities were closed to both boys and girls. Everything stopped. Women were not allowed out alone. It is the custom in Muslim families for young married couples to live with the husband's parents and this was the case with Seema and her husband, who worked for the Afghan government.

One day, the Taliban arrived at the house and took him away – incidentally, they also took the car which the couple had just bought – and nothing was heard of him for fifteen days. Seema, 21 years old at the time, felt helpless and lost. She tried going out wearing a burka but found it impossible – she could not see or breathe and felt that she was falling over. She returned home in a state of collapse.

Her in-laws had contacts but no-one could help and she was in despair but then, after 15 days, she was busy tending her baby when she heard someone say, "He's here". Her husband had been brought home. Then, as her father-in-law was taking him in, they asked for money although he had already paid them.

He said, "Can't you see that I have no more?"

They said, "If you want your son back alive, you will find some".

So here she was, in the home of her in-laws. It was the last days of Ramadan and they were preparing for the Festival of Eid when her husband's brother came to them and said, "You are not safe here, you must leave."

They paid a trafficker to get them out of the country but, when the time of departure came, they said, "We can only take two." Seema left with her nine-month-old son, leaving her husband and two-year-old daughter behind. Understandably, she felt completely alone and desperate to be reunited with her daughter. She would

Purim and a Night of Beauty

by Simone Halfin

On a cold winter evening 60 ladies, ranging from school children to the more mature, gathered in the Landy Gallery for an insight into beauty, both of body and mind. Rochelle Freilich first introduced make-up artist, Tali Dahan, who used an array of expensive Charlotte Tilbury creams on Yael Selig, a member of the audience, to bring out the 'glow' on her face. Tali's beauty tips included instruction to drink more water and keep away from sun. Maybe that is why I have so many wrinkles!! Although the products were expensive she insisted you 'get what you pay for'. Eye cream day and night was a must, as was exfoliating the skin regularly.

After a break for delicious pastries, mints, tea, coffee – and of course water, Rochelle introduced Rebbetzin Esti Hamilton, who declared Purim was not the Jewish Halloween. She said Jewish people had a connection to G-d and in the first temple period everyone felt the



voice of G-d for 1000 years, but then it was destroyed and people felt lost. However, the Purim story took place over nine years when Jews felt disconnected with G-d but they felt salvation was there.

From previous page

phone her husband at two o'clock in the morning, Kabul time, and say, "Hold the phone near her, let me hear her breathe." This was, of course, before the days of WhatsApp. Overseas calls were not straightforward and had to be booked in advance.

Two years, and a lot of money later, Seema's husband and daughter arrived in London but the years of separation showed. Seema recalls how her daughter rushed over to hug and kiss her, then backed away and rushed back to her father, the only one with whom she now felt safe. For several days she would not ask Seema for food – or anything else – she wanted everything from her father.

"Thank God that is all in the past," says Seema. "Life has its ups and downs!" Surely that is an understatement in Seema's case.

Two years ago, Seema and her sister ventured back to Afghanistan and found . . . nothing. There were just empty spaces. Gone was the family house. Gone also was its beautiful garden which Seema had loved, filled, as it was, with beautiful flowers as well as apple and cherry trees. Just one tree remained. They felt absolutely no connection with the place. The family are now all safely in this country. Her daughter has graduated from university and is working. Her son is still completing his degree. As well as maintaining her love of gardening, Seema continues



to enjoy studying history and visiting places of historical interest.

Thank you for telling me your story, Seema. It cannot have been easy for you.

Hilary Halter

Trans-Siberian Adventure

Clark Norton seeks out Jewish life in Eastern Europe and beyond

On Friday, 17 September 2021, Russia announced they were lifting their quarantine rules for travellers arriving from the UK. Two weeks later my passport was being inspected, under magnifying glass, at St Petersburg immigration.

I'd always wanted to voyage across Europe and Asia by train; my dream was to take the H2 Bus from the corner of Spencer Drive and travel, without the help of an airplane, through Europe, Russia, and China all the way, eventually, to Singapore. However, given the Covid situation, I was not yet sure how far

along the line I could get. I was able to take the train over 6000 miles across the largest country on earth. That was incentive enough. I had very few pre-emptive notions of how long I was going to spend in Russia, or where I was going to stop along the Trans-Siberian route. I thought perhaps great cities, or areas of outstanding natural beauty would be the driving factor behind where I decided to explore but there was one other signifier of locations that was likely to lure me off the train – shuls.

I left London, on the Eurostar, the day after Simchat Torah 5782, Thursday, 30 September 2021. After stops in Brussels and Berlin I arrived in Warsaw for Shabbos. Sat in the Nozyk Synagogue in central Warsaw, it struck me that I am a descendent of the Warshawski (now Shaw) and the Nossek (now Norton) families. As I enjoyed the Kabbolos Shabbos songs I could not help but think about my family heritage. My Mother's family were from Warsaw. Had they ever davened here? What was life like for them? Would they have been glad to know I'd returned? Questions



The Red Arrow Train



St Petersburg Choral Synagogue

such as these and myriad others crossed my mind as I made my way eastwards through Europe.

Stops in Vilnius and Riga followed, both cities with a rich

Jewish history. Indeed, Napoleon referred to Vilnius as the Jerusalem of the North. I was lucky enough to be invited to join a tour with boys from Yeshivat HaKotel whilst there – learning about prominent figures in the realms of Torah scholarship and wartime resistance. In Riga, the meaty restaurant was closed – the low point of the trip so far.

The voyage proper began the next day when I entered Russia. I felt quite alone on that first Russian night. In Europe I was British. In Russia I was Western. Yet, in the St Petersburg Choral Synagogue, I was Jewish. I thought I

would take 40 minutes out my day to go to Shacharit at this glorious domed shul before the Hermitage opened that Monday morning. But, of course, I'd forgotten that it was a Thursday. Not to worry – an extra 10 minutes. Ah, it's also Rosh Chodesh. I certainly hadn't factored that in – another half an hour. One more thing, there's the Bar Mitzvah, of a boy who, until recently, had no idea that he was Jewish. That'll add at least 15 minutes. Despite the delays, those two hours at shul reassured me that I wasn't alone here. And, they throw sweets in Russia too.

My preconceived notion was that outside Israel there were really only two global epicentres of Jewish life, London and New York.

Moscow is another. Some of the toughest decisions I had to make in Russia were where I was going to daven on Shabbos and which of the fabulous restaurants I was going to enjoy. At the Jewish Centre in Marinya Roscha there were comfortably over 200 people attending the Kabbolos Shabbos. I was welcomed with open arms and even had the privilege of addressing the community the next morning at a Shabbos Farbrengen. I expressed how surprised I was



Moscow Choral Synagogue



Clark in Moscow

through my journey.

Spending 57 hours straight on a train might get you thinking that there's nothing but track. And certainly, for vast swathes of Russian countryside, this seemed to be the case. But after three nights spent in my four-man compartment on the 002 train we rolled into the fastest-growing city in Russia and the largest city in Siberia – Novosibirsk. A friend had told me about the state-of-the-art modern synagogue and community centre at the heart of the city he passed through. They had nine men on the Friday night. Given the growth of the community since then, he assured me there'd be a minyan. There wasn't even a Zimmum. Well, I was the third. The Rabbi reliably informed me that there had been an outbreak of Covid in the community during the week and everyone was isolating. I reached for my mask.

Despite the disappointment of not being able to experience the community in all its glory, I managed to get a sense of this shul – a modern marvel and example of what was possible for post-Soviet Russian Jewry – could be. Seeing photos of all the events and simchas held in Novosibirsk, and listening to the Rabbi speak with such passion, it's clear there's a bright future for the community in this maturing city.

