

NORTHAMPTON HEBREW CONGREGATION

N H C

N E W S

PESACH 5772



2012

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The period between Purim and Pesach, only a month long, is usually pleasant. Although, as I write this, it's not yet officially spring, some daffodils and other early varieties of spring flowers are already out and the grass is starting to grow. The long dark winter nights are drawing out and for those of us still working, it's a joy not to have to come home in the dark.

And then, before we know it, Pesach is upon us. This year, the first night of Pesach falls on Friday, and this leads to a change in the format of our Friday evening service. We do not repeat the Amidah during Maariv on weekdays. This is because of a Talmudic ruling that Maariv is considered an optional service. There were no offerings in the temple at night, and the lack of a repetition serves as a reminder of this.

Shabbat evening, though, is different as although we do not repeat the Amidah as such, we recite the **Magen Avot** prayer immediately after the Reader repeats the first paragraph of Kiddush. This prayer has only one paragraph but is a synopsis of the first seven blessings of the Amidah. It was introduced in Talmudic times because most synagogues were outside town limits and it was considered dangerous for Jews to walk home alone after dark. Observant Jews would not leave the synagogue until after they had completed their own reading of the Amidah and late comers would often leave the synagogue after most other people had left.

Because of this, the Sages introduced the **Magen Avot** prayer so that everyone would stay in Shul a little longer and people would leave together. The **Magen Avot** prayer is now such an important part of our liturgy that, with one exception, it is also said on all festivals commencing on a Friday evening, even on Kol Nidre. The exception is when the first night of Pesach falls on a Friday as it does this year. We do not recite **Magen Avot** because Pesach evening is known as **Leil Shimurim** or the night of watching, when Jews have special protection from God. This originates from the book of Exodus (12.42)

"It was a night of watching unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is a night of watching unto the Lord for all the children of Israel throughout their generations."

There is, however, an interesting irony that although the Talmud notes that on the night of Pesach the Jews are under greater protection, during the Middle Ages in Christian Europe, Jews actually had to be more vigilant, for the Christians would accuse them with the blood libel specifically on Pesach night. This was particularly so when the first night of Pesach corresponded with Good Friday, which, of course, it does this year.

The word **Shimurim** has its origins from the word **Shomer** meaning "to guard". The word is used in many different ways. In its literal sense it can be used to describe someone who guards premises such as a museum. The word is also used to describe

someone who supervises the preparation of kosher food or the kitchens at weddings and similar events to ensure that kashrut is preserved. Someone who strictly observes the laws of Shabbat is known as **Shomer Shabbat**, or one who guards the Shabbat.

The word has been extended to include an organisation called the **Shomrim** which was set up in Chassidic areas of New York in the late 1970s to protect Jewish interests and property. They carry out regular patrols both on foot and in cars fitted with radios and sirens. They don't carry weapons and have no power to make arrests but they will often detain suspects until the police arrive.

In 2005, after a spate of crimes against Jews in Stamford Hill, a group of volunteers got together and set up the a local branch of **Shomrim**. A similar group was set up in Golders Green and Hendon in 2008, again following a spate of attacks and robberies against Jews. These attacks had increased following incidents in the Middle East. They describe themselves as a mobile neighbourhood watch. While the police were initially hostile to the idea of "vigilantes" patrolling the streets of London, the Shomrim now work closely with the emergency services. During the 2011 riots, the Shomrim played a vital role in protecting Jewish property when the police had lost control of the situation.



Shomer is also the root of the word **Shomronim** which is the Hebrew for the Samaritans. No, not the group you are thinking of, but the original Samaritans who are a remnant of the ancient kingdom of Israel. They only accept the Torah and keep its commandments strictly and believe that Moses was the last prophet. They acknowledge the later "prophets" as leaders of the community but nothing more. The word **Shomronim** is used as to describe the Samaritans as the keepers of the faith.

The Samaritans do not accept Jerusalem as the religious centre of Judaism and were opposed to the rebuilding of the Temple. They consider Mount Gerizim, which overlooks Nablus, to the original Holy Place of Israel from the time that Joshua conquered Israel. They keep the commands of the Torah to the letter, especially the laws of Shabbat. They keep the same calendar as Jews and also the same major festivals but whereas Judaism will vary the calendar to ensure, for example, that Yom Kippur can never fall on a Friday or a Sunday, the Samaritans do not.

