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WADS News

The magazine of Watford & District Synagogue
ISSUE Eighteen Spring 2012 Passover 5772

Watford's Cheder Club

Rochel Levine

The past year at Watford Cheder Club has been a fun and enjoyable one. We have managed to pack in a wide range of enjoyable education that has ensured the children have learned in the best way possible. Most important is the emphasis we place on Hebrew reading. It is critical that the children move through the Aleph-Beis in the most efficient manner so that their reading ability improves each week.

Since the Cheder started, we have been using the much acclaimed Aleph Champ system which has recently been adopted across the US Cheder network. Our Hebrew reading teacher Shlomit Williams has been doing a fantastic

job working with me in sitting with each child individually every week. In so doing we ensure that each child gets the right level of attention needed.

We are happy to take on more children. So please get in touch if you would like to enrol your son or daughter. Don't leave their Jewish education to chance! Our Cheder runs on Monday night so that your Sundays can be free. Drop me a line at cheder@watfordsynagogue.org.uk and I will be happy to send you an information pack.



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Wads Youth



The school year started in style with a trip to the Snow Centre in Hemel Hempstead. My personal highlight was watching Adam Woolf descend down that big slope in a mode of transport barely large enough to contain his right arm. As they would come down the slope, I originally greeted the youth each with a personalised snow ball. Unfortunately however, the "hunter" soon became the "hunted", and before I knew it, the year 7 Yavneh boys had made sure that I blended in a little too well for my liking with the ski slope itself! Overall though, it was a really great day out (even if I do still find that occasional piece of snow still lingering in my ear).

Before we knew it, Sukkot had arrived and it was time for Pizza in the Hut. We invited Northwood Youth to come along and take part in what will go down as one of the most creative supper quizzes of all time. "What happens next", "Guess the advert" and "Name the song" all featured in a highly interactive evening. Naturally, only one team could leave the victor and proudly, the winners were from Watford with Daniel Katz, Jamie Slome and Joel Burkes team, named "Anatidaephobia", proving to be too knowledgeable for the rest (although they did get a helping hand from Mr Slome).

Film night was next on the agenda. Falafels, chips and unnecessarily large quantities of pop corn were the ingredients for a great "night in". Eventually (and after some lethal Scott Michael persuasion) we settled on watching "2012". Unfortunately, we didn't make it to the end, so I'm still not entirely sure the world is going to make it to 2013...

The calendar year ended with the spectacular tribe event "Chanukah on Ice", in the shadows of the tower of London. Was a really beautiful evening, attended by tribe teenagers from all over London. And Harry Burke's riddles topped the evening off, making the journey home that much more enjoyable (even if we did get the wrong train back!).

And then it was January and we were back at Watford Hollywood Bowl for the Watford Youth annual bowling trip. No one quite managed to repeat Scott's heroics of the previous year (with a score close to 150!). However, give Danielle and Jemima a few more years and they could have what it takes!

Sadly, this years Purim event will be my last with Watford. It's been a great year and a bit. The community have made me feel at home from day one. There has been so much positivity and support (especially from the Shayles!!) – it's really testifies to the type of community you are. I have really enjoyed getting to know the youth – we have had some great times and I leave with some truly precious memories. I do have to publicly express my gratitude to Helen (and her family) for really making all this happen. Her effort and dedication is unparalleled and with her on the scene, and some excellent candidates lined up to take over, the future is bright for Watford Youth.



Thank you Aaron for all your hard work at Watford, you will be missed, keep in contact and good luck for the future!

From all the Wads Youth xx

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Dear Readers

What a busy few month it's been at Wads. Whether it's the young members of the Cheder Club or Tribe; Ladies at a Women's Circle event or a social gathering at the popular Supper Quiz it would seem that Wads has successfully catered for a wide spectrum. You can read details of the varied events further on.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition by writing an article, sponsoring a page or advertising. I'm delighted to say that all costs for this publication were covered. I would like to thank Carolyn Silverman for her help and support and Brian Levy and Stephen Horne for their assistance in getting advertising.

I've said it before and I really do mean it - you can help our attempts at covering the costs of Wads News for future editions if you simply let the advertisers know you've seen their advert between these pages. A little mention can go a long way. So please do speak up for Wads.

Happy reading,

Sam Stuart

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The views expressed in Wads News are not necessarily those of the Board of Management of Wads, or of the United Synagogue.

Welcome!

We're delighted to welcome the following new members to our community:

Richard Leibert, Marian Wiseman, Emma and Benjamin Sosner, Stephen and Adele Rinder,
Rosalind and Michael Corzberg, Melvyn Enoch, Frankie Weinberg and Daniel Raphael

Wads cares

First of all apologies for any omissions made below. We wish a hearty Mazel tov to ALL our members who have celebrated a special birthday, anniversary, family simcha, a new baby or a new grandchild. Our thoughts are with the families who have lost a loved one. Wads Care is there to help all our members.

There are many people, unfortunately, within our community, who are ill. Some are being looked after in Nursing Homes, some are waiting to have operations; some may be recovering from treatment. Our thoughts are with them and their families and we wish them all well.

We are very anxious that the WADS Welfare Committee keeps in touch with the news. We can help in many ways. What we really need is for you to let us know of the joys and sorrows that happen within our Synagogue, without this contact we can't know what is happening, so please get in touch with the Welfare Committee: Esther Levy 0208 954 0819.

Births

Mazel tov on the births to:
Lindsay and Michael Gordon - grandson,
Sue and Leigh Lewis - grandson
Betty and Eddie Marks - great granddaughter,
Carol and Peter Peters - a grandson,
Susie and Clive Walters - granddaughter,

Plaques for the Memorial Board
£75 each
contact Carolyn Silverman
01923 222755
secretary@watfordsynagogue.org.uk

Wads
AGM and Elections
Sunday 13 May 2012

This page has been sponsored by Lindsay and Michael Gordon



Photos by Jodie Stuart



28th Watford Brownies

'Please can I put my daughter on your waiting list?' This has now become quite a regular call from prospective parents. The waiting list has now grown to 10 girls all waiting for their 7th birthday to be able to join our Brownie pack. Our two eldest girls will soon be leaving to join a Guide group and there will be five new girls joining us by Rosh Hashana. Yes our Brownie pack is thriving and long may it continue.

We continually strive to make our meetings interesting and full of fun and also showing the girls the importance of the Guiding motto which is 'Lend a hand'.

That is exactly what we did recently for Purim. We baked a variety of biscuits, made baskets and took them to the residents of Sydmar Lodge in Edgware, the Jewish home for the elderly. The Brownies also entertained everyone by singing, telling them all about the movement, chatting with the residents and we finished off the afternoon with an enrolment. I was so proud of the girls that afternoon who really showed they could give their time to others.

To celebrate Tu B'Shevat we gave the girls the ingredients to be able to make up a cocktail and also to make a picture of a tree using the different fruits. They had great fun judging the efforts of each other and then eating everything up.