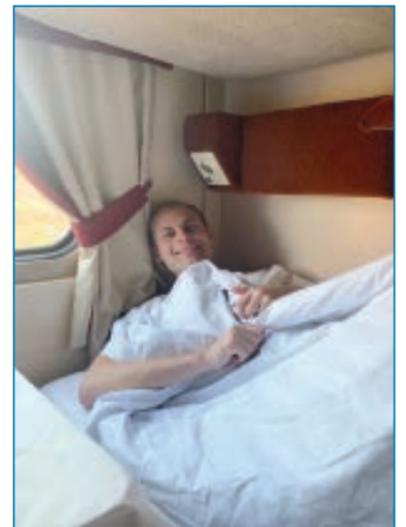
My next stop – after another 30-hour train journey was the city of Irkutsk. During 1825 Decemberist Revolt many political dissidents and contrarian intellectuals were sent to this town on the confluence of the Angara and Irkut rivers. The high proportion of educated and culturally engaged residents made for a town

at the scale of orthodox Jewish life in Russia and how special it was for me to sing *Niet Niet Nikavo* (There is nothing but G-d) among the Russians to whom those words mean so much. It was a mindset that carried me

blessed with the furnishings of any cosmopolitan city in Europe at the time. Dubbed the Paris of Siberia, the wide boulevards and cultural centres satisfied the needs of the exiled intelligentsia and it was here in Irkutsk that, thanks to an agreement between wealthy Jewish industrialist, Israel Fershter, and Jewish members of the local military battalion that the first minyan was held in what would later become one of the most vibrant Jewish communities in all of Siberia.

Standing in this shul and reading the story of the community, I was moved to tears by the extraordinarily tumultuous history of the community. Yet when I stood outside the shul looking at the magnificent blue and white façade, almost camouflaged with the clear Siberian sky, I was quite sure this was the most beautiful shul I had ever had the privilege to see.

Before Shabbos I spent three days by Lake Baikal, the deepest lake in the world, a lake the size of Belgium. I hiked 55 kilometres, alone, around part of the lake and, despite the water being only five degrees, I could not let the opportunity pass me by and so I fulfilled the mitzvah of mikveh in that lake – in late October, in Siberia. I was fed like a king in Irkutsk



. . . . and on the train

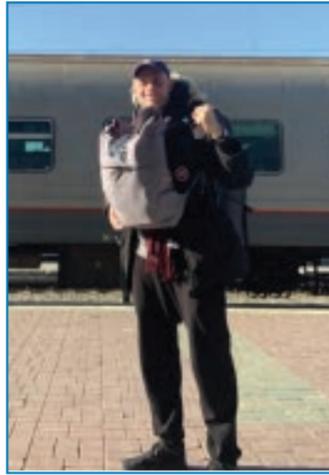
and even enjoyed a chance to play some football with the Rabbi's children on Shabbos afternoon. I will always remember that Shabbos in Irkutsk – to feel so at home in such a strange place was an immense blessing and, I have no doubt, kept me going through my voyage across Siberia.

I was now on a mission to reach Vladivostok. Back on the train once again. The landscape shifting, we were east of Baikal in the historical homelands of the Buddhist Buryat people. I spent a Shabbos alone in Ulan Ude – no shul there. If I hadn't already, I now had a heightened appreciation



Irkutsk Synagogue

Continued overleaf



My backpacks and me

of all the hospitality I'd received so far in Russia. On Sunday morning I was heading further and further east. To the south was Mongolia and not so far to the south east was China and straight in front was Russia. It was always Russia. We passed the point in the tracks where the trans-Mongolian and trans-Manchurian routes branch off, both destined for Beijing. On this leg of my journey I shared a

compartment with three lads my age. Vladimir, Petr and Kirill. All three Russian soldiers. They were some of the best friends I made on my whole trip. They wanted to practise their English. They asked about my aspirations, and I asked about theirs. We discussed football, travel and women, drank vodka and shared our food. They were getting off at the same town as me, a mere 40 miles from the Chinese border, the town of Birobidzhan.

Pulling into the station and seeing the main sign in Yiddish on the station building was a very emotional moment. The Jews had been given this town as their own. A sort of phony, 'Zionist' Stalinist project, this was marketed as a town for Jews to have their own self-determination. Really it was an effort to get Soviet Jews out the way, some 5000 miles from Moscow. Seeing the menorah in front of the station and the Yiddish on the street signs was rather exciting but I was disappointed when the shul was closed.

After 20 minutes trying to convince the babushka sat in the shul office to open up the actual shul sanctuary she eventually gave in and got up from watching her daytime TV to open the shul. We agreed on five minutes, so when I went to put on tefillin she shouted at me and demanded that I take them off and that I'd run out of time. I'm not certain, but I'm pretty sure she must have been a Jewish mother. No one else in Russia would have such a go at me for putting on tefillin while they wanted to watch TV.

I visited the shul in Khabarovsk on the banks of the mighty Amur river before the next day, arriving at the end of the line. I had made it to Vladivostok. Eight nights in total spent on the train. The shul in Vladivostok was my easternmost synagogue but, again, I found it closed. However, as I passed a man in the street wearing a baseball cap and sporting an untrimmed beard, I knew he must be the rabbi, so I pulled him aside and he too let me in. This time with more patience than my friend in Birobidzhan.

The next day I took my first internal Russian flight. Eastwards still to the Kamchatka peninsula. That Shabbos

I davened alone from my hostel balcony on the shores of the vast Pacific Ocean, not too far from the Alaska. As the sun set that Friday night it struck me that, given the time of year, I may be the first person on earth bringing in Shabbos that week. I felt a rush of responsibility to make a good first impression to the bride of Shabbos. As I sang *L'echa Dodi* at the top of my voice I was choked by the thought of all the communities around the world who would follow me singing these words, bringing in Shabbos over the next 24 hours around the globe. Of all the amazing synagogues I was blessed to pray at, this was the most powerful religious experience of my journey.

That brought me to the end of my voyage. I'd not only reached the end of the line but I'd now reached the end of the map. Any further and I'd fall off the edge of the world. I took an eight-hour flight back to Moscow for one last Shabbos. The Chief Rabbi of Russia came up to me, remembering my face from five weeks before, "You survived Siberia. You must tell us all about it."

My message to the community was primarily of thanks to those who had looked after me. But I wanted to recognise what I felt they had all been working towards. In my mind the communities of Central and Eastern Europe were backward looking, into their history. In Russia, the communities look forward into the future. I will forever be indebted to the Jewish community of Russia for all the kindness they showed to me last year. They live hard and austere lives but show the same love and warmth as any other people all over the world.

Four weeks later I was in Tulum, Mexico. I'd spent the last month exploring this country that seemed to be the opposite of Russia in every way. Up until now I had nowhere to go for Shabbos dinner. I grew homesick in Mexico. This was no coincidence. My travel chanukiah, was the only source of the light of Yiddishkeit I was able to enjoy. Until, whilst in Tulum, I spent 30 minutes walking to Shabbos dinner – in the wrong direction. I asked a local to help me and he sent me down a road seemingly into the jungle; I was about to give up when ahead, through the heavy dark air, I could hear the melodies of Shabbos and the words "*Higaleh na ufros chavivi alay, es succas shelomecha*" "Reveal yourself, my beloved, and spread over me the tabernacle of your peace". As I walked in and joined the service, I was once again filled with the peace of Shabbos and the comfort of the Jewish people.



With Lenin

Lunches with a Literary Flavour

Martin Kaye tells all

Following on from the success of our *Lockdown Literature* initiative that became a popular feature of Norrice Lea TV, and in an attempt to offer our members the opportunity to meet in a close and personal setting with authors, their writings, as well as each other, we have launched a new series entitled **Literary Lunches**. Whilst far from imitating the success of Christina Foyle's famed literary luncheons, featuring an audience of highbrow literati, I like to think that we provide fine food, good company and an opportunity to meet authors whose works touch on familiar subjects.

This certainly seems to be the case, as audience numbers bear testimony.

These events are held once a month in the Landy Gallery. A guest speaker will discuss their recent work, followed by a plethora of questions accompanied by a light and well received luncheon.

To date, we have enjoyed listening to an enthralling array of speakers. Helen Fry, author of *The Walls Have Ears* and *Spymasters* spoke to us about how the Allies eavesdropped on captured German Generals at Trent Park in Cockfosters during World War II, together with a fascinating glimpse into the secret worlds and personalities of both MI6 and MI9.