I wish you all a happy and healthy Pesach.

John Josephs – March 2012

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office of the
CHIEF RABBI

CHIEF RABBI'S PESACH MESSAGE 5772

The story of Pesach, of the Exodus from Egypt, is one of the oldest and greatest in the world. It tells of how one people, long ago, experienced oppression and were led to liberty through a long and arduous journey across the desert. It is the most dramatic story of slavery to freedom ever told, one that has become the West's most influential source-book of liberty. "Since the Exodus," said Heinrich Heine, the 19th century German poet, "Freedom has always spoken with a Hebrew accent".

We read in the *maggid* section of the *Haggadah* of Rabbi Gamliel who said that one who did not discuss the Pesach lamb, the *maztah* and the bitter herbs had not fulfilled their obligation of the *Seder*. Why these three things are clear: The Pesach lamb, a food of luxury, symbolises freedom. The bitter herbs represent slavery due to their sharp taste. The *matzah* combines both. It was the bread the Israelites ate in Egypt as slaves. It was also the bread they left when leaving Egypt as free people.

It is not just the symbolism, but also the order these items are spoken about in the *Haggadah* that is interesting. First we speak of the Pesach lamb, then the *matzah* and finally the bitter herbs. But this seems strange. Why do the symbols of freedom precede those of slavery? Surely slavery preceded freedom so it would be more logical to talk of the bitter herbs first? The answer, according to the Chassidic teachers, is that only to a free human people does slavery taste bitter. Had the Israelites forgotten freedom they would have grown used to slavery. The worst exile is to forget that you are in exile.

To truly be free, we must understand what it means to not be free. Yet 'freedom' itself has different dimensions, a point reflected in the two Hebrew words used to describe it, *chofesh* and *cherut*. *Chofesh* is 'freedom from', *cherut* is 'freedom to'. *Chofesh* is what a slave acquires when released from freedom. He or she is free from being subject to someone else's will. But this kind of liberty is not enough to create a free society. A world in which everyone is free to do what they like begins in anarchy and ends in tyranny. That is why *chofesh* is only the beginning of freedom, not its ultimate destination.

Cherut is collective freedom, a society in which my freedom respects yours. A free society is always a moral achievement. It rests on self-restraint and regard for others. The ultimate aim of Torah is to fashion a society on the foundations of justice and compassion, both of which depend on recognising the sovereignty of God and the integrity of creation. Thus we say, 'Next year may we all be *bnei chorin*,' invoking *cherut* not *chofesh*. It means, 'May we be free in a way that honours the freedom of all'.

The Pesach story, more than any other, remains the inexhaustible source of inspiration to all those who long for freedom. It taught that right was sovereign over might; that freedom and justice must belong to all, not some; that, under God, all human beings are equal; and that over all earthly power, the King of Kings, who hears the cry of the oppressed and who intervenes in history to liberate slaves. It took many centuries for this vision to become the shared property of liberal democracies of the West and beyond; and there is no guarantee that it will remain so. Freedom is a moral achievement, and without a constant effort of education it atrophies and must be fought for again. Nowhere more than on Pesach, though, do we see how the story of one people can become the inspiration of many; how, loyal to its faith across the centuries, the Jewish people became the guardians of a vision through which, ultimately, 'all the peoples of the earth will be blessed'.

I wish you and all your family a Chag Kasher v'Sameach.


Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks



Overstone Road Parking

For many years Overstone Road has been part of an area covered by a residents' parking scheme. This has not caused too much trouble as the restrictions ended at 6 pm and didn't apply at all on Sundays (except for double yellow lines).

However, at the request of residents who were unable to park their cars in the evenings, the Council has now decided to extend the restriction until 10.00 pm at night Mondays to Saturdays. Also, the number of spaces available to non-permit holders has been greatly reduced. This means that it will be almost impossible to find legal on-street parking.

This will particularly affect people coming to Shul on Friday evenings (apart from those who walk) or if there is a function on a Saturday evening. Sunday functions will be unaffected.

On a brighter note, although parking charges apply in the St Michael's' Road car park, the first hour is free so this will be OK for normal Friday services (for those who choose to drive). BUT this car park closes and is locked up at 8.30 pm. Alternatively the Upper Mounts car park (behind the Crown Court) is free after 6.00 pm.