On February 22nd Thinking Day is celebrated worldwide by all the different groups in Guiding. This day is to commemorate the birthdays of both the founders of Scouting & Guiding and this year we joined the District for a fun afternoon of crafts from around the world, our own celebrations took the form of Israeli dancing which the girls really enjoyed.

Gaining Brownie badges continues to be very important for the girls and they have an ongoing competition between them as to who has gained the most badges, they range from computer skills, cycling to cooks and entertainers.

Brownies are divided into groups and the head of each one is called a 'Sixer' who takes responsibility for different events. To help them develop leadership skills we encourage the 4 sixers to plan and run a Brownie meeting. This sounds easy but they soon realise how difficult it is to control the girls and keep them occupied with a varied programme. We as leaders become the 'naughty Brownies' for the evening!

As you see we work towards a fun programme but at the same time the girls are learning so many skills which will help them on their journey of life.

A big thank you goes to the Mums who continue to help us out and of course to Tawny Owl, Gina Collis who makes sure our finances are kept in order.

We wish Rabbi, Rochel and family, our Brownies and their families A very Happy Pesach.

Lorraine Myers
Brown Owl
28th Watford Brownies
Mobile 07989 029031



Passover 5772

Rabbi Ephraim Levine

The festival of Purim is the most joyous day on the calendar. We celebrate the redemption of the Jewish people from certain annihilation as a carefully orchestrated plan came to nothing thanks to Mordechai and Esther (with a little help from above!). And as we think of Purim, we cannot help but think of Pesach that falls exactly one month later.

Pesach is also a celebration of redemption. Redemption from a place that limited the Jewish people both physically and spiritually. In fact, the good books tell us that the Hebrew word for Egypt, Mitzrayim, shares its root with the Hebrew word for limitations, maytzarim. No coincidence here as we just mentioned the Jewish people were on no pleasure trip as they endured over 200 years of forced slavery. The Hagaddah tells us that the Egyptians embittered our lives - such was the extent of the harsh conditions under which the Jews worked. As you can imagine, this took its toll not just on family life but on spiritual well-being also. Not only were the Jews incapable of stepping over the physical boundaries but their spiritual deficiencies left them with no chance of a brighter tomorrow either.

In many ways, this also applies to our lives. How often have we felt shackled or unable to be true to ourselves because of our inability to be free. Our simple lack of self belief prevents us from being who we really want to be. This is called modern day slavery and it exists in a very real way. But Pesach tells us we have the ability to extricate ourselves and change the status quo. Our being free is simply a matter of us going beyond our own personal limitations – maytzarim – and experiencing the freedom that lays just beyond.

We have had a busy year this year at Watford with much going on in all areas including the Cheder, Children's Services, educational and social events, Watford Youth together with Tribe, Women's Circle, as well as our core service of being a Bet Knesset – a place where people can come together in prayer.

But there are still quite a few yet to avail themselves of the many events going on at Watford. So I make a plea to you for the coming year to take the message of Pesach to heart and go beyond your limitations. If something has been holding you back, make the effort to 'break the boundaries of slavery' and try something new. If you don't see what you are looking for or if you feel we are not catering for you, then simply give us a call or drop us an email and we will ensure it gets done. It is up to each and every one of you to ensure you are getting the most from your community.

Rochel and the boys join me in wishing you happy and kosher Pesach of freedom and coming year of health and happiness.

Rabbi Ephraim Levine.


CHIEF RABBI
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 *matzah* 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 slavery. 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.




A US we can be proud of

Jeremy Jacobs

The sheer number of different areas the United Synagogue work with never fails to surprise me, nor does the impact that we can have on people's lives. We have had an amazing year.

The US is all about communities and our ability to inspire our members, enrich their lives with Jewish values and ensuring our heritage is passed onto future generations. To do this we need the best people, modern and vibrant programmes, and properties that are both adaptable but also warm and welcoming.

The top priority is to ensure we have the right people who can realise the goals of the US. We have had some tremendous successes this year, appointing a number of new Rabbis, Assistant Rabbis, Youth Rabbis and Youth Workers to many of our Shuls, not least due to the Rabbinic Intern Programme. For the past few years we have brought over a number of young Rabbis to various communities at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. They lead services, run programmes and generally take part in community life. This programme not only provides much needed assistance to our own hard working Rabbis but also gives these young Rabbinic hopefuls the experience, not only of Rabbinic life, but also in the Anglo-Jewish community.

We also continue to invest in ongoing Rabbinic Training and Development through the P'eir programme run by Rabbi Ginsbury of Hendon US. There are induction programmes for new Rabbis and Rebbezens plus training programmes for our existing Rabbinate. A mentoring process is also provided to ensure that our Rabbis are able to network with their colleagues and discuss any issues they face in a confidential and positive manner.

Adding to this is our participation in a high level management training programme run by the Kellogg School of Management in Chicago. Every year we enrol four of our Rabbis onto this course and the results have been incredibly successful.

Indeed the working relationship between the Centre and the Rabbinate has been flourishing. The Rabbinical Council has engaged wholeheartedly with the strategic work of the Centre, helping to

develop additional programmes and opportunities which are directly impacting on our membership. Over the past year we have developed amongst other things:-

- The Challenge Programme for pre-bar and bat mitzvah students
- The weekly SPARK and MiBereshit resources for children's service leaders
- The Learn 2 Lead programme being implemented across more US communities
- The enormous growth in Tribe programmes including After School Clubs, Summer Camps and Schemes and of course the launch of the first ever Tribe Israel Tour
- The beautiful Pesach Guide sent to all our members following on from last year's Tishrei Guide
- The increasing use of our You & US Website with its incredibly useful resources such as the as the Jewish Online Guides (JOG) that offer 'Ask The Rabbi' videos and 'How To' guides which demonstrate basic Jewish practices; the various Living and Learning sections full of fascinating articles on a huge number of Jewish topics and my personal favourite, the 'mishigas of the week', a hilarious anecdote of those seemingly minor annoyances in life which are found in the features and fun section.

- Additional resources for our Chedarim, Jewish schools and nurseries. One great example of this is the new magnetic "Tribe Tots Table" which has been distributed free to the US Chedarim, primary schools and nurseries.
- The increasing number of heritage tours that are being run by local communities using Central resources and in particular the tour run across US communities for 38-58 year olds

Then there are the myriad of programmes developed by local shuls, which together with the Central programmes are helping our communities serve our members and engage them with mainstream Orthodox Jewish Living, Learning and Caring.

This year has also seen a number of property developments, especially the re-development programme at Mill Hill United Synagogue which is now underway. Many other Shuls are in the process of preparing new development plans, and this can only add value to our members.

Centrally we have the development at Bushey Cemetery of the burial grounds on the other side of Sandy Lane at the planning stage including some very interesting plans for the development of modern but sympathetic prayer halls to partially replace the existing facilities. The care and attention to detail that our planning consultants are showing for this major project is something that we are delighted with and I am sure the whole community will be immensely proud of the end result.