Jo Bloom discussed how her book *Ridley Road* came to fruition and the events leading to it becoming a BBC television series with TV rights sold to a worldwide audience. It arrived on UK screens at a most apposite time. Many of our audience delighted in sharing their reminiscences of Ridley Road and battling with Colin Jordan and his fascist followers.

Vivi Lachs enthralled us with her collection of tales of the cacophony of Yiddish poets and authors of East London during the years 1930-1950, including examples of East End Yiddish humour and wit, in her book *London Yiddishtown, East End Jewish Life in Yiddish Sketch and Story*.

A packed, if not overflowing, house heard Ariana Neumann speak about her personal journey to discover her family's wartime history, as encapsulated in her multi-award winning book *When Time Stopped: A Memoir of My Father's War and What Remains*.

This fascinating and captivating talk was illustrated with surviving artifacts sent to Ariana from family friends around the world.

This innovative series of lunches has, in its launch season, attracted a tremendous and enthusiastic response from



One could hear a pin drop as a capacity audience listens intently to Ariana Neumann recounting her family's wartime experiences

our members and their friends. It is proving a popular way of encouraging our members to return to events at our premises and enjoy the company of others, while hearing an array of excellent speakers highlighting a variety of literature, sometimes hitherto unknown.

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A Liverpool Childhood

Stella Sternberg looks back over a vanishing world

By the time I left my home town of Liverpool in 1979, a once thriving and vibrant Jewish community was rapidly disappearing. After the war the Jewish population numbered about 7500. Today, the community only has about 2000. Young people who moved away for work or university never returned. Shuls, butchers and bakers were closing. How different this was when I was growing up there in the 50's and 60's in a large extended family who all lived in the surrounding roads. Most Jews had by this time relocated from inner city areas and settled in Childwall, Allerton and Woolton south of the city. The community had a Jewish Lawn Tennis club, an old age home, a Jewish Golf Club and an active Board Of Guardians, now Merseyside Jewish Care. My road in Childwall had its own claim to fame. At one end lived Reverend Samuel Wolfson the Minister of the Greenbank Drive Synagogue where my parents had married in 1950 and later Geoffrey and I in 1982. At the other end was Reverend Myer Wolfson the Minister of the Childwall Synagogue and later, in the middle, Rabbi Doctor Norman Solomon.

A diverse community

I never experienced any antisemitism growing up. Was this because there was not one person in Liverpool who did not come from an ethnic background? Or is it because the 'scousers' are the most tolerant and good humoured people? The Irish lived mostly in the 'Scotty' Road area (where Cilla Black was born and raised) and depending on whether you were Catholic or Protestant, north of the city or around the Everton area. This of course dictated which football team you supported. It was not uncommon to see poor Irish women the 'Mary Ellen's' or 'Shawlies' walking around the streets of this area dressed entirely in black, swathed in a large black woollen shawl more often than not concealing a tiny baby. The largest Chinese population in Europe lived in their own Chinatown in the Brownlow Hill area.

My mother was a tireless worker for Kosher Meals on Wheels, cooking and delivering to poor Jews living in dire circumstances. Each week she would climb steep steps of large tenement buildings to deliver a Shabbas



Greenbank Drive Synagogue, established 1936, closed 2005. Geoffrey and I were married here in 1982 by Geoffrey's late first cousin, Rabbi Lionel Cofnas

meal. Very often she was the only visitor that some of these elderly Jews had in a whole week. My parents, having been brought up during the Depression years always reminded me how fortunate I was to be living in the comfort and warmth of my lovely home. I was therefore encouraged from an early age to regularly put money into the small 'blue and white' (JNF box) which my mother referred to as a 'pushke'.

There were at least five or six Synagogues each with a Minister and thriving congregations, Princes Road, Allerton, Childwall, Ullet Road and the Liberal Synagogue. On high holy days our shul was packed. No seat was available for a child in the main shul or overflow and I would squeeze in with my mother or sit on the steps. When Cantor Henry Chait (recently deceased) arrived in the early 1970's people flocked to hear his wonderful voice and theatrical performance. On Yomtov my friends and I would walk great distances to visit other shuls with no fear of traffic or predatory adults. We were perhaps 7 or 8 years old. What a thrill it was for a little girl to enter the Princes Road Synagogue, a beautiful grade one listed building built in 1874 in the Moorish style. It was quite breathtaking, and we felt as though we had entered a magical kingdom.

My mother seemed to spend her entire day in the kitchen preparing and cooking not only for her own family but a large army of her elderly aunts and uncles who I had the great privilege of knowing well. The Rosenthal,

Ostrin and Freedman families were very well known and closely connected, as very often two brothers married two sisters and cousins married cousins. My cousins and I would regularly sit around my grandmother's open fire in her large Victorian house listening to her regaling stories of her childhood when kosher shops stayed open until the early hours of the morning and the streets were full of horses. My grandmother Esther Rosenthal, was a born and bred English woman. She was well educated and often wrote to the main newspapers or phoned in to local radio stations to discuss events of the time.

Getting out and about

At the weekends we piled into my father's large Zephyr car with bench seats and no seatbelts! We would set off to one of the many lovely destinations within easy reach of Liverpool. A short car ride through the Mersey tunnel, at that time the longest underwater tunnel in the world (3 miles long) brought you onto the Wirral Peninsular, Hoylake with its beach, New Brighton to the art deco lido, Wallasey or Heswall where many Jews gathered for a Sunday afternoon tea. In school holidays we went to



The Beatles on the balcony of Liverpool Town Hall with the Jewish Lord Mayor Louis Caplan

Ainsdale Sandhills not far from Southport. The sea was always too far out and there were many jellyfish on the shore, but for a small child the sandhills were a lot of fun.

I was a little too young to immerse myself in 'Beatlemania' but wearing my knee high Beatles socks I did line up with my mother on Queens Drive, the main ringroad through the city, waving my Beatles flag when they returned to the city to make their way to the balcony of Liverpool Town Hall to be greeted by the Jewish Lord Mayor, Louis Caplan. My grandmother took me to their concert at the Liverpool Empire in 1965, a big night out for a ten year old!

Football was an extremely important topic discussed at our dinner table, my father, brother and young uncle who lived with us would talk of nothing else. My mother tried to ban the topic when things got heated, but my father would quote Bill Shankly, former famous football manager of Liverpool football Club "Football is not a matter of life and death. It is much more important than that".

Off to school

After nursery I attended Chedar at the Childwall Synagogue twice a week. This was overseen by the kindly and patient Reverend Myer Wolfson. On Sunday morning Mrs Ram encouraged young children to use the library, with its many beautifully illustrated Bible story books. Lots of Purim and Chanukah parties were held in the Childwall Synagogue hall and we returned home with a box of Hamantaschen or a shiny sixpence for Chanukah gelt and a tangerine!

My life changed dramatically when my parents removed me from the local C of E primary school when the new Jewish school of King David opened in 1964. Many non-Jewish children were also given places at this new school. I was very impressed at how they integrated so well and sang Hatikva and grace after meals perfectly! I now no longer had to walk home every day for lunch and could stay for school lunches. Many Jewish children went to secular schools dotted all around the city and for this reason the new Jewish community centre, also known as Harold House, was a magnet for Jewish children from all over Merseyside to meet up at the weekends and some evenings. Here you could take part in art classes, drama, cooking etc. I have a vague recollection of meeting Prince Phillip when he came to open the community centre in 1964. We had a brief conversation about the plasticine dinosaur I was making. He hastily moved on!

I have many happy memories of being at this school with Mr John Wiener our marvellous headmaster of the primary school, and Mr Charles Beebe, headmaster of the senior school. These days I visit Liverpool a couple of times a year to visit family members and to pay a visit to the cemetery. There are about 2 thousand Jews living in Liverpool today and they manage to keep 3 shuls going, kosher meat is brought in pre-packed from Manchester but a deli is still busy and thriving. I consider myself very privileged to have been raised in such a wonderful city and only have good memories of a very happy childhood.

