

SUSSEX JEWISH NEWS



WHAT'S INSIDE....

**TRIBUTE TO GODFREY GOULD | MEET THE BNJC CHEF | CHANUKAH IN
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Pause for Thought

What's in a minyan?

What's in a minyan and why does it hurt when there isn't one? What is it about being one person short?

It's 'just' one person after all. A single individual, and yet, according to tradition, the embodiment of so much more. For only with 10 (men if you're Orthodox; men and women amongst the Judaism's liberal strands), can you say Kaddish, the Memorial Prayer. Only with 10 are we able to have a proper quorum, making up what tradition says constitutes a 'kehilla' or community. Only then, can we continue with our communal prayers, morning, afternoon, Shabbat, Yom Tovim.

Recently, one Shabbat, as my synagogue's Community Security Trust officer, I stood outside while eight congregants waited. With nine, I'd be asked to come in so prayers could continue. The doors would be locked. Security cameras actively watched by the caretaker. We could go on. But no. 10 never materialised. The minutes ticked over, a sense of anxiety mounted. We had to stop. A prepared kiddush raised the mood slightly. We took pleasure in simply being together, post-most-stringent-of-lockdown-protocols lifted. And yet: the nagging thoughts.

"I can't remember ever not getting a minyan on

Shabbat," one crestfallen fellow congregant said on the way out of the door.

The temptation to generalise rises unbidden as a consequence. What's wrong? Should we have called more people? Rallied the troops harder? Have we lost our recognition of what the essentials of Judaism are? How much it's not simply about numbers, but the disappointment for those saying Kaddish or observing a Yahrzeit that they cannot collectively praise, sanctify and memorialise the Eternal as a way of binding ourselves to our lost loved ones?

Is it a sign that, despite all our efforts at communal rejuvenation, that the downward demographic slide has gathered too much steam to stop? As Jews, we live with the notion of attrition. We know what happens when the music stops.

And yet.

Tomorrow is another day, another Shabbat. Another chance to think about Woody Allen's famous quip: "Ninety percent about life is showing up". Not for the individual. But for the collective. For our community. For the permission to say, when we raise the kiddush cup, "L'chayyim!" – and embody it.

COVER : *Godfrey Gould at the Amsterdam Railway Museum*

SJN brings local news, events, articles, reviews, announcements, people, congregations, communities, contacts and more. Delivered at the start of each month, SJN is run entirely by volunteers for reporting, editing and circulating each edition. It has become the cornerstone of the Jewish community across the region.

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What's on: December 2021

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SHABBAT SHALOM - BRIGHTON TIMES

| In | Light candles | Out | Havdalah |
|--------|---------------|----------------|----------|
| Fri 3 | 3.39 pm | Sat 4 | 4.53 pm |
| Fri 10 | 3.37 pm | Sat 11 | 4.52 pm |
| Fri 17 | 3.37 pm | Sat 18 | 4.53 pm |
| Fri 24 | 3.41 pm | Sat 25 | 4.57 pm |
| Fri 31 | 3.47 pm | Sat 1 Jan 2022 | 5.03 pm |

SPECIAL DATES

Wednesday 1 – 4th candle Chanukah

Thursday 2 – 5th candle Chanukah

Friday 3 – 6th candle Chanukah

Saturday 4 – 7th candle Chanukah

Sunday 5 – 8th candle Chanukah

Monday 3 January 2022 - Bank Holiday

Please note that the next issue will be January 2022.

The deadline for your announcements, news, views, articles, photos, adverts, etc., is **2 December 2021**.

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| Announcements up to 3 lines | £10 |

GUIDELINES

Sussex Jewish News ('SJN'), its Editor and Editorial Board:

- are not allied to any synagogue or group and the views expressed by writers are not necessarily those of SJN;
- accept advertisements and announcements in good faith but do not endorse any products or services and do not accept liability for any aspect of any advertisements or announcements;
- and
- welcome readers' contributions but reserve the right to edit, cut, decline or submit the content to others for comment. To ensure that we receive your submissions by email, please send them ONLY to sjneditor@sussexjewishnews.com, otherwise we cannot guarantee their consideration for publication. To assist the Editorial Board, submissions should be in Word format using Times New Roman font, size 12. Receipt of submissions may not be acknowledged, unless specifically requested. As the Editorial Board is made up entirely of volunteers, any response may be subject to delay.

Your News

Special Birthdays

Mazeltov to:
Barbara Isaacs and all who have special birthdays this month.