So you will see that it has been a tremendously busy year for the United Synagogue and I wanted to take this opportunity of thanking all my colleagues, both lay and professional, at the Centre and in the communities, for all their efforts to make the United Synagogue the vibrant organisation that it is.

Finally may I take this opportunity of wishing all our members a Kosher Pesach and I look forward to helping the community move from strength to strength for many years to come.



The US

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Wishing You All a Happy Pesach

Wads been going on in Watford?

There has been much going on over the last year. Here's a brief round up of some the events!

Pizza In The Hut

Succot wouldn't be the same without Pizza In The Hut. Run for the fifth consecutive year for adults and children who come and enjoy pizza, salad, soup, chips and drinks in the Succah. With Simon Grant the Baker pictured right with Rabbi Levine, and our professional pizza oven, pizzas are guaranteed to taste just right.

Hebrew Reading Course

This course once again proved vital in helping improve the Hebrew reading of those who attended. We showed that a small amount of practice can go a long way in building confidence to read at a more respectable pace.

Tesco Menorah Lighting

This old favourite didn't fail to do its job as we lit up Watford each night of Chanukah with the grand lighting on the third second night. Whilst taking the menorah down afterwards, the non-Jewish security guard commented that he felt the message of Chanukah was so beautiful that the menorah should stay up in Tesco all year round! How nice that would be.

Melave Malke

His Honour Judge Martyn Zeidman QC, below right with Rev Wiseman and Wads Chair Brian Levy, was guest speaker at Watford's fourth annual Melave Malke. He entertained us



with stories about himself as an orthodox Jew in the legal world as well as educating us about the legal system in general. The evening was beautifully accompanied with music and a three course meal.

Intergalactic Judaism

Edgware Synagogue's Rabbi David Lister spoke on this fascinating subject. Promoting his new book of the same title, Rabbi Lister questions whether there is a place for cutting edge technology in Judaism. An interesting discussion on the universe and new scientific discoveries wrapped up the evening after which Rabbi Lister sold some copies of his book.

Understanding Addiction

This eye opening evening was a personal look into the life of the presenter Darren Rolfe, a self confessed addict. He spoke about his addiction quite openly and how it impacted his family, including his mother – who also spoke about how her life had

been affected by having an addict son. Darren also brought a friend who spoke about dealing with children who find themselves falling into the world of addiction. Currently in recovery, Darren could not speak highly enough about those who helped him to where he is now including professional organisations, family and friends. Very emotional and moving at times, the talk left a deep impact on all those present.

Holocaust Evening

To commemorate Holocaust memorial day Toria Maze organised an Evening at the shul. We were honoured to hear from two great speakers; Helen Hyde, below right (Headmistress and leading Holocaust Educator and daughter of a survivor) and Zigi Shipper below left



(Holocaust Survivor).

Overall the evening was hugely successful with an estimated 90 people and with much positive feedback.

Mitzvah Day

As part of the Mitzvah Day activities, Watford Synagogue

Rabbis Jumping for *Joy (*aka Project Chesed)

Why connecting young people to their Jewish identity is Critical

What prompted some US Rabbis to jump out of a plane

You may know and support the Chesed Bursary Fund or perhaps you've heard of it but thought it didn't speak to your community. Created in 2010 in response to the worsening economy in the UK and the profound effect it is having on some of our families, the CBF awards bursaries to enable young people in our community with severe financial constraints, to take part in Jewish summer programmes here and in Israel. These well thought out programmes run by experienced, trained youth workers are a Jewish immersion into our culture, religion and values without the distraction of outside influences. Their success is a crucial component in the wellbeing of the whole of our community.

Before I go further I would like to thank the very generous donors who contributed last summer. Their donations really made a difference.

I read a recent study showing that often youngsters struggle to articulate their connection to Judaism and Israel. We believe the programmes we are asking you to support help make that link clear. Help connect them or reconnect them with their Jewish identity. Lets make sure no child is denied the opportunity. It's that multi-layered benefit gained from the CBF that has spurred our committee on to plan a series of money-raising events this year. Please help whether by making a donation, taking part in an activity or creating your own fundraiser. We are also looking for Local Ambassadors to champion the cause year round.

Seeing these youngsters grow through play and learning into knowledgeable confident members of our community means every penny you give is well spent. We like to think of this as a moment to plant or nurture a seed in them which will form part of a life long love of their heritage. The feedback received from last years beneficiaries were moving affirmations of the importance of the programme.

This year we have planned a series of activities and would love your support in your community. Rabbi is giving his consideration whether to be thrown out of a plane, okay maybe I should re-word that as Sky-dive. Should he decide YES then your sponsorship and support of his terrific commitment will send not just Rabbi Levine soaring through the clouds but enable a youngster to visit Israel for the first time.

We will be sending a team to the Macabbi Fun Run on May 20th. If you can join me or form your own shul group our target is to have at least one runner from each shul.

Our new year round campaign is called We Need Dough. The campaign kicked off with a collection for Pesach Parcels. CBF supports this campaign and we would like to work with

you to create your own We Need Dough event to support Chesed and the CBF. Events can range from Chola baking to picnics – as long as there's dough and dough involved!

We really appreciate your support. Here's some ways you can help:

- Become a Local Ambassador. Please email me at cbf@theus.org.uk
- Make a donation in the following ways: a cheque or charity voucher made out to USYC can be posted to US Chesed, 305 Ballards Lane N12 8GB
- Donations can be made by credit card, please call 020 8343 5658
- Online Transfer, UCBF as the reference, into the USYC bank account. Account Number 60054670 and sort code 60-80-07

You really can make a difference this summer.

Gaby Morris
Chair of US Chesed Bursary Fund



The Jewish Marriage Council's commitment to the future of marriage

Sixty five years after its founding, the Jewish Marriage Council - JMC- has launched an ambitious new programme of family therapy alongside its existing services which are designed to appeal to engaged and married couples as well as those seeking a partner for life through the JMC's dating agency, Connect.

The organisation remains as faithful to its founding principles as the institution of marriage itself, but is keenly aware that the threats to the stability of Jewish marriage from the outside world have presented it with serious challenges. The JMC prides itself on offering services to Jewish people at each stage of their married life, be it Connect, the engaged couples seminars to prepare them for a Jewish marriage, family therapy or the counselling service, which comes into play when the individual or



Our innovative Sunday seminar is tailored towards engaged couples, which enables them to explore the dynamics of a good Jewish marriage and to discuss each partner's expectations. It also gives the opportunity to meet other couples with a similar experience.

While acknowledging the pivotal role of the JMC counselling facility, the organisation is keen to emphasise that it is not simply a "breakdown service." Counsellors work with individuals, couples and families, including people who are single, engaged, married, divorced, or widowed.