A message from The President



Passover is the Jewish festival of freedom and this year's celebration will be especially poignant as families will be at liberty to celebrate their Seder without lockdown restrictions for the first time since 2019. More than 1000 members of the UK Jewish community have died from Covid-19 and we will be thinking of them this Pesach. It is my earnest hope that we will be soon able to create a proper memorial to those who died.

We also pray for the freedom and safety of those in danger in Ukraine – this senseless Russian aggression flies in the face of justice and decency. We continue to be inspired by the resolve of the Ukrainian people and we pray for peace. All who are able, please donate towards the charities collecting on behalf of the victims of this terrible conflict.

We have had a number of significant achievements this year. The Board has been campaigning long and hard for the proscription of Hamas in its entirety as a terrorist organisation and, in 2021, we were very happy that the Government legislated to ban its so-called political wing, meaning it can no longer lobby for support in this country.

Many of you will have been distressed by the BBC actions following the antisemitic attack on teenagers celebrating Chanukah on a bus in central London last November. We supplied forensic evidence which conclusively refuted BBC reports that there had been anti-Muslim abuse coming from the bus. The BBC's Executive Complaints Unit agreed with us that the BBC did not meet standards of due accuracy and impartiality. We are now working to supply evidence to a new

Ofcom investigation into BBC handling of the incident.

We have been focusing on the issue of online hate which is the new frontline against antisemitism. Thanks to Board of Deputies campaigning, the Government wrote to social media companies asking for the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism so that so that racists will no longer be able to harass Jewish users with impunity.

The work of the Board of Deputies is so wide and diverse that it is impossible to mention everything in a short message. To give a few examples, we have provided support for Chinese Uyghurs who have been cruelly persecuted in their home country. We are working in the community to facilitate the implementation of the groundbreaking Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community which considered 17 areas of Jewish communal life and made 119 recommendations. And, working with our partner organisation EcoSynagogue, we were out in force at the COP26 summit in November. In addition, we provide official inspection of religious education in Jewish schools through the Pikuach organisation. Our team monitors and protects our religious freedoms.

Whatever your interests or concerns as a Jew, the Board of Deputies is here for you.

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

Marie van der Zyl

President, Board of Deputies of British Jews



An HGSS Reunion



Michelle and Graham Hirschfield recently visited Rabbi Dov Kaplan and Freda at their lovely home in Tekoa overlooking the Judean Desert. Also with them were Suzanne and Jeffrey Zamet and Hilary and Meyer Pearlman. "It was a very enjoyable HGSS get together", says Graham.



Notes from Israel

David Lew

Obtaining driving licences was really the only area of Israel's infamous bureaucracy we have had difficulty navigating and, to be fair, Covid played its part in the delay. We completed the online forms during lockdown and heard nothing other than an electronic 'Thank you', so after six months we booked an appointment at the local Ministry of Transport office. Three trips to the MoT, three to the post office and two to the local optician later (not, by the way, for an eye test, but to have our pictures taken and I promise I am not making that up) and our shiny new licences dropped into our post box. Actually, one was delivered and the other needed to be collected on another trip to the post office.

The UK Highway Code has been updated and pedestrians now have priority of sorts at junctions. 'If people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing have priority and the traffic should give way'. Should give way? And if the traffic doesn't?

Surprisingly enough, this has been the law (must, not should) in Israel since 2015 and even more surprisingly, it is a rule that is almost universally kept, albeit rather grudgingly. It is therefore quite safe to march onto a pedestrian crossing with your headphones at full blast with eyes peeled to your smartphone.

So, as a responsible new immigrant, I checked out the Israeli version of the Highway Code and I quote to you some of the sections. (As a caveat, my Ivrit is still not up to much, so the translation may be less than perfect.)

Pedestrian crossings. Pedestrians have absolute priority and drivers must stop if a pedestrian is within four amot of the crossing. Pay attention to the derech ertz to be observed:

Drivers: Ensure that you approach the crossing at the maximum permissible speed and that braking is left as late as possible. It is an obligation to scare the pedestrian.

Pedestrians: You must continue to look at your phone or be deep in conversation whilst crossing. Pedestrians without phones in their hand are forbidden to cross. Kosher phones are allowed on weekdays. You must walk slowly. Walking very slowly is for the mehadrin*. Faking a limp is for the mehadrin min hamehadrin. (*Mehadrin – those who beautify the law.)

Indicators. There is a stalk on the steering wheel which operates the yellow flashing lights in each corner of the car. This stalk is only for use in the galut. 'Indicators' are not to be used under any circumstances in Israel – it is no-one's business to know where you are travelling.

Hazard warnings. The button with a red triangle on the dashboard operates all of the yellow flashing lights together. Switching them on when you double-park is optional. But take care: it is strictly compulsory to use the hazards when you triple-park even if you are only stopping for twenty minutes to meet your friends for coffee.

I checked out my car's manual and I found this:

"Special accessory – Israel.

Your car is fitted with a special accessory developed by the manufacturer with the assistance of the Ministry of Transport and Unit 8200. It is connected to the traffic light system and responds to every traffic light in Israel, from Metullah to Eilat. If your car is stationary at a traffic light and it is not the first car in the line, your horn will sound automatically after the lights turn green if the first car in the line has not started moving within 0.5 seconds of the lights changing. This has a tremendous advantage as you do not have to sit at the red light with your hand hovering over the horn and are free to use that hand to text, light a cigarette or buy a book of Rabbi Nachman's sayings from the Bratslaver chasid working the traffic light queue.

Talking of Rabbi Nachman, and rather more seriously, as I write the UK government seems to be stalling on the issuing of visas to Ukrainian refugees whilst Israel has announced a quota of 5000 in addition to the 20,000 Ukrainians already here. These are visas for non-Jews and are of course in addition to the commitment to all Jews as defined by the Law of Return, estimated by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research in 2016 at 200,000, of whom 56,000 were halachically Jewish. Having met and studied with Ukrainian students at ulpan, the UK is surely missing a trick. They are generally hardworking (they do ALL of their homework) and have benefitted from a good educational system.

It is a good time of the year to remind ourselves that when we left Egypt, we were accompanied by the erev rav, the 'mixed multitude'. Rashi's explanation is that they converted and since the term occurs only once, I assume that they were absorbed within our people during the next forty years. All that is needed now is for those citizens whose status lies somewhere between the Halachic and the Law of Return definitions to be fully integrated in Israel as Jews. Hopefully, it won't take another forty years.

Chag kasher vesameach





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The Party



Over 70 Youth attended Megilla and 60 enjoyed mocktail making!



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Women's Megilla Reading

After its brief sojourn in the marquee last year, the Women's Megilla Reading returned to its home in the main shul. Over fifty women gathered to hear the Megilla being read by eighteen different women, including two girls, Amelie Haffner and Mimi Kaufmann, who had recently become Bat Mitzvah.

This was the twentieth anniversary of the Women's Megilla Reading which was one of the first in the UK. It began in Aviva and Andy Kaufmann's sitting room, and migrated to the shul library about ten years ago. Having outgrown the library, it moved to the main shul and, before Covid, it would attract between 60 and 80 women every year – we hope these numbers will return.

There was excellent representation from the youth of the community. Eight out of the eighteen readers were not even born when the HGSS Women's Megilla Reading was founded.

The leiners (in order of appearance) were: Aviva Kaufmann, Deborah Galaun, Emma Greenberg, Daisy Rosen, Shosh Greenwood, Sara Franks, Leora Greenberg, Nirit Schemtob, Lior Schemtob, Juliet Taub, Amelie Haffner, Francine Barsam, Andrea Grossman, Mischa Haffner, Rosie Kaufmann, Liora Franks, Mimi Kaufmann, Esther Livingstone.

Aviva Goldschmidt Kaufmann



Said first timer Annie Fine "What an inspiration it was to hear so many women leining on Wednesday evening – such dedication, passion and beautiful voices. It was my first time and I will definitely put a date in the diary to return."



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Pandemics Past

As we learn to live with Covid, Hilary looks at some pandemics in years gone by

1346-1353 The Black Death

An outbreak of the bubonic plague started in Eurasia and parts of Africa and claimed the lives of an estimated 75,000,000 – 200,000,000 people worldwide.