Mazeltov to:

Bobbie Silver on her 100th birthday on 24th December. Bobbie is living at Nightingale house in Clapham after spending many happy years in Hove. She sends greetings to all her friends in Hove and has many fond memories of her time there. With much love from her family.



Barmitzvah

Mazel tov to Rabbi Zalman and Shterna Lewis and family on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Shmulik at Holland Road Shul on 5 November 2021.

Get Well

We wish a refuah sheleima to all in our community who are unwell or in hospital at the present time.

Deaths

We wish Long Life:

To Louise Cohen on the sad passing of her daughter Michelle Heal z'l.

To the families of Aubrey Besser z'l and Norman Zaft z'l.



The Lunch and Social Club at Ralli Hall

by Jacqueline Tichauer

Tel: 01273 739999 or lunchandsocialclub@gmail.com

Facebook: [Lunch and Social Club at Ralli Hall](#)

Twitter: [Lunch and Social Club @lunch_social](#)

Happy Chanukah everyone and we hope you are all enjoying latkes and doughnuts (not the best diet, but very tasty). 2021 is coming to its end and we are hoping that 2022 will be easier on everyone. Hopefully there won't be any restrictions and we can enjoy being in each other's company. I am very happy that we are back up and running and that the Lunch & Social Club is going from strength to strength. Our members are so happy to get back together and are enjoying seeing each other. The social aspect is so important for many people especially after the long time we spent apart.

We were very lucky to have Sharon Starr singing for us on Monday 18th November - she was amazing, and everyone was mesmerised by her lovely voice and her very entertaining songs. A big Thank You to her and hopefully she will come back in the near future to sing for us.

Unfortunately, we had to close for two weeks due to our being informed at a very short notice that, because of a shortage of staff, the Hyman Fine House could not deliver

food to us in the foreseeable future. We hoped we could come to some arrangement but unfortunately, they could not help us. We have now organised our food for the next few months and Angela Samuels, when she is available, is coming to our rescue, for which we are most appreciative. We then hope we can make some new permanent arrangements but we can assure you that we are staying open and looking forward to seeing everyone.

Our Chanukah party on the 2nd December will be lots of fun. We have an amazing band appearing, and will be making high tea, so something to look forward to.

Please join us on a Monday and Thursday from 12.00 pm to 5.00 pm and enjoy a great afternoon with good food, scrabble, cards, quizzes, discussions, and not forgetting the most important thing - a good wee chat.

Looking forward to seeing you and wishing you all a lovely Chanukah.

Lunch and Social Club & Ralli Hall Chanukah Party at Ralli Hall

Thursday 2nd December
12.30pm – 5.00pm

Afternoon High Tea
Great Entertainment from
John Lake Trio & Dave Williams

Come and enjoy yourselves
Contact: Jacquie Tichauer on 01273 739999



ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PART TIME JOB?

We are looking for someone who knows their way around a kitchen and has a Level 2 qualification in Food, Hygiene and Nutrition.

WE NEED SOMEONE WHO IS WILLING TO COMMIT TO TWO DAYS A WEEK ON MONDAY AND THURSDAY, AROUND 5-6 HOURS A DAY, COOKING A THREE COURSE KOSHER MEAL (unsupervised)

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CALL
JACQUIE 01273 739999/07738760250**



We are ready to welcome you to our care home.



Hyman Fine House is located by Brighton beach in Kemptown.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, keeping our residents safe has been our priority. Our experienced and caring staff ensure our home has the highest level of cleanliness, regular testing and ample amounts of PPE.

We also know how essential it is for you to stay in touch with your loved one. We have made sure that families stay connected through one on one visits and video calls.

Our home is a very special community with daily activities promoting wellbeing and stimulating both body and mind. We celebrate Jewish life and enjoy Shabbat and festivals together as well as delicious Kosher food.

For more information please call me on 01273 688266 or email ncarson@jcare.org

Natasha
Registered Manager



Hyman Fine House Go Purple and Remember

by Mark Pady

Tucked away as we are, in the depths of Sussex with the salt spray in our faces and the gentle call of seagulls in our ears, sometimes the rest of the world seems so far away. This month we have been delighted to feel connected with our fellow Jewish Care homes, community centres and supporters from communities across London and the South East.

We all joined in Go Purple Week, a fun fundraising and awareness raising week to embrace purple - Jewish Care's colour. It saw us dressing up in purple clothes, purple wigs and eating purple cake across the organization. We had a purple party with a purple quiz (did you know that the original purple dye came from a snail?) and purple themed music. Seeing pictures of all the care homes, day centres and office staff having a giggle was great.