They are experienced and qualified, operating under the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) guidelines for ethics and practice. The JMC also runs counselling training courses every six weeks and invites all Jewish counsellors to attend.

The JMC receives no government grants and is entirely reliant upon donations from the community.

For more information about counselling and engaged couples seminars, visit the JMC's website www.jmc-uk.org For Connect: www.connectjewishdating.com or call Yasmine on 0208 203 6311. 23 Ravenshurst Avenue, London NW4 4EE



Connect Jewish Dating
Talk. Meet. Connect.

couple may reach points in their life when they need help.

Connect Jewish Dating recognises the difficulty Jewish singles face in finding their soul mate in today's modern world. Connect proudly distances itself from internet-based services, working on a more personalised, matchmaking structure. All members are halachically Jewish and free to marry. The age range is 28 – 45 for women; and 30 – 50 for men.

The agency's consultants hand-pick each potential match for their client based on values, lifestyle and other important factors. In addition, events are organised for both members and anyone who would like to attend and a new service of dating coaching has been well received. We are always here for our members at the end of the phone and offer professional dating advice when needed. This year we are celebrating a couple of weddings and have many more couples out happily dating. In order to continue enhancing our services we need the support of the community to help us spread the word!

Qualified Nanny/Nursery Nurse

I am level 3 qualified with over 10 years experience of children & First Aid trained Call Sarah 07849080872.

hosted the start of the annual Watford Inter-Faith Association (WIFA) pilgrimage around faith centres in the town to perform the mitzvah of 'shining a light unto the nations'.

At least 50 visitors, including the Chair of WIFA, and 15 members of the Watford community enjoyed tea and cakes as Rabbi Levine welcomed guests to the shul. The group then set off on a tour of the town's faith centres, which included the Central Mosque, Gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) and two



churches. There were plenty of discussions along the way as participants recognised similarities between our cultures while celebrating the differences. Above Laura and Di Roberts

Supper Quiz

Our Annual Supper Quiz was for the second year running held at the Park Inn Hotel. Richard Woolf compiled most of the Quiz and was our Quizmaster. We had our usual team of great helpers on the day who managed to make the evening another success. Profit from the evening was approximately £1,150. We will run this event again this year but the date and location is to be confirmed.



Wads' Charitable Giving

The following charities were sent donations in 2011

Aleh Charitable Foundation (disabled children in Israel)

Bobath Centre for Cerebral Palsy

British Friends of Israeli War Disabled

Chai Cancer Care

Children with Cancer

Children with Leukaemia

Nicki's Smile

JAMI

Jewish Blind and Disabled

Jewish Childs' Day

Jewish Deaf Association

Friends of Ohel Sarah

Magen David Adom

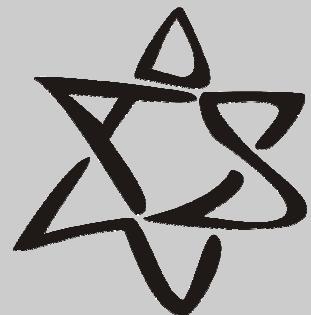
Peace Hospice

Shaare Zedek

The Sam Keen Foundation

World Jewish Relief

Youth Aliyah Child Rescue



Finance

Ronnie Jacob

This will almost certainly be the last article I write in the Shul magazine as FR. We reckon that I have now done the job for about 13 years and at long last we have found a successor in Robert Keane.

My time as FR has been exhilarating and rewarding and I have loved every minute of it. I want to thank Carolyn for all the hard work she has put in supporting me over the years and the Finance Committee for their assistance.

The biggest thanks of all must go to you the members for your amazing support over the years. Your efforts have seen us reduce the loan from the US by about £90,000. We have embarked on various projects, which have led to the stained glass windows, memorial wall and the naming of some of the rooms in memory of our members families. These projects are all ongoing and can be subscribed to at any time.

We have continued to support those families in the community who fall on hard times, and also continue to

support other charities. It's a frightening thought, but during my time as FR, we have probably seen the best part of £1 million coming into and going out of the Shul!

I have been working closely with Robert over the last few months and I know that he will do an excellent job. Earlier on I said I loved doing this job, but one thing I will for sure not miss having to do, is standing up in front of you and doing the Kol Nidre appeal every year. Talking of which, as a Shul, we do raise a lot of money at these appeals for both Israel and ourselves. You all deserve a lot of praise for the efforts you make in this regard in these tough economic times.

Looking forward, the Executive, through protracted negotiation and with not a lot of meaningful support from the US Head Office, have as you know concluded arrangements with the Rabbi so that he spends longer each week working for us. This is already reaping benefits for us all. As a result of this and other increased costs, we will have to increase the communal contribution this year by more than inflation for the first time, and I hope that you will agree that this is money well spent.

Finally, thanks again for all your support and I know that you will give Robert the same in years to come.

Thinking Inside the Box

Wardens Report

Michael Gordon Ellard Roberts

As we approach that time of the year when I drive my family to the point of madness (more so than usual) with "Don't buy any more of that we've got to run things down for Pesach" and "I'll need to kosher the freezer soon so please use up the frozen fruit" – that's the fruit the kids decided on the one hot day we had last year we desperately needed to make smoothies right through the summer, which they bought in bulk, never used and has taken up two and a half shelves in the freezer since last May - I look back on my first (I trust the use of this adjective is not too presumptuous) and wonder, initially, how a year can possibly pass that quickly. I then reflect with great gratitude and not a little awe on those who have announced their "retirement" from roles in which they have served our Community for many years. I do not wish to cause embarrassment by saying how many years but (in no particular order) Elaine Shoob, Ronnie Jacob and Brian Levy have all indicated an intention to step down from positions they have held with the Shul for a considerable period. All have worked tirelessly for our Community, have given sterling service to and on behalf of the Shul and are owed a huge debt of gratitude from us all. Whoever follows in their roles will indeed be "standing on the shoulders of giants".

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of my "senior" (in

experience not age) colleague Ellard and myself to thank publicly all who have helped to conduct the services throughout the last year – often at short notice – indeed sometimes with none - in particular Allan Solomon, Steven Newman, Scott Michaels and Alan Fisher. We are always on the lookout for new talent/additional helpers and if anyone feels able and would like to offer their services or would be willing to do so with a little prior help then please do have a word with Ellard, myself or the Rabbi.

Our Shul is of course run by part-time or volunteer workers and whilst we all endeavour to get everything right and ensure everything runs smoothly, on occasions, something may go awry. Please do let us know (politely – it is not intentional) if something does go wrong or if there is something about which you are not happy. Even better, if there is something you expect, for instance an aliyah where you have a chiyuv (such as a Shabbos of or before a yahrzeit) then please let us know when you arrive in Shul – we would far rather be reminded of something about which we were already aware than overlook something of which we were unaware.