The official church policy at the time was to protect Jews because Jesus was Jewish. In practice, the Jews were the target of much Christian hate and this was exacerbated when it was found that the Jews were less affected by the outbreak than the general population. Among the explanations for this was that Jews were isolated in ghettos and they were inclined to wash more often, taking a bath before Shabbat and washing their hands after visiting the bathroom. There are, however, stories of Jews being coerced, through torture, into admitting that they had poisoned wells.

The consequences of this catastrophic outbreak included a cessation of wars. There was a sudden slump in trade although only of short duration. A more lasting and serious consequence was a drastic reduction of the amount of land under cultivation, due to the deaths of so many labourers which proved to be the ruin of many landowners. The shortage of labour compelled them to substitute wages or money rents in place of labour services in an effort to keep their tenants. There was also a general rise in wages for artisans and peasants.

1665-66 The Great Plague of London

This was the last major episode of bubonic plague to occur in England and it killed an estimated 100,000 people, roughly a quarter of London's population. Of course, at that time, there was no sanitation and open drains flowed along the centre of winding streets. The cobbles were slippery with animal dung, rubbish and the slops thrown out of the windows. It was muddy and buzzing with flies in summer and awash with sewage in winter. The City Corporation employed 'rakers' to remove the worst of the filth which was transported to mounds outside the walls where it accumulated and continued to decompose. The stench was overwhelming and people walked around with handkerchiefs or nosebags pressed against their nostrils.

Diarist Samuel Pepys recorded:

Wed 7 June

This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and "Lord have mercy upon us" writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw.

13 July

There come to dinner, they haveing dined, but my Lady caused something to be brought for me, and I dined well and mighty merry Above 700 died of the plague this week.

30 July

Will was with me to-day, and is very well again. It was a sad noise to hear our bell to toll and ring so often to-day, either for deaths or burials; I think five or six times.

Sunday, 3 September

(Lord's day). Up; and put on my coloured silk suit very fine, and my new periwig, bought a good while since, but durst not wear, because the plague was in Westminster when I bought it; and it is a wonder what will be the fashion after the plague is done, as to periwigs, for nobody will dare to buy any haire, for fear of the infection, that it had been cut off of the heads of people dead of the plague.

An inspiring story to come out of this episode is what happened in the village of Eyam in Derbyshire. A local tailor received a flea-infested bundle of cloth from London. His assistant, noticing that it was damp, opened it. Within a week he was dead and the infection began to spread round the village. The villagers turned to their rector who introduced a number of precautions, including closing the church and holding services out-of-doors. Villagers were told to bury their own dead and contact with surrounding villages ceased. Merchants from these villages sent supplies which they would leave on marked rocks; the villagers then made holes there which they would fill with vinegar to disinfect the money they left as payment. Only 83 of the 350 villagers of Eyam survived, but they had prevented the spread of the virus to their neighbours. The population of Eyam is now approximately 900.

1918-1919 The Spanish Flu Pandemic

It is believed that this started at a military base in Kansas. Those based there went to serve on the Western Front and it spread from there. It is estimated that 500,000,000 people, about a third of the world's population, was infected and 50,000,000 people died.

A glance through the satirical magazine **Punch** does not reveal much, it is far more concerned with the aftermath of the war. However, there were a few comments, for example:

March 1920 *"The influenza microbe," announces a medical journal, "has made its appearance in many parts of the country and is slowly but surely making its way towards London." With any other government than ours a simple suggestion that the sign-posts en route should be reversed would have been at once adopted."*



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CREDO
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Reader's Choice

Adam Bass reviews three books to
augment the family collection

Game On

by Marley Byng

£12

Fun easily accessible party games,
great fun ★★★★★



If your house is like mine, a bulging downstairs cupboard overflows with Risk, Monopoly, Rummikub, Connect 4 (missing most of its pieces) and a plethora of boards, dice, characters and cards gathering dust at the back. Jews have time to kill but the vacuous months of lockdown (which created a sales boom for family board games and puzzles) have been replaced by a faster pace and may lead to children rolling their eyes when you suggest a 'game.'

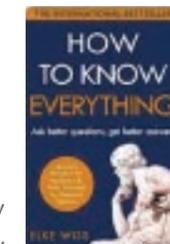
To the rescue comes *Game On*, a neat little book full of fun, easily playable party games that require little more than a willing group of people. Most are whimsical and fun rather than competitive and tend to peter out rather than lead to rage quits. Take *Mr Freeze* for example, a perfect dinner party ice-breaker. It simply requires the host to place a playing card under each guest's plate. Whoever has the Ace of Diamonds is Mr Freeze and when they surreptitiously stop moving, the rest of the table has to follow suit until, usually, two people are left deep in conversation and the rest of the guests are sitting frozen repressing laughter. With hundreds of similarly fun, silly, and easy to learn games, this little gem of a book will keep your family entertained. As a bonus, my elder children tell me many of these are popular drinking games, adding extra kudos for the teen generation.

How to Know Everything

by Elke Wiss

£9.99

A game changer for
better conversations ★★★★★



What is the purpose of a book review column? Is it acceptable to review any book, even one you think is immoral? *How to Know Everything* by Elke Wiss may not know the answers but it will help formulate better questions. Wiss's concise thesis uses Socrates as a guide to encourage you to ask more questions. In fact many pages are devoted to "What is a question?" Pages that help you realise that many of your questions never actually invited an answer. For example, who really wants to know "where did you go on holiday

this year?" What they really want to do is tell you where they went. Similarly, how many Q&A sessions feature an audience member sharing their own thoughts rather than actually asking a Q. Flawed approaches to questioning are challenged here alongside a helpful guide as to how to be genuinely curious and the purpose of the Socratic dialogue. To back up her arguments, Wiss defines a whole array of non-questions disguised as questions, including my favourite category, 'loser' questions, such as "Why didn't you put the bins out?" or "How hard is it to empty the dishwasher?" which, with the simple addition of the words "you loser", reveal these to be more put downs than questions. For anyone looking to improve their conversational technique, this book will open a door to a new world of debate.



Israel, a simple guide to the most misunderstood country on Earth

by Noa Tishby

£16.99

A useful primer for anyone taking on
keyboard warriors ★★★★★

If the answer to most disputes, according to Wiss, is to ask questions with genuine curiosity in an attempt to fully draw out the adversary's point of view, then Noa Tishby's book probably fails in that endeavour. However, as

a primer for anyone who wants to rebut accusations of apartheid or displacement, it works well. So long as the reader makes copious notes, the numerous counter arguments (such as how the UNRWA's definition of a refugee has multiplied the number of displaced Palestinians from 700,000 to 5.6m) should prove to be a handy summary. In an era where Israel bashing is rife, arming your children with this book before they face Fresher's week is a smart move. Written using accessible language and short, easy-to-read paragraphs, by a celebrity actress, its style will appeal to those with a shorter attention span and gives punchy facts to use in case of a confrontation with either a real or a keyboard warrior. Does it ask questions though? Is it genuinely curious about the other sides point of view? I think the answer to these questions is probably no and no. There are deeper books on the source of the conflict, for example Conor Cruise O'Brien's *The Siege* which gives a neutral's take on the conflict. No doubt I'll receive a number of recommendations after this column and I look forward to receiving them.

Happy reading.



Meet Adele, Malka, Mushka and Noa, all recent graduates of Afikei Ohr in Israel. Before arriving at this girls-only youth village, each had experienced family trauma and neglect, leading to low self-esteem, no life direction and disruptive behaviour in and out of school.

Migdal Ohr relies on generous donors like yourself to fund our life-changing programmes to empower these girls to thrive, thereby shaping a bright and positive future for them.

Learn more about their stories at migdalohr.org.uk/4daughters

As Israel's largest welfare non-profit educational network, we provide critical services and support to nearly 12,000 deprived, orphaned and at-risk children.

Please help us continue providing for the safety and wellbeing of our precious Migdal Ohr children and transforming the lives of the most vulnerable among us, promoting our mutual aspiration for creating a better world. Donate at migdalohr.org.uk/donate or send a cheque/charity voucher (Payable to British Friends of Migdal Ohr) to our address below.