John Josephs

Since writing the above, we have met with Councillors who have listened to our concerns. One solution is that they can arrange for St Michaels' Car park to stay open longer if we give them notice of an event, e.g. a Shabbaton. People would still have to pay but at least it's secure.

Abbeyfield

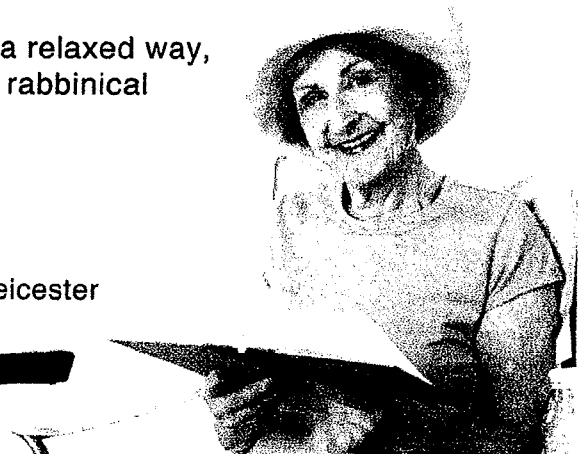
Where older people find care in housing

Our nine sheltered flats make up an active, sociable and vibrant place where older people live their lives with support, independence and good food, and at very competitive rates.

But don't take our word for it: pay us a visit, stay for a meal and have a look around and perhaps experience one of our regular coffee mornings, quiz and card evenings, discussion group and outings to theatres and local places of interest.

We celebrate Shabbat and Jewish Festivals in a relaxed way, and all our food is kosher but we are not under rabbinical supervision.

The House on London Road, 342 London Road, Leicester
Contact Ian Simons, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Ladies Guild: **Monday, 16 April 2012 at 7.45 pm**
At the home of Sylvia Crystal

Friendship Club: **Thursday, 3 May 2012, 2-4pm**
At the home of Michelle Josephs

Shabbaton: **Friday, 4 May 2012 at 7.30 pm**
Evening Service followed by Shabbat meal. Our speaker will be Councillor Michael Clarke, Chairman of Northampton South Conservative Association & representing Hackleton for NCC. To reserve your place, phone Sandra Goldcrown on [REDACTED] or Linda Necus [REDACTED] 24 April. **Remember, no bookie, no cookie!**

Ladies Guild AGM: **Monday, 14 May 2012 at 7.45 pm**
At the home of Gloria Pollock

Shul AGM: **Thursday, 24 May 2012 at 7.30 pm**
At the Synagogue, Overstone Road

Singers Hill Birmingham: **Wednesday, 30 May 2012, afternoon**
At the Synagogue, Overstone Road

During the afternoon of Wednesday 30th May we will be visited by Rebbetzin Rachel Jacobs of Singers Hill Shul in Birmingham who will be bringing a group of their members to visit our Shul and to meet some of our members.

It is important that we maintain good connections with our larger neighbours and it may be that we will arrange a reciprocal visit in the future. Singers Hill is a beautiful "cathedral" type Shul and is well worth seeing. Both Rabbi Jacobs and his wife are young and very dynamic.

The plans are at a very early stage but if you are able to come please let John Josephs know. Further details will follow.

It is hoped that Malcolm Weisman will be coming to Northampton for lunch some time during the summer. Details to follow.

Please don't forget to phone Sandra [REDACTED] or Daphne [REDACTED] if you have any news that you would like included in the newsletter or if you would like the name of a loved-one added to the List of Yarzheits. [REDACTED]

NORTHAMPTON NEWS

Mazel tov:

Ros and Lionel Barnett on the engagement of their son Peter to Deborah Baker

Michelle and John Dub on the engagement and forthcoming marriage in August of their daughter Amy to Grant Lucas

John and Shirley Mitchell on the engagement of their daughter Louise to Daniel Golding. They will be getting married in August.

Condolences to:

Sandra Goldcrown on the sad loss of her dear mother, Rachel Hickman

Lori Gale-Rumens on the sad loss of her dear mother, Helen Gale

Arnold Ellis on the sad loss of his dear sister Sylvie (Seemah)

The family of Aza Shine on their sad loss

Thank You

The Goldcrown family would like to thank their dear friends for all the love and support given to them throughout their darling mother and grandmother's illness and passing. Rachel was loved by all who knew her.