Then we received the terrific news that Daniel Carmel-Brown – CEO of Jewish Care – had decided to adopt the London Living Wage across the organisation. This means that nobody working here will get paid less than £10.85 per hour, and qualified staff £11.05. This compares very favourably with other industries (a delivery driver at Sainsburys gets £10.15). The fundraisers will have to work harder to the tune of £1.5 million, but this is money well spent.

And thirdly, of course, there was Remembrance

Sunday. Our colleagues gathered stories from people who wished to contribute to this day of memory and our own Sidney Lipman was pleased to help.

Eighty years ago, Sidney was stationed in Scotland with the Royal Engineers to construct a pier for shipping. Word went out that they were going to be sent overseas and they were soon sent on embarkation leave.

Sidney says, "Pending a voyage to who knows where, I sent a letter to my fiancée with a postscript, "Shall we get married?"

"It caused a real stir, her family realised there was a lot to arrange in such a short time. So it was on 26 October 1941, childhood sweethearts were married in the Stamford Hill Synagogue by Rabbi Unterman. After four days. I returned to my unit, but it was three years and eight months before we were reunited. As you can imagine, our reunion after all this period was dramatic. What happened in between is best described in my war memoirs entitled 'A Man With Two Scars'. Now, after a long and eventful life of 100 years, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, sent me congratulations with a charming photo which my family will treasure in days to come."

These little details, the personal touch, make these tales so important. They should never be forgotten.

Again, from Jewish Care's Hyman Fine House, we wish everyone a very Happy Chanukah and wish the community light and joy.

Shalom until next time.



Community Life



Meet the Chef: Yanir Mrejen

We're counting down the days until we open the doors next summer to our fully kosher community hub for Brighton & Hove and we're delighted that Israeli Chef, Yanir Mrejen, will join us to lead our catering team.

An outstanding and imaginative chef, Yanir has worked in top international restaurants alongside world-renowned chefs, including Gordon Ramsey. Yanir recently helped launch Novellino Bistro in London and we are proud to be working closely with Novellino to benefit from their experience in creating superb kosher restaurants. Yanir will be relocating to Brighton & Hove, with his wonderful family, to run the whole catering facility, from the bakery to the bistro restaurant and from menus to cook-along events.

We recently spoke to Yanir to find out more about his experiences training under Gordon Ramsey and to get a sneak peek into the delicious menu options we have to look forward to at our restaurant.

What made you want to be a chef?

I think I've always wanted to cook, even when I was 6 or 7, I made salads and dishes with my family. But there was definitely a moment in my life that decided my career change and gave me my purpose to become a chef. After I left the army, I experienced a severe terror incident in Israel that changed my perspective on life. As cooking was always something I loved, I decided to get experience working in hospitality and begin my training to become a chef. In 2005 I sent an application letter to Gordon Ramsey to work in his restaurant and I never looked back.

Can you tell us more about your experience working for Gordon Ramsey?

I've been lucky enough to work with quite a few famous chefs. I trained with Gordon Ramsey when I first started out (although I only worked with him around four times a year), but despite his TV persona, he's a really nice guy to work with. I was also grateful to work with Chef Oliver Peyton OBE. But as much as I loved being a London chef, it was an incredibly tough and fast-paced environment. As soon as I became a father, I realised that being a parent comes first and I couldn't manage the long hours anymore, so I started working in kosher restaurants.

You're now the Head Chef for Novellino Bistro in London. What's it like to run a kosher kitchen and what have been your challenges?

When you run a non-kosher kitchen, every ingredient is available and possible to use. But when you're cooking in a kosher way, you have to keep in mind many dietary requirements that can sometimes be limiting, and substitutions, such as dairy-free cheese, don't taste quite the same. It has made me work hard to find

imaginative ways to recreate these flavours in a kosher way. It's also a challenge with suppliers, as all elements of cooking need to be kosher, so, if there's a shortage of kosher margarine, for example, that's key to making a delicious fondant, it can get a bit tricky to deliver a quality meal.

How would you describe your style as a chef and what are your favourite dishes to cook?

I love combining textures in my dishes. There's always something soft, salty, and crunchy on my plate. I enjoy using high-quality ingredients and prefer to make the cooking process simple to really showcase the elements of the dish. I don't like cooking ingredients until they disappear! I want people to look down at their plate and know exactly what they're eating. The influences in my cooking very much come from my family heritage in the Middle East. My grandmother came from Morocco and my memories of her food are of so many incredible flavours and spices. Recently, I've also enjoyed learning to cook more traditional Ashkenazi style dishes



Can you give us a sneak preview of the menu at BNJC when we open next summer?