If you are travelling to Israel, come to meet the Children of Migdal Ohr and see our work first-hand.



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f @
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An exciting term for our Youth!



It began with our epic Laser tag event, where we had the battle zone with music and lights set up on HGSS grounds.

We had amazing **BA** programmes every Shabbat afternoon, including those favourite wintery weeks when we could end off with havdala and spirited singing.



Mazal tov! It's a boy!

Our youth directors, Netanel and Tzivya welcome baby Elisha to the HGSS youth team:)

Shabbat Morning Services and kiddushim have been pumping! Cholent and kugel, ice cream, Sushi, shnitzel, cereal – what is next??



Our Years 10-13 **Lighthouse** programme continued in high spirit; we had an IDF soldier come to speak, a mental health workshop, first aid course and a session on Jewish leadership.

The **Holocaust Memorial Day Dinner** was an inspiration to all and gave us the opportunity to tap into our roots and remember those who showed strength and held on to their Heritage.



Netanel, Tzivya and Elisha at the Purim Mocktail Making

We are now done for the year and, as always, we can't wait for our next years group at **HGSS Youth**. We look forward to you all joining in the fun!
Netanel, Tzivya and Elisha

Bar Mitzvah Preparations

Dana Brass reports

Since September, the pre-Bar Mitzvah boys and their fathers/parents have been engaged in a programme of learning and understanding what it means to become Bar Mitzvah.

After a lovely welcome evening hosted by Chazan Avromi and Rochelle in their succah, boys and their fathers have been meeting and learning together once a month. The aim of these sessions is to increase their connection with their Judaism, with HGSS, with the wider community and with each other.

With Avromi leading the sessions, we have also hosted a range of other educators including Rabbi Cobi Ebrahimoff. There was a Chanukah session with Rabbi Bentzi Sudak, a live tour of the Kotel and Old City and session on Israel with Stand With Us and a deeper look at Tefillin. Our next session will have the boys matza baking! We will then look at Chesed and how Bar Mitzvah can be an opportunity to get involved with a personally meaningful project.

Our youth leaders, Tzivya and Netanel, also kindly hosted the boys in their flat after Kabbalat Shabbat for



a ruach-filled Friday night dinner which was hugely enjoyed by everyone – it was certainly no mean feat squeezing all those boys into their flat!

Alongside sessions for the boys, we also ran a parenting course with Rabbi Herman from Seed, which was particularly appreciated, since many families were still adapting to life post-lockdown and how to navigate the pressures of everyday life again.

We look forward to the last few months of our programme, with a finale Shabbat dinner to celebrate the boys' graduation.

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News from Kerem

The Spring Term at Kerem has, as always, been very busy.

We got off to a great start with Year 6 achieving excellent results in the Eleven-Plus entrance exams to Secondary School. From the class of 22 children, nine scholarships were offered. These were for a range of subjects including academic, creative writing, sports and music. Scholarship offers came from a variety of top schools including Aldenham, Channing, Haberdashers' School for Girls and Boys, Immanuel College, South Hampstead and UCS.

Headteacher, Ms Naomi Simon, said, "We are exceptionally proud of the incredible results achieved by our wonderful Year 6 pupils. As a non-selective, non-prep school, this was no mean feat, but came about thanks to the hard work, determination and positive attitudes of our pupils and teachers alike".

We had the honour and privilege of a visit from Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis who came to sing with the children as part of the preparation for Shabbat UK 2022.

This term there have been outings to The London Transport Museum, the Celtic Harmony Camp, The Florence Nightingale Museum, London Zoo and Bletchley Park. At school, there were visits from an Israeli travelling theatre who brought an immersive experience of Hebrew language to school. In addition to this, children's author Gareth P Jones visited the school to celebrate Book Week.

Food has been a feature this term with a Victorian Great Bake Off competition as part of Year 5's project into studying the Victorians. The Kerem PTA organised a virtual challah bake, hosted by the Jewish Chronicle's Victoria Prever. It is great that events are still happening, albeit not yet in person.

Kerem entered three teams



A visit from The Chief Rabbi

amongst a total of 107 into the General Knowledge 'Quiz Club' regional heat. Teams were made up of children from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and they competed against children from a range of schools including local prep schools. We are very happy to report that not only did all three teams qualify for the national semi-final but we ranked first, second and third! We are so proud of all of the children who were great ambassadors for the school.

Calling all Kerem Alumni!

To launch our Diamond Anniversary, we are looking to create a Kerem Chronicle – "75 Stories for 75 Years". As we look to celebrate Kerem's 75th anniversary during the academic year 2023/24, we are asking Kerem Alumni to share your inspirational Kerem stories with

us – your journey, your memories, photographs, lifelong friendships, etc – all the memories that you hold dear from your time at the school.

We will be using these stories for a weekly "Throwback Thursday" posting on social media, and eventually to create a book, leading up to the big event in our 75th year. Our hope is to use events and stories from the past 75 years to help motivate and inspire future generations of Kerem, for the next 75 years.

Please do share this message with all past pupils and parents with whom you are in contact. The further afield it travels, the more varied and interesting the stories that we will receive. Please send them c/o depstein@keremschool.co.uk – we look forward to receiving your memories!



Kerem at Purim

All the staff and families of Kerem wish the HGSS community a Chag Pesach Sameach.

From The Aleph Centre



A challenge was set to the Aleph Centre pupils before the holidays - each child was given a Hebrew Reading Board with prizes available for those who completed rows and special prizes for those who completed the whole board. Well done to Zevulen (Year 1), Adi (Year 1), Sophia (Year 3), Theo (Year 4), Evie (Year 4) and Jacob (Year 4) who all completed their entire boards.



The Tuck Shop has proved very popular and the Year 6 pupils have been doing a fantastic job selling and helping the younger children. We have also had the table tennis tables out at break time which has been a lot of fun!



Fun and creativity at Tu b'Shvat



Reception cut out their own trees



Year 1 planted strawberries



Year 2 made fruit faces

Year 3 had a fruit feast



Are You Unemployed?

Are you unemployed, or know someone who is? Then you may be interested to know Resource helps members of the Jewish community back into the workplace.

Resource offers free one-to-one practical advice and support combined with a range of workshops to improve the job search process.

Take Simon, for example, who at 38 was made redundant after years in retail. Following months of fruitless job searching, his morale was at rock bottom and he was deeply worried about being able to continue supporting his wife and children.

When a friend told him how Resource had helped him through a period of redundancy, Simon made an appointment to see a Resource advisor, who reviewed his job search strategy and agreed a plan of action with him. He attended several Resource workshops, learning how to make his CV more effective, improve his interview technique, upgrade his IT skills and make the most of networking.

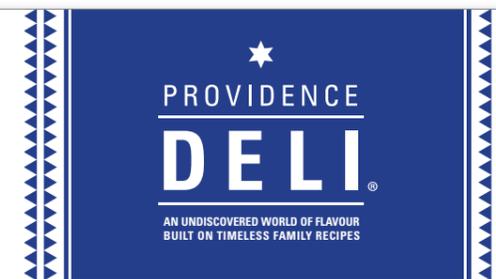
When he was invited to attend an interview his advisor arranged a mock interview with one of Resource's trained interviewers, which made the subsequent interview far less daunting. A job offer quickly followed, which he was delighted to accept.

Resource provides free support for those looking to get into the workplace, regardless of age, experience or educational qualifications. To make an appointment or for more information call 020 8346 4000 or visit www.resource-centre.org.

Help Needed

We are looking for volunteers for our newly-opened care home, **Hammerson House** in Bishops Avenue, to help on Friday evening and Shabbat morning to make Kiddush with the residents and also assist the Religious Co-ordinator with services.