Cynthia Markstein would like to thank everybody for their support during the year and for coming to the Stone Setting on 4 March. Henry would have been proud to see the Ohel so full of so many of his family and friends. Thank you to John for the usual great job you do on these occasions and to Thelma, Sandra, Michelle and Gloria for helping me with the food. Sorry about the weather!

Sue Krantz would like to thank everybody for their wonderful support on the loss of her darling mother and brother. What a caring community we live in. Everybody is so kind and thoughtful.

Stone Settings

The stone setting in loving memory of Bernice Conroy will take place on Sunday 3 June 2012 at 3pm at Towcester Road Cemetery

The stone setting in loving memory of Sue Krantz's brother, David Wilson, will take place on Sunday 17 June 2012 at 3pm at Western Synagogue Cemetery, Bulls Cross Ride, Cheshunt, Herts EN7 5HT

The stone setting in loving memory of Len Shulman will take place on Sunday 29 July 2012 at Towcester Road Cemetery, time to be confirmed

The stone setting in loving memory of Rachel Hickman will take place on Sunday 9 September 2012 at 2pm at Towcester Road Cemetery

The stone setting in loving memory of Helen Gale will take place on Sunday 9 September 2012 at 2.45pm at Stock Road Cemetery, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

Get Well Soon

We wish any member of the community who has recently been unwell a speedy return to good health.

Friendship Club

Following the winter break, the Friendship Club has now resumed. We meet about once every six weeks, usually on a Thursday afternoon, for a cup of tea (or coffee, if you prefer!), a nosh and a chat. If you have not joined us for some time, or indeed never before, please join us at my home on Thursday, 3 May 2012 at 2pm. If you need a lift or directions, please phone me [REDACTED]

Michelle Josephs

Welfare Visits

I would like to remind the community that if they know of anyone who is unwell, either at home or in hospital, and who would like a visit, or perhaps just a phone call, to please let me know. [REDACTED]

Michelle Josephs, Welfare Co-ordinator

Daphne and Sandra would like to thank those of you who have contributed information or articles for this edition. Please keep them coming!

Ladies Guild Lunch – 4 December 2011
Speaker – Ms Luciana Berger, MP

The delectable Ms Berger (as she has been described in the media) has a well-founded connection to Northampton. Her grandfather, Ron, is a member of our community and her father, Howard, grew up here. Surprisingly, her parents had not been present before at one of her speaking engagements. They came along and brought a friend, Vanessa Lloyd-Platt (the well-known divorce lawyer). They were all duly proud and impressed.

A number of us have met Luciana on other occasions and, with all the people she meets, it was good to be remembered by her.

This was no “formal” after-dinner speech. Luciana obviously felt she was amongst friends and she happily chatted away in a relaxed way. She told us what it was like for a young woman entering Parliament for the first time as an MP. Luciana also told us how she felt as a Jewish woman MP. She is very much a go-getter and will, I’m sure, go far in politics. Both her Jewish heritage and Israel are important to her and get her support on every possible occasion. Everyone was interested and absorbed. Later it was time for questions, some serious, some funny, with serious undertones, but all replied to with a beautiful smile.

John Josephs, our President, thanked Luciana on behalf of those present and thanked the Ladies Guild for the wonderful lunch they served.

Our visitors were most interested to see the hall transform, once more, into a Synagogue. They thanked us and said how impressed they were by the way we did things and the lunch that the ladies had produced.

By way of a postscript – I did ask Luciana if she saw herself as Prime Minister one day. She smiled and said “I don’t know about Prime Minister, perhaps Secretary of State.”

I’m sure that we all wish Luciana Berger well in her career.

Daphne Rudd



Are you a knitter or would you like to try?

POMKNITS is a World Jewish Relief community project which supports desperately needy old people in Eastern Europe. Through their Knitting Communities Together Project, squares are knitted, then sewn into blankets and sent to frail elderly people who need them to keep warm. These people have very little and live in appalling conditions. A warm blanket would make a real difference. Some of the ladies in our community have already been knitting squares and if you would like to join them, please contact Gloria Pollock for more information [REDACTED]

Rachel Hickman – 23 October 2011

Everyone knew Rachel - always a beautifully groomed and beautifully dressed lady. A regular supporter of all the functions held in the Shul, she was a gracious hostess when she held the Friendship Club at the home she shared with Sandra and Graham.