Finally Ellard and I wish all a Chag Kasher Vesameach.

managed to learn a little bit at first hand about Jewish communities around the world, about the problems they face, and then trying in a small way to make a bit of a difference for them.

In 2002 I was deeply touched by a particular meeting I had with Holocaust survivors in Krakow. You will not need me to recall the long shadows that traverse that particular community, but what struck me – forcibly – was that, despite the passage of time since the Second World War, they still had nowhere to meet socially; to come together as a community to share stories and to pass wisdom between the generations. Well, not for nothing is my motto – "Ich Dien" ("I serve") – with, in parenthesis, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained!" I decided immediately to do what I could to encourage the building of a Jewish Community Centre, right in the heart of Krakow next to the Synagogue. I cannot tell you, therefore, how proud my wife and I were when, six years later, we went back to Krakow (with the kind donors I had managed to corner!) to open that Jewish community centre, fixing a Mezuzah to the entrance. And when we met again some of those same survivors. Today 1,000 Jewish and non-Jewish community members use the facilities for their social, educational and religious programmes.

Of course, this would not have been possible without the work of an organization for which I have the highest regard and respect – and, dare I say it, the greatest affection: World Jewish Relief. It is an organization that I have come to know rather well over the years. The work it does for the Jewish community worldwide is worthy of the highest praise. World Jewish Relief has been working its incredible magic since that fateful year, 1933, when it helped those escaping from Nazi persecution to rebuild their lives in Britain. As I told those gathered there that afternoon at the Jewish Free School, I have tried my whole life to understand and reflect upon what they had to endure and to try to draw lessons from it.

If I may, Ladies and Gentlemen, I just want to recall and recognize the fact that in two World Wars British Jews made an outstanding contribution to the defence of our values and of our liberty, on land, at sea and in the air. Many thousands were killed in action, on all the War fronts. Jews also volunteered to be parachuted behind enemy lines, and to serve on the most dangerous of missions. I know that my great uncle, Lord Mountbatten, was enormously proud of the Jewish airman, RAF Flight Sergeant Jack Nissenthall, a radar specialist. He knew that he would have to be shot by his own men if he was about to be captured, but he went ashore at Dieppe in 1942 to examine a crucial German radar station on the cliff top.

It was in 1933 that my father, then at school in Germany for a year, helped an older schoolboy who had been identified as Jew by the other boys and had been set upon and had his hair cut off. I shall always be proud of my father's act of compassion. Ten years later, in 1943, when the Greek capital, Athens, was occupied during the Second World War, my father's mother – my grandmother – Princess Alice, saved a Jewish family by taking them into her home

and hiding them. For many years afterwards, my grandmother told no-one about what she had done. Not even her family! She was quite a formidable lady and when the Gestapo began to suspect her, she simply pointed out that she was deaf and could not understand their questions! Interestingly at the end of her life she wanted to be buried in Jerusalem, next to the aunt she adored, The Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Russia, who had been martyred by the Bolsheviks by being thrown down a Siberian mineshaft. I've never forgotten how when her daughters and others used to say "how on earth are we going to come and visit your grave?", she'd say, "that's alright, there's a very good bus service from Athens."

My grandmother's story – and her courage – were one of the reasons that I wanted to be at the Kindertransport reunion in November 2008, to mark the seventieth anniversary of the British Government's decision to bring those children to Britain. I met 500 of the 10,000 Jewish children brought to Britain in the months before the outbreak of the Second World War. It was, in every sense, a heroic decision by our Government and one which echoes through history as an example of compassion – of, simply, "doing the right thing." As I told those gathered there that afternoon at the Jewish Free School, I have tried my whole life to understand and reflect upon what they had to endure and to try to draw lessons from it.

many different communities. That is certainly true, but I have always thought it a little misleading to suggest that it was ever any different! When our country has drawn strength from its diversity it has been literally world-beating. It is only when we have allowed difference to gnaw away at us or when we have tried to extinguish difference, as in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, that we have been weakened at home and abroad. So the importance of "Unity through Diversity" cannot be overstated.

We do not all share the same Faith, but we should not forget that we are linked by Faith itself, sustaining and enriching our national life. In the various charitable initiatives I have tried to inspire or champion over the years, I have believed passionately that each faith, with its rich ethical and spiritual base, has a crucial part to play in promoting the harmonious tolerance that is the bedrock of our society. Each faith, of course, draws on a profound belief in the sanctity of human life. I recall your own Jewish exhortation in the Book of Deuteronomy: 'Choose life!' I am also reminded of the welcome the Patriarch Abraham gave, so many thousands of years ago, to three strangers, running to meet them, and inviting them to rest at his home and strengthen themselves with his food. Kindness was the way of Abraham; the path, according to your fine tradition, to true spirituality.

Since as long ago as 1784 (and almost certainly earlier), I know that British Jews have been praying in their synagogue services for the well-being of the Royal Family. In that year they prayed for the health and safety of 'our most gracious Sovereign Lord, King George the Fourth and all the Royal Family.' Today, my entire family is deeply touched that a prayer for the Royal Family remains an integral part of the synagogue service.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I can think of no better way of concluding than to recall the words of your Ethics of the Fathers: 'On three things does the world stand: On justice, truth, and peace.' As you look forward to the next quarter millennium of the Board of Deputies, let that lesson guide us in all we say and all we do.

250th Anniversary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews

HRH, Prince of Wales
Guildhall, 5th July 2011

Fifty-five years ago as Sir Winston Churchill concluded a speech here at the Guildhall, he is reputed to have turned to my Mother, who was to speak after him, and provided one of those examples of what happens when the microphone has inadvertently been left on... The entire gathering heard him say: "Poor you, it's your turn now!".

Well, now it is *my* turn, and I cannot tell you how touched and delighted my wife and I have been by the warmth of your welcome this evening, nor by the honour you do me in asking me to speak at this immensely important and significant event to mark the 250th anniversary of the Board of Deputies.

If you trace a time line through a quarter of a millennium you cannot help but feel the weight of history on your shoulders. Few settings can bear that weight more robustly than the Guildhall, itself inextricably linked with the history of our British Jewish community - though not always with happy outcomes. Indeed this very room was the scene - more than 430 years ago - of the trial of Rodrigo Lopes, the Jewish-born doctor of Queen Elizabeth I. History recalls that Lopes was falsely accused by those who were jealous of his influence at Court. He was tried here in this hall and sentenced to death. The Queen tried to avert his execution, but in vain. She was, though, able to achieve something almost unheard of after a treason trial. She gave the Lopes' family the right to retain their property.

Later reigns were to see Jews welcomed to Britain from many lands: from Spain and Holland, Germany, the Balkans and Romania, from Poland and the Baltic States, from Egypt, Yemen and Morocco, from Iran, Iraq and Bahrain and from South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Incidentally, some time ago I met a family of British Jews of Lithuanian origin who told me how in about 1900 their forbears had bought tickets for New York, so were most surprised to be disembarked in Ireland.