Please contact Elie Levy:
elivy@nightingalehammerson.org



IF YOU'RE DIPPING, MAKE SURE YOU PICK THE BEST DIPS

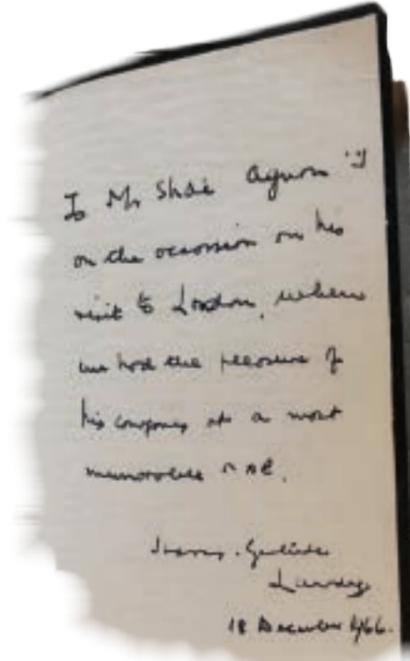
PROVIDENCE DELI WISHES ALL THE MEMBERS OF HGSS A HAPPY PASSOVER

Memories

A grandson of mine recently interviewed the curator of Agnon House, the home of the author S Y Agnon, the only Israeli author ever to win the Nobel Prize for literature. The interview was for The Koren Podcast. He showed us an early edition of the Koren *Tanach* that was presented to Agnon in December 1966. He had stopped off in London on his way back to Israel after receiving his Nobel Prize – his only visit to London. The inscription reads:

"To Mr Shai Agnon on the occasion of his visit to London when we had the pleasure of his company on a most memorable Shabbat. Henry and Gertrude Landy, 18 December 1966"

Of course, we remember the Landys when we are in the Landy Gallery. They were members for many years. Harry served as Financial Representative from 1990 to 2002 and Gertie was very active in Emunah.



An historic moment

This appeared in the Pesach edition of *The Norrice Leader* in 2012



An historic moment is caught on camera as smart new gates replace the old, green ones.

Members Remembered

Sybil Frankfurt

Sybil Frankfurt, who has died at the age of 102, was born in the East End of London. She was the youngest of four children, with three older brothers. Her parents had emigrated from Galicia at the end of the 19th century but, sadly, her father passed away when she was just seven years old. Early in the war, she, her mother and her youngest brother were bombed out of their home and came to live in the Suburb where another of her brothers had already settled.



She married Stanley, whom she had known since her schooldays, in June 1942 whilst he was on leave from the army. They set up home in the Suburb and joined Norrice Lea. Both were committed communal workers and Sybil supported Stanley during the many years that he served as warden – everything they did was carried out quietly and with modesty.

Both were firm believers in Jewish education and Sybil gave Stanley unstinting support when, from 1948

onwards, he set about establishing the Kerem Schools, despite a great deal of opposition from some quarters of the community. Their children, Barbara and Howard, were among the founder pupils at Kerem House and the family representation has continued over subsequent generations as both grandchildren and great-grandchildren attended Kerem School. The schools have gone from strength to strength and, until fairly recently, Sybil was a regular guest of honour at their annual prize-giving days when she distributed prizes to the children.

A prolific and valued community worker in her own right, Sybil held many positions in organisations, such as the HGS Group within British Emunah and Jewish Care, where she volunteered at the Sobell Centre in Golders Green until well into her 80s.

Her memory was phenomenal, and members of her family, and friends would come to her for information when, for example, they were researching their own family histories. She was on the ball right to the end. She passed away, peacefully, in her flat in February, bringing to a close a golden era for both Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue and the Kerem Schools.

It was with great shock and sadness that the community heard of the sudden passing of a much loved member, Lady Lira Winston.

Lira and her husband, Lord Robert Winston, were married at HGSS in 1973 and came to live in the Suburb in 1979. Her father's family, the Feigenbaums, early members of the shul, served on the Board of Management and were involved in the Shul in numerous other ways. Her grandparents even moved from Chalton Drive to 10 Norrice Lea, when her grandfather was no longer able to walk that distance, in order to be in shul regularly. Both Lira and Robert's sons, Joel and Ben, celebrated their Bar Mitzvahs at HGSS and, with their daughter Tanya, were involved in Bnei Akiva and the youth service.

Lira studied History at LSE, followed by a Masters in the same subject at Sussex University. Aged 22, she landed her first job: "I became

assistant to Terence Prittie, who formed the pro-Israel lobby Britain and Israel. He was an incredible man, an ex-German prisoner of war, whose life was committed to working for the Jewish people." After a fulfilling time on this project, Lira moved on to the BBC, conducting research on historical publications and programme notes, and then worked for a couple of different publishing companies, all in the area of historical research. Later she worked for the Jewish Leadership Council, serving on the committee which produced a report on the future of Jewish schools in this country. She then became Project Manager of the Schools Strategic Implementation group which aimed to put the findings of the report into action.

From 2000, she ran the UJIA's

Lady Lira Winston

As shown Fellowships which look at leadership training for senior Jewish professionals (headteachers and others) involved in British Jewish Education. She was also on the council for the London School of Jewish Studies. From 2012, she served as Assistant Director of PaJeS (Partnerships for Jewish Schools). Then, in February 2020, she received a special award for her work from then Emeritus Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks who spoke about her enormous contribution to the great success in the growth of Jewish education over recent years.

Our condolences to Lord Winston, to Tanya, Joel and Ben and to her sisters, Naomi and Ruthie, and all the family. She is sorely missed by us all.





PINZAUER

ARCHITECTURE | INTERIORS

Simchas

Wedding Anniversaries

Mazal tov to



Fiona & Charles Tannenbaum on their Golden Wedding Anniversary

Fiona writes: Charles and I were married on 4 January 1972 at the Oxford Synagogue in Johannesburg, South Africa. We have lived in the Suburb since 1981 and joined HGSS in 1992. Our three children and their families are all members of HGSS.



Dawn & Howard Kaffel on their Ruby Wedding Anniversary

Howard writes: We were married in February 1982 at the Royal Lancaster hotel, officiated by the late Chief Rabbi Lord Jacobovits and Rabbi Dr Harry Rabinowicz from Willesden and Brondesbury Synagogue. Dawn's late grandmother Fay Schneider ran the kosher catering at the Royal Lancaster.

Initially we lived in Highgate and joined Highgate Synagogue, after a few years we moved our membership to Norrice Lea, where we have been members for around 36 years.

Our daughter Zoe and son-in-law Archie with our grandchildren Emily and Joe are an integral part of the HGSS community.



Sasha & Tim Bolot who have celebrated their Silver Wedding Anniversary

Wedding

Mazal tov to

Stephanie & Graham Nagus on the marriage of Saul to Lizzie Green, daughter of Evelyn & David Green. Also to grandmother Valerie Halpern

Making a simcha?

Please tell us about it:
hilaryhalter34@gmail.com

Congratulations to Rabbi Dr Daniel Friedman on earning his PhD in International Relations

Special Birthdays

Greetings to



Joseph Winton, father of Daniella Ezra and grandfather of Gideon, Natalie and Benji Ezra, on his 103rd birthday

Walter Felman on his 90th birthday

David Spitz on his 80th birthday and John Martin on his 80th birthday

The Dubido Bat Mitzvah by Madeline Cohen

Before Pesach six years ago, my daughter Sara brought some cast-off clothes to a Gemach (charitable organisation) in a deprived area in Israel. Her six-year-old daughter, Maya, came along for the ride. Maya glanced at the area and said: "These kids don't have any toys. I'm going to make something." She fashioned some items out of popsicle sticks and they went back and handed them out. But those weren't "real" toys.



Teddy in Hebrew and teddies – as well as unicorns, dragons and other stuffed animals – is what they "do" <https://dubido.co.il> They

then distribute them through an organisation called Healing Teddies <https://healingteddies.org.il>

Maya invited all her classmates, members of her Bnei Akiva shevet and our immediate family. All wore Covid masks.



Of sixty invited, fifty-eight turned up. Each received a box containing two toys (one to keep, one to give) and stuffing. There was an instructor to explain what to do. Each toy has a heart and a birth certificate as well as a bit of notepaper for a note to send a good wish.