For the last few years, together with Sandra, she played hostess again during the High Holy Days to John Mitchell and his family and to many members of the Community who were also invited.

Our condolences to Sandra and her family on their sad loss.

Helen Gale – 5 January 2012

We were all saddened to hear of the sudden death of Helen.

A past Chairman of the Ladies Guild, she whole-heartedly involved herself in everything to do with the Community. From the raising of money for carpet squares (it was Helen's idea to charge a pound each) to carpet the Synagogue, to being the initiator of the Friendship Club which was held in her and Frank's home for many years. She was involved and was a member of the Social Committee.

Never a shrinking violet, Helen held strong views and was a good organizer of anything she was asked to undertake.

Our condolences to Joanne and Lori and their families on their sad loss.

Ladies Guild Lunch – 11 March 2012

More, you want more! Well of course they asked for more. The delicious soup was certainly worthy of second helpings, and many people made the most of it.

A delightful meal, enjoyed by all, special requirements were catered for. A lot of thought and hard work went into the lunch which was appreciated by everyone. The delectable dessert had everyone forgetting their diets for the day and, where possible, sneaking an extra little piece.

As always, The Overstone Singers were the icing on the cake, an extra on the dessert menu. Everyone's pleasure was evident with many joining in and singing along. Well done the ladies! Another triumph for Sue Krantz and her "Catering Clan".

I am delighted to say that the lunch raised £248.23 which will go towards this year's chosen charities which are World Jewish Relief and a Northampton General Hospital appeal for slippers for emergency patients.

Daphne Rudd

Holocaust Memorial Day 2012

The theme for this year's Memorial Day was "Speak Up, Speak Out". On the 27 January, the actual Holocaust Memorial Day, there was a short flower-laying ceremony in the courtyard at the Guildhall. One of the speakers, Richard Engel, shared his thoughts of his late father, Max, whose birthday fell on 27 January and who would have been 100 years old were he still alive.

The HMD evening event at the Guildhall took place on 30 January and was hosted by Lindsey Ambrose and Morcea Walker, the organisers of the event. The evening opened with the choir from Lumbertubs Primary School performing the Millennium Prayer and poetry readings.

Mr V J Patel spoke about the expulsion of Asian people in 1972 from Uganda and he also shared his own experiences.

We were told about counselling services for the young including issues around bullying, discrimination, sexual orientation and many other issues.

Thomas Becket School contributed by reading passages from children that were in concentration camps – unfortunately, we were unable to hear these very well as they didn't use the microphones!

Lindsay then told us about the "Stamp Out Hatred" Campaign currently being run by Northampton Youth Forum.

The young people who had taken part in the evening then lit candles and read out the Statements of Commitment.

The evening concluded by John Josephs reciting the Prayer for the Departed (El Malei Rachamim) and Kaddish followed by a two-minute silence and the Sounding of the Shofar.

Michelle Josephs

Jewish/Roma Collaboration – Past, Present and Future

Sairica Rose (Sarah Necus) & Jennifer Bajdan

Thursday 28 June, 7.30pm £10 in advance/£12 on the door

London Jewish Cultural Centre, Ivy House, 94-96 North End Road, London NW11 7SX

Sairica Rose (Sarah Necus) is an Ashkenazi Anthropologist, documentary maker, author and poet. Since 2009 she has been a European specialist for the EC's Decade of Roma Inclusion. **Jennifer Bajdan** is a journalist turned documentary filmmaker. Descended from Polish Lowland Roma she was born and raised in the United States. Jennifer has maintained a close connection to Roma traditions and culture and is now dedicated to creating films that promote human rights and address minority challenges.

Sairica and Jennifer met whilst both working with The European Commission. These two dynamic young ladies will be in conversation discussing the Jewish Roma Collaboration, Past Present and Future and look forward to taking your questions.

KRANTZ'S KOOKERY KORNER



CLEMENTINE CAKE

4-5 Clementines (whole) poached in water for one and a half hours.