My menu will be centred around fresh Mediterranean ingredients. I plan the dishes to be tasty, healthy, fresh and sourced from great suppliers. I really love mezze or tapas, so I intend to create a selection of tasty dips and dishes to share on the table to start each meal. I love dishes with aubergine and tahini. People don't know the secrets of how much you can create with aubergine. The restaurant will definitely be a real fusion. The menu will be based on French bistro cuisine, but elevated with delicious Mediterranean mezze and fresh, earthy dishes. It will be fine dining, but simple and well thought out cooking. We'll also offer Ashkenazi staples like chicken soup, and other traditional dishes with

a French twist, for example a delicious chicken pate rather than chopped liver. Ever had chopped liver with a pear and wine jam? It's delicious.



Brighton is known as the vegan capital of the UK. Will the menus at BNJC offer a variety of choices for all lifestyles?

We definitely plan to create menus that will be accessible to everyone. We plan for allergy tolerant

options, such as gluten-free, nut-free and of course dairy-free with the many pareve options on offer.

Veganism is growing and we will make sure to have both vegetarian and vegan options for every meal. For example, a selection of vegan sushi at our sushi bar, tasty vegan options in our bistro menu and vegan-friendly desserts - I especially love a delicious vegan carrot cake.

What value do you think a kosher restaurant will bring to Brighton & Hove?

Currently, there are no kosher restaurants in Brighton & Hove and I believe that bringing kosher options to any city is a real mitzvah. Although it presents a challenge, it will be worthwhile to provide the community with a really great place to eat, that just happens to be kosher. I hope our restaurant will bring good competition to the restaurant scene in Brighton. As the only kosher restaurant in the city, I want to go beyond what people

expect. I'm really looking forward to getting to know the Brighton & Hove Jewish community and learn what they want to eat. I hope to provide amazing food for the community to enjoy together.

End of an Era

by Ronnie Taylor

What do you do when your 1863 building, once full of people, prayer and song becomes an empty shell of a building with no people and no songs or prayers?

In the case of the Eastbourne Hebrew Congregation there is only one answer: close and sell the Synagogue.

The attendance at Shabbat services has been averaging 6 to 8 people and of these, only 3 or 4 have been men. Indeed, the declining membership does not contain a minyan of shul-going men. Regrettably, the upkeep of the building has become unsustainable; it is impossible to heat and there has been major expenditure on the fabric of the building. Services will be held in rented property after the sale is completed.

The building was purchased in 1922 and made into a Synagogue by a group of businessmen, who had established the Eastbourne Hebrew Congregation in 1918. The first President was a Mr. Hyams and Mr. George Marks was the Treasurer. The first Minister, for only a short time, was Reverend Jacobs who was succeeded by Reverend Louis Wolfe, who retired in 1945 and died in 1966 at the age of 91. He is buried in Eastbourne's Langney Cemetery.

Reverend Chaim Zack was appointed Minister in 1946 and when he retired in 1998 had the distinction of being one of the longest-serving Ministers in the country.

The Panto family had a significant involvement in the Synagogue. In 1969, when Paul Panto, a founder member and President of the congregation, passed away, Isaac Panto became President until 1985.

Ben Finkel was the next President until he retired due to ill health in 1994 when David Mindell took his place. David and his wife Margaret, the then Secretary, moved to Watford in 2005 and the very charismatic Menasche Harounoff, who had been a member for many years, became President until he sadly passed away in 2017. Menasche who was born and brought up in Jerusalem, loved to tell of his experiences working in the British tax office during the Mandate period and then in 1948 of fighting with the Haganah.

Over the years alterations to the interior of the building have been made including closing off the ladies' gallery in 1970 due it becoming unsafe and then in 2002 a major project was undertaken to change the ground floor configuration so that the Ark, Bimah and pews could be relocated from the first floor to street level. It was hoped that more members would be encouraged to attend services, but, sadly, the membership has continued to decline while the apathy has not.

Ronnie Taylor is the current President of Eastbourne Hebrew Congregation.

Brighton & Hove Jewish Welfare Board

Caring for Jewish people in need (Registered charity No. 255060)

We can help you

Are you, or someone that you know, in need of assistance? The Brighton & Hove Jewish Welfare Board (BHJWB) was established in 1846 and since that time, has been assisting Jewish people living in Sussex. Our aims are to alleviate poverty, hardship and deprivation by, for example:

- Providing financial help, usually in the form of a quarterly grant.
- Casual help of a financial nature.
- Benefits in kind, usually in the form of food, clothes, furniture, white goods etc.