"Surely we can't be in New York?" they said. "No, you bought tickets to New Cork," came the reply. They had been tricked – but many of them ended up here in England. And that incredibly diverse heritage has brought a deep and vibrant contribution from British Jews to every sphere of British life: in the

arts, sciences and medicine, in trade and commerce.

British Jews play an immensely significant part in local and national government, in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords – where, if I may say so, the Chief Rabbi always provides a wise and steady voice. The whole of British society has also benefitted from a great deal of Jewish philanthropy, for which so many have cause to be deeply grateful.

If there is anything to regret in all this, it is that the talents and contributions of our Jewish community are not – to my mind, at any rate – sufficiently well known by the public at large. They are certainly not sufficiently celebrated and that is why my wife and I wanted to come here this evening – to recognize excellence and celebrate it with you.

Of course, the Jewish contribution to our country is nothing new.

The first Jewish knight, created by Queen Anne, was Sir Solomon de Medina. It was Sir Solomon who provided the supplies, including the food, that enabled the British Army under the Duke of Marlborough to win the decisive Battle of Blenheim – a vital turning point in the War of Spanish Succession and a swift kick in the shins to Louis XIV's aspirations.

The great Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, was baptized as a child, but he always regarded himself proudly as a Jew – and I loved the way he described himself to Queen Victoria as: "The blank page between the Old and the New Testaments!"

I also loved his wonderful response to the insulting taunts of a Member of Parliament: "Yes, I am a Jew, but when the ancestors of The Right Honourable Gentleman were living as savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon!"

Less militaristic than Sir Solomon, but no less effective, was Sir Moses Montefiore who was raised to the Baronetcy by my great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria. Interestingly, when she was a young girl, and her mother, The Duchess of Kent, used to take her down to Ramsgate, Sir Moses had a special key cut to give her access to his gardens nearby. Of course,



you will know better than me, Ladies and Gentlemen, that Sir Moses was one of Vivian Wineman's most distinguished predecessors as President of the Board of Deputies. I can only say that Vivian will need a very great deal of energy if he is to beat Sir Moses' incredible record of thirty-nine years in the post! Of course, history remembers Sir Moses particularly for his daring intercession with the Tsar of Russia and the Sultan of Turkey to protect Jews in their dominions, not to mention similar exploits in Rome, Morocco and Romania – and seven trips to Jerusalem. He so loved Jerusalem that he adopted it on his family crest and wrote it on all his belongings including his bed! He took a bit of Britain to Jerusalem – a Kentish windmill that still stands there, known as the Montefiore windmill – and a bit of Jerusalem to Britain: he is buried in Jerusalem soil, in Ramsgate, in an exact replica of Rachel's Tomb not far from Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Indeed, his appetite for travel – and by horse-drawn carriage at that! – seems to have been utterly unquenchable. That alone must have nearly killed him; though not as quickly as some may have thought.... He shares with Mark Twain the distinction of having read his own obituary, published a little precipitously by a local editor. Like Twain, his response was pithy and memorable: "Thank God to have been able to hear of the rumour and to read an account of the same with my own eyes, without using spectacles!"

Like Sir Moses, not only do I have some idea of the pleasures – if not the rigours! – of horse-drawn carriages, but I have also

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Calling all Ladies Frankie Weinberg

I have recently moved into Watford, very near to the Shul. I thought this would be good thing as each week I could then wear my high heels without too much hobbling along the street.

I go to Shul most weeks and was quickly introduced to lovely people, everyone was very welcoming and friendly. I usually arrive quite early and so when I noticed that there were not many people to help with the Kiddush I always went in to the kitchen and offered to help.

After a few weeks people were asking "have you been put on the Kiddush rota yet?" I got the impression that it was some sort of penance. Actually it is the reverse, I have got to know people and the camaraderie it brings makes you feel part of a huge family.

I found that some ladies had been doing their duties for well over 25 years, and think surely it is time for others to take over from them, so they can now sit back, relax and be served.

Whether it was because of my close proximity to the Shul or my early arrivals on a Shabbat, I am not sure which, but I have been asked to take over the role of leading the Kiddushim from Elaine who very much wanted to retire. A hard act to follow but I will do my best.

I am appealing to all ladies for help please. There is a Kiddush every week and it would be really nice if some new ladies joined our team. It will require your help about once every 12 weeks or longer depending on how many people would be willing to join.

When a rota is issued full guidance on what is required will be issued each time. Please email me on Fr@nkie.me or telephone 01923 354426 to join the rota, or if you require further information.



Women's Circle

RochelLevine

Since Rosh Hashanah, the Women's circle has been busy. Here's a round-up of what's been going on:

Nutrition Evening. We were joined by expert nutritionist Rivkah Wells who spoke to us on the importance of a healthy balanced diet. She also specialises in children's health and was on hand to give advice to parents about healthy eating and how good vitamins can improve their overall well-being.

The Art of Sushi

A lovely crowd turned out learn the art of sushi making. The evening opened with a talk by Rabbi Levine on the importance of checking vegetables lest they contain insects which cannot be consumed according to Jewish law. Together with Rochel, guest presenter Chaya Mills helped all present to make their own sushis with a variety of flavours.



a tasty Shabbos meal. The evening concluded with everyone present enjoying the full meal that had been cooked on the night.

Challah Baking II

This evening furthered previously learned skills in challah baking. Those present were taught by guest presenter Nechama Sudak how to braid challah with six braids, a talent in its own right. Everyone left with wonderful challahs for Shabbos.

Kanteen

A nice ladies night out at Kanteen for all the hard working Women's Circle!

For more info about upcoming events please email rochelevine@hotmail.com

Shabbos in One Hour

Guest presenter Rochel Dubrawsky took us through the steps of making Shabbos in one hour. We are all rushed on a Friday from time to time and need to know the skills required to make



This page has been sponsored as a thank you to Sam Stuart

Hashanah parcels to assist people.

Also The US Living & Learning department under the stewardship of Rabbis Andrew Shaw and Michael Laitner have introduced some fantastic initiatives including the newlyweds' course, educational trips to Poland and a range of learning programmes at various US Shuls.

You & US: What about the media image of The US? You mentioned before your election that people view The US as an older organisation with a brand seen as 'unattractive' to the Facebook and Twitter generation. Do you think The US has started to address these problems?

SP: As I mentioned earlier on we are addressing this issue head on and has been discussed at the Young Leaders Group. There is a danger that we believe our own publicity and assume everyone knows about the great initiatives that exist. But in reality there are thousands of members who still see The US as that old, tired organisation and we need to show them that The US is changing for the better with a fresher and more exciting image.

To that effect, we have the recently launched You & US website which is eye catching and entertaining to read and we have our team working on Facebook to better engage with the 'online' generation. We are aware that there is a lot to do and this is just the beginning.

I think we are going to have more problems with Shechita and Brit Milah but we are determined to fight for our right to continue our traditional practices.