Process - 6 eggs

225 grams sugar

250 grams ground almonds

1 heaped teaspoon of baking powder

Whiz the whole fruit with peel in a food processor until pureed.

Add to other ingredients and mix well.

Line an 8" cake tin with baking paper and pour in mixture.

Bake at 190 degrees for approximately three quarters of an hour.

Test with skewer - if baked too well on top but still sloppy in the middle, lower the oven temperature.

Shabbaton –18 November 2011

We were delighted to welcome Michael Ellis, MP for Northampton North, to our November shabbaton.

Michael, an accomplished and persuasive speaker (no doubt due to his training as a barrister), entertained his audience with stories of his early days in Parliament and his work as an MP. He also recalled his barmitzvah in our shul some 30 years ago. Following his talk he took questions from the audience, who were particularly interested in his thoughts on the current situation between Israel and Iran. On a lighter note, asked if he had any gossip to report, he did tell us that two members of the Palace of Westminster staff were caught in a compromising position in the Chamber – in this case, the "staff" being two Police dogs!

Many thanks to the Ladies Guild who very kindly stepped "into the breach" at the last minute and prepared a delicious supper.

We have heard recently in the news how difficult it is for some fathers to cuddle their sons, whilst for others, it's quite natural.

In September 2010 Matthew Engel wrote an article for the Daily Mail about his father who, had he lived, would have been 100 years old this year. Below is an extract from that article.

“WHY EVERY DAD SHOULD BE A HERO TO HIS SON (...EVEN IF, LIKE MINE, HE THINKS HUGS ARE FOR WOMEN)”

Father and son is the most important male relationship. It is almost unexplored until it is too late.

My dad was an amazing man. On the face of it, he was a small-town solicitor. That isn't even a fraction of the story. He was born in Antwerp in 1912, two years before the Germans invaded Belgium. My grandparents ran a restaurant which was, effectively, a canteen for diamond traders. The building was commandeered by the defending Belgian forces, who told my grandfather to stay behind and feed them while my grandma fled to London with the toddler and his older sister. I tried to imagine the scene as the Boche swept through the panic-stricken country, but my grandma died when I was 11, so I couldn't ask. Grandpa joined them two months later and the refugees slowly turned into Londoners.

Dad was initiated into the diamond business before opting for law. He had just opened a London office when the next war came and he joined first the police and then the RAF. He was commissioned, earned his wings and, in 1945, took the surrender of the Danish city of Aalborg. World War II, Dad would say, was six years of boredom and ten minutes of blind terror.

He and his bride moved to Northampton, where he had to overcome the suspicion of the local establishment, since he was young and Jewish and worked harder and knew more law than they did.

Whatever Dad did, he did with determination and distinction. He was still a brilliant lawyer in his 90's, for too cunning for the management company of his flat when he sued them for the sport of it.

Was he a brilliant father? That's a more complex question. The Prime Minister may have kissed his father on camera but my Dad would never let me pull a stunt like that even in private. Men of his generation thought those gestures were for women. If there was a cuddle, I don't recall it. He avoided family holidays, handed out praise to his three sons as if it were the Koh-I-Noor diamond. He didn't watch us on sports day. Birthdays, not his thing, all that was Mum's role.

He saw himself as the provider and in that he never let us down. Did I want something else? You don't want what you never know might exist. Growing up in the fifties and sixties I had space to wander without anyone seeming to bother. I was 17 before I got a glimpse of what lay underneath Dad's apparent indifference. I failed to return home from a party. Both parents took me aside, separately and reproached me. "I wasn't bothered, I knew you would be alright, but your mother/father, was terribly worried." It

was then that I twigged that, deep down, he might be the worrier, and he just wouldn't let on.

We didn't discuss feelings and now we can't, he died suddenly in 2005 aged 93, still sharp as a tack. His last words, on the 'phone to me were "Excuse me I've got work to do" and he meant it. That was three months before my son Laurie died of cancer aged 13. One small mercy was that it wasn't the other way round, if Laurie had died first, I can't imagine how Dad would have responded. I just know now, that in his own way, he did care. It was all too deep for mere words.