Simchas

Just arrived

Mazal tov to



Gerard & Rosemary Cohen on the birth of a granddaughter, Sofia, a daughter for Miles & Melissa Cohen



Shelley Lubert on the birth of a grandson, Natan, to Hannah & Beto Shiver

Harriet & Jamie Cohen on the birth of a son, Zac, a brother for Max. Also to grandparents, Irit & Ashley Cohen, Louise & Stephen Ingram and great grandmother Ruby Cohen



Laura & Stuart Marchant on the birth of a granddaughter, Georgina (Maya), a daughter for Natalie & James Lewis. Mazal tov to great grandparents Richard Marchant and



Jennifer Finegold

Susan Monty on the birth of her first grandchild, a daughter to Abby & Adam Monty

Betty Pruwer & Anthony Gershuny on the birth of a grandson Yehudah Yair to Tami & David Pruwer



Lauren & Dean Ramey on the birth of a daughter. Also to grandparents Michael & Robyn Stein and Caron Ramey, and great grandparents David & Toni Spitz

Stuart & Yasmin Saunders on the birth of a granddaughter, Amalya Lielle, a daughter for Olivia & Nir Darwish and a sister for Rafaeli

Jennye & Jonathan Seres on the birth of a granddaughter, a daughter for Adam & Philippa Seres



Naomi & Bernard Taub on the birth of their first great grandchild, a son, Or Zion, for Maayan & Shachar Amrusi in Petach Tikva

Jonathan Waxman & Sam Leek on the birth of a granddaughter, a daughter for Rachelle & Binnie Sack

Louise and Daniel Coleman on the birth of a granddaughter, Hallie, a daughter for Georgia & Edward Harrison

Sophie & James Duboff, on the birth of a daughter, Olivia Rose. Also to grandparents Susan & Peter Duboff and Clive & Helene Kahn



Nigel Fisch and Debbie Kagan on the birth of a grandson, Noam Ariel, a son for Nataly & Amit Hirsh



Reina & Andrew Freedman on the birth of their son, Alex. Also to grandparents Rhona & Philip Freedman and Sara Benoliel

Judy & Julian Lewis on the birth of a grandson, Judah Charlie, a son for Emma & Nick Swerner



and on the birth of a granddaughter, Clara Ray Lewis Keller, to Aron & Tizzy. Also to grandparents, Ruth & Henry Keller

Bar Mitzvah

Mazal tov to

Zack, son of Annette & Simon Dalah, grandson of Joyce & David Gabbay and Sally Dalah

James, son of Annabelle & Bruce Josyfon, grandson of Yvonne Eichel and Sandra & Brian Josyfon

Zac, son of Julia & Saul Sender, grandson of Wendy Fishman, Marlene and Malcolm Sender



Alex, son of Annette & Danny Tricot, grandson of Velda & Michael Rosmarin and Gracy Dallal

Mikey, son of Emily & Dany Yamen, grandson of Kamilia & Farook Yamen and Fally & Eddie Sharabani

A Double Celebration

Mazal tov to Louise & Garry Crystal and family who have celebrated the Bar Mitzvah of Harry and the Bat Mitzvah of Chloe.

The greetings on these pages go up to and including Shabbat, 20 March.

Please send your announcements and photographs for our Rosh Hashanah edition to Hilary Halter hilaryhalter34@gmail.com 8365 2187 / 07914 810 222

Simchas

Bat Mitzvah

Mazal tov to

Annaelle, daughter of Vivian & Armand Benslous, granddaughter of Sarah Galas and Carmen Benslous

Jenna, daughter of Natalie & Alan Cesman, granddaughter of Beverley & Sylvain Mouw and Carol & Wolf Cesman

Joost and Madeline Cohen on the Bat Mitzvah of their granddaughter Maya, daughter of Sara and Micah Levy



Lucy, daughter of Jane & Eric Elbaz, granddaughter of Mimi Elbaz, and Susan & Israel Weinstock



Sophia, daughter of Natalie & Robert Gold, granddaughter of Lynne & Gueora Mellman and Janet Gold



Sadie, daughter of Margi & Steven Kark, granddaughter of Polly Davies

Emily, daughter of Juliette & Jeffrey Tannenbaum, granddaughter of Fiona & Charles Tannenbaum and Marion & Barry Pincus

Dalia, daughter of Claire & Daniel Zimmerman, granddaughter of Anne & Clive Orman and Kathy & Harvey Zimmerman



Engagements

Mazal tov to

Danielle & Max Ashton on the engagement of their son, James to Nicole, daughter of Michelle & Stephen Grossman



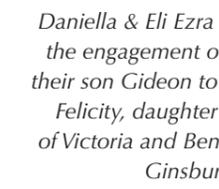
Suzanne & Keith Barnett on the engagement of their daughter Abigail, to Jake Yudelowitz. Also to grandparents Rabbi Jeffrey & Gloria Cohen and Susie Barnett



Amanda & Rod Chanes on the engagement of their daughter Jordanne to Jason Shaw, son of Susan & Clive Warner



Rosemary & Gerard Cohen on the engagement of their son, Jolyon Cohen, to Jessica, daughter of Maurice and Janet Lawson



Daniella & Eli Ezra on the engagement of their son Gideon to Felicity, daughter of Victoria and Ben Ginsburg



Debbie & Ian Fenton on the engagement of their son, Alexander, to Rebecca Ross. Mazal Tov also to grandfather David Morein and great grandmother, Renee Bourne

Lisa & Jeff Kagan on the engagement of their son, Daniel to Alexandra Miller



Shelley Lubert on the engagement of her daughter Georgia to Ryan Luntz, son of Helen Luntz and Colin Luntz

Fay & Nigel Miller on the engagement of their daughter Lillie to Aviad Edell, grandson of Jack Lopian



Marion Silverblatt on the engagement of her granddaughter Rebecca Silverblatt to Gabriel Nussbaum



Patricia Soto, remembering David ז"ל, on the engagement of her daughter Davinia to Naor, son of Mali & Yitzack Banian



Naomi & Bernard Taub on the engagement of their granddaughter Talia Herman to Eli Maman



Lilias & Anthony Weisz on the engagement of Natalie to Sol Tricot, son of Edna & Nissim Tricot



Michele & David Yamin-Joseph on the engagement of their son Rafi to Alana Saunders, daughter of Sally & Scott Saunders. Also to grandparents Fouad Yamin-Joseph and Rose & Basil Saunders



Shiva Visiting

Some reflections by
Rabbi Dr Jeffrey M Cohen

The mourners sit,
Fidgeting,
On the low, hard, stool,
Receiving visitors –
An old-established rule –
Acquaintances, friends,
Children trying hard
To tone down
Their boisterousness
So they wouldn't get barred.

“Another drink of tea,
My dear?”
“Oh, that'd be very nice,
And another piece of shtrudel
Please –
It's my only vice!”

They come and go,
Throughout the day:
Some to chat,
And some to pray,
Some to say
How much they care,

Some sit tongue-tied,
Self-aware.
Some embrace
And plant a kiss,
Some talk too much
And reminisce.
Some soothe in silence,
By just being there,
Their eyes betraying
How much they care.

Some need to know
Each detail:
The 'how?'
The 'when?'
The 'where?'
And whether the departed
Had time
To prepare!

Others change the subject—
“Are you still playing golf?
Do you remember 'The Hillcrest'
Where I defeated Rolph?”

A few recount
Their holidays
To save the day,
Filling in the silences
In that convenient way.

A palpable
Change of mood
Is sensed around the room.
An influx of
Kippa'd men
Shuffling to make room
For fellows arriving
In time for eight,
Knowing it's not protocol
To attend the service late.

The rabbi has, by now, arrived;
The atmosphere has changed.
The candles are readied
And the chairs re-arranged.

A hush descends on the room
With the evening prayer,
intoned,
The departed memorialised,
And the loss bemoaned.

Like one whose mother
Comforts him,
I shall comfort you.
For those whose link
To shul is weak,
Shivah provides
The glue.

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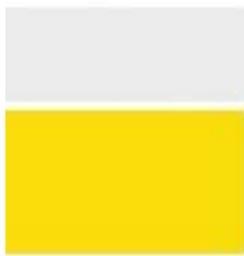
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