You & US: Do you think your job is harder and more complicated than the other US

President??

SP: Well of course when you are working with our chevra everyone has an opinion! But in all honesty, no. I have a great professional team and I don't whether his team is as strong as ours, which I am grateful for!

You & US: What is the best advice you have ever been given?

SP: Consult. At my last job at PWC I used to say to my colleagues that the biggest mistake you can make is to make a mistake alone. So it is very important to get advice, to consult and generally not to be a loner. Our people have extremely good ideas and I want to encourage them to share them.

You & US: What do you do in your spare time?

SP: That's easy - my priority is to spend time with my wife, my children and especially my grandchildren.

'I would be delighted to hear directly from members who have comments or suggestions on any matter affecting the US. My email address is president@theus.org.uk.

My colleagues join me in wishing you and all of your family a Kosher L'Pesach'



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giving the names of those attending, together with the name and date of birth of your child.

Entry is by security pass only, which will be emailed to you a week before the meeting.

We look forward to meeting you on 9th May and giving you as much advice and assistance as we can.

An open evening will be held later in the year for you to meet the Headteacher, Staff and Governors, look around the School and have a full briefing on the educational and pastoral opportunities HJPS can offer your child

www.hjps.herts.sch.uk

Introducing the New US President Stephen Pack



Stephen Pack was elected US President in July 2011, taking over from his predecessor Simon Hochhauser. Since then, Stephen has been working with the new trustees, staff at the US Centre and various communities to improve and increase the programmes and services available to the US membership. At the same time, he is overseeing the Selection process for the next Chief Rabbi and working on advancing the US message of authentic, inclusive and modern Orthodox Judaism to Anglo Jewry. Below is an update of an interview with Stephen Pack which originally appeared on the You & US edition of 19th January 2012.

You & US: Hi Stephen, How have things been progressing since you were elected as President of the US?

SP: It has been an intense and enjoyable few months. The US is an impressive and unique organisation and I hope to improve and build on its strengths significantly during my tenure.

You & US: Can you give us an update on some of the goals you wanted The US to focus on?

The Younger Generation: You have said that attracting young people to The US and giving them active roles are key to "securing the future of The US". What is the latest?

SP: We launched a new initiative called the Young Leaders Group which I am immensely excited about. The first meeting generated some great suggestions ranging from events in the City to programmes for US singles. This is a fantastic opportunity to get input from the younger generation which is crucial because they are the key to the future of The US and British Jewry.

One of the main objectives which we have achieved was to create a number of steering groups run by the young leaders which will empower them to help us drive The US forward. I am delighted to announce that we now have three committees which will focus on increasing the younger membership of the US, improving the image and brand as it appears to them, and programmes and events that are provided for young professionals.

The most recent meeting included a progress report and a discussion on the best approach to making The US more attractive our younger members. We will also be looking at the best ways to attract younger, unaffiliated Jews to The US.

Increased Autonomy for Shuls: How are you going about doing this?

SP: I am a big believer in allowing Synagogue Rabbis and lay leaders to decide what works best for their individual communities. No two Shuls are the same which means that we can't expect them to run the same sets of programmes and services for its membership. My opinion is that as long as they conform to accepted halacha, are not running at a loss and uphold US values, there is no reason to interfere with the way the Shul is run. The Centre is here to support, not dictate to communities.

Trustees to adopt communities and obtain regular feedback: Have any trustees been appointed Shuls yet? If so, what has the response been like from both the Trustees and their appointed communities.

SP: This was implemented soon after I was elected and the response from both Trustees and Shuls has been overwhelmingly positive.

The idea is to increase the lines of communication between the Centre and the communities. It is not only Shuls that are being adopted by the Trustees, they have also been assigned a department from within The US Centre, such as Marketing, Finance or US Chesed. This is especially useful for Trustee meetings, as they have a greater level of knowledge about the different communities and the way they are being run which means they can communicate whether support is needed and where there are issues to be resolved.

It also helps the communities as they have a 'champion' Trustee, who understands their issues, can support their needs and make sure new initiatives are offered to Shuls.

Merge and build closer relationships with other communities: We have recently seen St Albans and Enfield become full members of The US and there have been Tribe youth workers appointed in Manchester. Is this what you envisage when you talk about closer relations with other communities? What about others such as the Spanish & Portuguese and Federation?

SP: The US welcomes the addition of Affiliates taking full membership status and we believe we have the necessary infrastructure to assist them. But it is a choice that they have to make for themselves. There is no pressure of any sort by The US. Where we can help, we can and we will, if asked.

You & US: Is there anything within your manifesto that you have changed your stance on or maybe not made as much progress as you would have liked?

SP: I am impatient to move more quickly, but overall I am pleased with what has been accomplished so far. Many of our initiatives are still at a relatively early stage, but I think we are on track to make some important changes. I am also conscious that our professional staff are doing excellent work and it is important to let them run the organisation rather than get in their way. The Trustees input is primarily concerned with strategy and governance.

You & US: 2011 was a big year for the United Synagogue with a whole range of new programmes and initiatives launched. Which ones are you most proud of?

SP: Across the whole of The US there have been some really amazing initiatives. The launch of the first ever Tribe Israel Tour was an amazing success and it was supported by the incredible US Chesed department who offered bursaries to those US families who otherwise could not afford to send their children to Israel.

US Chesed have made a tremendous impact on thousands of people both within and outside the Jewish community, be it through organising blood donor sessions at Hendon US or preparing and delivering thousands of Pesach and Rosh

Consulting group on January 25th.

What I would like to stress is that I believe this to be the most transparent process for the selection of the Chief Rabbi. All the latest documents are available on the website and I encourage people to look at this if they want to gain a better understanding of the process.

Relationship with Board of Deputies (BOD) and the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC): What is your opinion of the relationship between The US and these groups?

SP: The majority of deputies to the Board are US members, which of course reflects the relative size of our community. If we want the Board of Deputies to do the right things for us, then we need to ensure that we get the right deputies appointed. It is a very important job and we have to give it to deputies who really care and take their responsibilities seriously.

I am in the process of meeting and familiarising myself with the JLC and its working functions and I intend to work closely with them in a way to best advance the interests of the United Synagogue and British Jewry in a positive way.

Better Key Performance Indicators: How will you go about assessing what is happening across The US and where we can improve?

At our last Trustee meeting we had a presentation from our Consultant Marketing Director, outlining the key performance indicators proposed for the organisation. We are starting to measure a number of areas which will help us to assess what is going on across The US. We are going to do this properly and will place a special focus on trends in membership.

You & US: Is there anything within your manifesto that you have changed your stance on or maybe not made as much progress as you would have liked?

We have a good and close working relationship with other Jewish communities across the UK and have co-operated with them on matters which are of mutual interest to Anglo Jewry such as Shechita and Brit Milah. We invited leaders of the S&P community and the Federation to act as observers to the process in the selection of the Chief Rabbi and they attended the first meeting.