Neither my brothers nor I have adopted my father's approach. I suppose we were all determined not to do it my father's way, but I think we learned from him too. He always said you could never live people's lives for them. I now believe that the second most important thing you can do for a child is to give them the tools that allow them to fulfill themselves in their own way - especially, fathers and sons. I know that he would have supported his wife and sons against the world. And that, above everything, is the most important gift any man can offer

Annual Holocaust Memorial Day Lecture on 26 February 2012

Approximately 4,000 Jews live in present-day Lithuania. Before the Holocaust they numbered between 205,000 and 210,000, with 9-10,000 remaining at the end of the War. Dr Larissa Allwork, a lecturer at the University of Northampton, presented '**The Holocaust, the Jews of Lithuania and British Foreign Policy at the Turn of the Millennium**' which gave a different perspective on the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Her talk focussed on the genocide of the Jews in Lithuania, the problems of remembrance during the Soviet period and British/Lithuanian collaborative efforts to draw renewed attention to this difficult and painful past in the early noughties.

Dr Allwork pointed out that the Lithuanians believed themselves to be victims of persecution, as they had been under both the Soviet and Nazi yoke. The Lithuanian nation is ultra-nationalistic and, as Dr Allwork pointed out, the link between Communism and the Jews seems to be embedded in their psyche. During the Cold War the West turned a "blind eye" to those who collaborated with the Nazis and consequently very few Lithuanian war criminals have been brought to justice. Also, by 1950 Stalinist policies had closed all Jewish institutions in Lithuania.

Although in recent years there have been international efforts to bring Jewish life and heritage back to Lithuania (the British-Lithuanian Liaison Project which has been working in collaboration with the Lithuanian Government) to date progress has been very slow. There is a Jewish museum (the **Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum**) but it is "off the beaten track" and very much in need of funding and updating. By contrast there is also a Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius (formerly Vilna) but nowhere is the murder of the Jewish population mentioned. In conclusion, Dr Allwork said that the problems still go on and sadly the British-Lithuanian Liaison Project has not been entirely successful.

Following her talk Dr Allwork took many questions from the audience of about 35 people, resulting in a lively and sometimes controversial discussion.

Sandra Aber

Jewish Britain: A History in 50 Objects

Jewish Museum launches new online digital exhibition

The Jewish Museum London has launched a new online resource, *Jewish Britain: A History in 50 Objects*, where each object tells a story about the history of the Jewish community in Britain from Medieval to modern times.

As part of an 18 month project, a small curatorial team uploaded and categorised images of the Museum's most prized objects, building a visually stimulating and coherent narrative of over 350 years of Jews in Britain. The exhibition covers six key themes: *Working Lives & Trades*, *Sport & Leisure*, *Charity & Welfare*, *London's East End*, *Growing Up* and *Regional Communities*. Each object is accompanied with historical points of reference additional images from the same period and, where available, how the object came to be in the Museum's collection.

Objects of particular note include the London Jewish Bakers' Union Banner, a 13th century Medieval mikveh (Jewish ritual bath), a 1930s camera from the legendary East End wedding photographer, Boris Bennett, and a 17th century portrait of Menasseh ben Israel by Rembrandt. There are also a number of objects from the Museum's Judaica (Jewish ritual art) collection, recognised as one of the finest in the world, and awarded 'Designated' status from the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council, in recognition of its outstanding national importance.

Elizabeth Selby, Curator of Social History at the Jewish Museum says: "The Museum holds around 28,000 objects and, as with similar organisations, we are unable to display them all. However, by digitising our collections in this way, we can share our knowledge and passion for British Jewish history with a far wider audience, both in the UK and internationally.

"Each object is a gateway into British Jewish history and we hope that those who visit the online exhibition will gain a better insight into how Jewish people have lived within and contributed to British life over the last 350 years."

This is the second online exhibition to be developed by the Jewish Museum, after the success of *Yiddish Theatre in London*, which explores the rich theatre form brought by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the late 19th century.

Elizabeth Selby concludes: "This has been a fascinating project to work on and sharing our collection with a global online audience is a really important progression for the Museum. The main challenge we faced was actually narrowing the selection to only 50, as we have so many exceptional objects here, whilst at the same time ensuring as broad a history as possible was being told."

This exhibition has been produced as part of the Judaica Europeana project, co-funded by the European Commission. The aim of the project is to identify content documenting Jewish presence and heritage in European cities and to make it available on the Europeana website. The Jewish Museum London is one of a number of partner organisations contributing content.

Jewish Britain: A History in 50 Objects can be found at www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/jewish-britain-home

Yiddish Theatre in London can be found at <http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/Yiddish-Theatre-in-London>

You may remember that in the last newsletter we published a piece on the possible Jewish heritage of the Duchess of Cambridge. Susan Dotan has written this response.

Kate Middleton: Jewish or not - Is Kate Middleton Jewish? I was intrigued to learn that the future princess' mother was born Carole Goldsmith. Technically, royals can only be removed from the line of succession if they marry a Roman Catholic - so Jews are still A-ok. But as the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, I think the queen would sleep a little better at night if her line married Anglicans or similar.

Sadly, according to fairly definitive research, even if there are Jews in Kate's family tree, at least five generations of the Goldsmith clan have been married in churches, so if there was any Jewish link (and I have a hunch there was...) it was lost long ago. Still, it's nice to think that there might possibly be a couple drops of Jewish blood in the royal family for many generations to come - even if they won't exactly be hosting a seder at Buckingham Palace.

I am sure if one's Jewishness was perceived by blood line then you would have hundreds of people hammering on the door of orthodoxy. Many have been sent away from the Jewish community because of status and their membership questioned because of marriage status. This story was circulated by the American press along with the fact that the only reason for the couple marrying was that Miss Middleton was pregnant, my American friends had a field day with this. It seems that our dear Kate is too perfect by half and press want to find anything it can to spice up the rather nice couples image, as we know the press does not do nice. Of course the American Jewish law is more open than here in England so if the couple were in America the status would be different.

The reason why all the interest was an Israeli gave the couple a Jewish wedding contract as a gift, basic without the religious contents. So again we can blame the Israelis for opening a can of worms for the couple and the Queen, who is probably quite amused at the whole thing. The interesting thing is that Prince Charles has often mentioned that when he eventually becomes king, which will probably be in his dotage, he would like to be known as DEFENDER OF FAITH. That means he would be the head of ALL faiths, in that case it really would not matter what religion comes to the throneor would it? **Susan Dotan**

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## **Annual Supper Quiz – 20 November 2011**

Despite the low numbers, a good time was had by all those who attended. Five teams battled for the shield, which was won by the aptly-named "Mavens" (the ever-competitive John and Michelle Josephs and Brian and Sandra Aber). Cynthia Markstein kindly supplied and ran the quiz, assisted by Thelma Necus, and thanks go to both ladies. Thanks also to the Ladies Guild for once again preparing the supper. The evening raised £166.



**Shaare Zedek UK**  
*for Jerusalem's hospital with a heart*

Shaare Zedek's history is rich and varied and is inextricably linked with that of Jerusalem. The hospital is a landmark building, but more than that, thanks to the world-class medical care provided by its doctors, nurses and surgeons, Shaare Zedek has grown to become one of Jerusalem's most vital resources.

One such example is the children's facilities. More than 4,000 children are hospitalised every year at Shaare Zedek and a further 8,000 are treated as outpatients in the paediatric day hospital, with numbers expected to increase, particularly as it is now a national leader in treating many medical conditions, including Juvenile Diabetes.

Although the medical care and emotional support we provide for our young patients is first class, the hospital is struggling with the current cramped facilities, built over 30 years ago. Changes in medicine and the needs of patients, as well as a three-fold increase in the number of children treated, means that the design and size of Shaare Zedek's departments are outmoded. With that in mind, Shaare Zedek is constructing a dedicated Children's Hospital, the first such facility in Jerusalem. The new building will be linked to the hospital but will also have its own entrance and direct ambulance access.

Dr Floris Levy, Director of the Paediatric Day Care Hospital says "I believe that the new hospital will be even better suited to address children's needs, because every aspect is being designed for that specific purpose. The standard of care at Shaare Zedek will be even further enhanced by creating an environment specifically intended to help children."

As Shaare Zedek receives no government funding for new equipment or development, Jerusalem's children's hospital can only be built and furnished with the state-of-the-art equipment needed, with the generous support of Shaare Zedek's friends.

You can make all the difference in the world, not just for today's patients but also for those who will need Shaare Zedek's help long into the future.

This Pesach, we thank you for all that you have done and continue to do.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact Dani Freedland, Shaare Zedek UK  