We have visited a number of communities in the provinces and there has been a lot of interest shown in the programmes run by Tribe. If we are asked for assistance or a community wishes to implement one of our programmes, then The US is more than happy to assist where we can.

The appointment of the Tribe Youth workers at Prestwich Shul in Manchester came after we were approached to help run programmes in the provinces and it is encouraging to see how successful it is.

Secure appointment of the next Chief Rabbi: What do you want to say about it?

SP: The process has started and is running exactly as planned. We had the first meeting of the Representative Group on December 11th 2011 with delegates coming from across London and the provinces. We explained the process in detail and the next step was the meeting of the

Poem by Charlie Wagman Aged 8 years



If you get bullied and your torah gets taken away
Be Jewish anyway.
If you are Praying and someone takes your Siddur away
Be Jewish anyway.
If you are lighting your Shabbat candles and someone takes them away
Be Jewish anyway. If you are eating your matzah and someone takes it away
Be Jewish anyway.

If you are heating your Shabbat Story and someone takes it away
Be Jewish anyway.
If someone takes the tefilin away they still can't take the voice of Judaism away
So
Be Jewish anyway!

By Charlie



Watford's got the Blues

Coll Michaels

March 1965. Forty seven years ago I was studying hard for my Barmitzvah, rehearsing my Sedrah, Maftir and Haftorah for that very special Shabbat. Always happy to step up, I was looking forward to it. My older brother had surpassed all expectations only eighteen months earlier and I was determined to do at least as well.

My mother Pearl had her new dress made and ready. The proprietor of the Grosvenor Rooms, who also happened to be my father, had organised the party to end all parties. I had put a whole year's work into this and at last I was ready. I could do it in my sleep! And then disaster struck. Shock and horror! The Rabbi who had worked all year with me on my portion called my father and me into a meeting. He looked very serious. I felt guilty straight away. What had I done? My father looked at me, questioning. My heart began to thud. "I have some bad news". He shook his head and looked down at the floor. "I am afraid to tell you that you are not allowed to read this portion for your Barmitzvah next week. It remains my prerogative to do so at this time of year and I will be doing it. You will have to learn something else and you have six days to learn the right one".

Dumbstruck, devastated and distraught! How could this happen to me? All those hours of study! I held my head in my



hands. There was nothing to be done. My father put his arm around me. I expected to hear a brilliant speech. Sympathetic, comforting, supportive, motivating, inspiring? Not exactly. "Well son" he said, "What's it going to take"? Slowly, it dawned on me. No thought for the effort ahead, here was my silver lining and I was going to take it. I looked up at him and said. "An electric guitar."

My parents may have come to regret my father's rash but effective bribe. But it worked. I learnt the portion. My mother's dress was a fabulous success and the party dazzled. I even assaulted the guests with my first amplified instrumental Shadows guitar solo!

Music was my first love. My wife tells me it won't be my last. My love for music, and specifically the Blues turned from a passive love to an active one. When I wasn't studying or bus spotting (I knew how to enjoy life back then) I was in my bedroom making music with friends with whom I still play today. BB King and British Blues heroes such as John Mayall, Peter Green and Eric Clapton were my inspiration as I formed my first school band, *Blues Apex*. My school, Harrow County, turned out many winners, including famous musicians. Little did I know that my rhythm guitarist, Kimberley Rew would go on to write the international hit *Walking on Sunshine* and win the Eurovision Song Contest, and John Altman who played saxophone would win Emmy Awards for his movie scores including the music for the *Life of Brian* and *Titanic*. It all went down well and we were a legend in our own lunchtime. We even got to turn down a deal with the legendary Mickie Most in favour of continuing our educations. As I mentioned, some of us went to later fame and fortune and others to Watford, but the journey has given me some great opportunities to play with some wonderful musicians including one time with my greatest influence of all, Peter Green.

Blues Apex drifted on and the early '70s were busy

years bringing up four young daughters, Debbie, Sam, Toria and Lucia, with my wife Andy and building a business. But music always filled our homes. When a new musician was introduced to me, Chris Cheale, we formed a new band called the *Great Escape*. This saw me through the eighties with many studio recordings but few live public appearances. A welcome return to gigging arrived when *Smokestack Blues Band* was formed with the late Tony Kelsey-Stead, my daughters' physics teacher at Watford Girls Grammar School. This had the added advantage of a ready-made fan club! At this stage my idols were Fleetwood Mac and they hugely influenced our material at that time. Some of my favourite numbers include *Need Your Love So Bad*, *I Loved Another Woman* and *Stop Messing Around*. I still play some of these numbers and it gave me great pleasure to play *I Need Your Love So Bad* at Kim Rew's wedding last year!

My current band is the Cadillac Blues Band which has been together since 1991 and gives me the opportunity to sing and play my favourite songs and to invite guests from the roll of artists I have had the privilege of working with over the last 45 years. I have also toured with the Polly Browne Blues Band (*Same Old Feeling* No 1 hit) and recently recorded and performed with local band Dog's Life.

The current line-up of the Cadillac band comprises John Curtis on electric bass (Gary Moore Band), Kimberley Rew (Katrina and the Waves, Soft Boys) and Morris Windsor (Soft Boys, Egyptians). We play frequently in Watford at The Sportsman (Croxley Green).

Over the years I have been fortunate enough to be able to collect some beautiful guitars. Each one has its merits and I have two Gibsons and three Fender electrics as well as a Taylors and Ovation acoustics. But my all-time favourite is my PRS McCarty which has a violin like resonance, warmth and an endless sustain that is well suited to the Blues that continues to be such an important and integral part of my life.

If you want to come and see us, or if you share my passion for the Blues, visit our website for more information at www.cadillacblues.co.uk

Rock on!

This page has been sponsored by Di and Ellard Roberts to celebrate Jeremy and Eleanor's wedding

Fundraising

Julie Woolf

All the money raised from events goes towards the general upkeep of our shul and also a percentage is donated to our chosen charity of the year. This year coming to an end in April the charity was Nikki's Smile, and from May it will be the Sam Keene Foundation.

We need you. There is a desperate need for people to come forward and help me plan events. Right now it is just me and one is definitely not enough. Please call or email me on the contact details given if you would like to join me.

The 2011 WADS 100 Club ran with 40 members and made a profit of £925.00 on the year. We gave out to many winners 11 prizes of £50 and £25, with end of season prizes of £150 and £100.

The 2012 WADS Club is about to commence in April.

To participate it is £50 for the year with a monthly chance to win monthly prizes as above. If you haven't entered already please email Julie Woolf on jandwoolf@aol.com, or call Carolyn at the shul office for a form to be posted out to you, or call me on 01923 231705. Cheques should be payable to WADS and dropped into the shul office with a note saying 100 Club. This is a fun way to raise money, with much better chances than the lottery!

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2012 WADS 100 CLUB