If you or someone you know is in genuine need and would benefit from our help, please make contact via our website www.bhjwb.org. Please be assured that all information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Or perhaps you can help us..?

The Brighton & Hove Jewish Welfare Board derives its funding from you, the local community. We simply distribute your money to other members of our community who are in greater need. You can make a significant difference to the lives of those less fortunate living in our Sussex community.

Please visit our website www.bhjwb.org to make a donation or to arrange leaving a legacy to the Brighton & Hove Jewish Welfare Board in your will.

New Board members

The Brighton & Hove Jewish Welfare Board is a small, friendly team of local and compassionate volunteers. We meet 8 times each year (currently on Zoom) and the average Board member undertakes approximately 4 hours work each month.

The BHJWB is looking to recruit new members, at all levels, to replace long standing members who have recently retired or plan to retire in the near future. We need people who will be prepared to take on leadership roles once they have gained the necessary experience and we specifically need a secretary to take minutes and to deal with administration between meetings.

If you are discreet, have a caring nature and skills that would enable you to make a valuable contribution to the work undertaken by the BHJWB, please in the first instance contact our Chairman Fiona Sharpe at info@bhjwb.org

10 Features

Godfrey Gould – A Tribute

by Michael Crook and Gordon Franks



Godfrey was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 17th June 1931 to Abraham and Blanche (nee Berlovitz) Gould. He had a sister Carol, born in 1937, and by the outbreak of World War 2 in September 1939, they were living in Sunderland. During the war they moved several times, including to Keswick and Birmingham, which meant frequent changes of school. Eventually, his father was working for Swan Hunter (shipbuilders) on the Tyne and the family settled in Whitley Bay, where Godfrey attended Whitley Bay Grammar School, and enjoyed playing on the beaches there. He wrote at length in the Rosh Hashanah 2021 edition of the Brighton & Hove Hebrew Congregation magazine (The Shofar) about his Bar Mitzvah, in the Whitley Bay Shul in June 1944.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of a wartime education, Godfrey secured a place at Durham University to read Geography, and then moved to London to take a Postgraduate degree. He registered as a teacher in 1954 - RP/54/106 was his England & Wales Qualified Teacher Number - and taught for several years at secondary schools and colleges in Wimbledon, Coventry and from 1962 in Woking.

Godfrey met Maureen Bash on a trip to Israel and they married in 1966 in London. By this time, Godfrey had been appointed as Deputy Director of Human Resources at East Sussex County Council at Lewes, so they moved down to the area. Initially, they lived in Portslade, later moving to a bungalow in Rothbury Road in Hove. Sadly, it was not long before Maureen was diagnosed with MS, and after several years of his looking after her, she went into Linton Hospital near Maidstone in 1978. Godfrey continued to work full-time and visited her every weekend until she passed away in 1986. He was lonely and became depressed, but two years later he was advised to join organisations and get involved, which he did in his own inimitable style.

One of the first organisations to benefit from Godfrey's enthusiasm was the Brighton & Hove Jewish Welfare Board. He was actively involved for many years, and produced 'A Brief History 1846-1996' to celebrate 150 years of its work. His other interests are too numerous to mention, but included the Jewish Discussion Group, the Arts Society, the National Trust, the Sussex Transport Interest Group, and concerts at the Brighton Dome and elsewhere.

In 1996 Godfrey enrolled as a very mature student (as he put it) at the University of Sussex, for a three-year Diploma in Landscape Studies, under the guidance of Geoffrey Mead, a noted local historian who became a great friend. His studies included a 5,000 word dissertation on Rottingdean, which he summarised in the June 2020 SJN. He also produced an analysis of the growth of tea rooms in Bramber in the Victorian era, which, of course, relied upon the Shoreham to Horsham railway for access, another of his favourite topics.

Godfrey was editor of the Shofar for several

years, during which time it was awarded a 'Highly Commended' in the Board of Deputies Community Magazine Awards 2003. From 2013, he contributed a series of sixteen articles under the title "Brighton Jewish Worthies", starting with David Mocatta, including Sir Edward Sassoon and Henry Solomon, and ending with Dr Julius Carlebach. He also wrote virtually every month for SJN, sometimes about his own life, sometimes about current topics such as climate change and the pandemic, even in July 2020 about his experiences as a book reviewer, and always in a highly readable and entertaining style.

One of Godfrey's enduring delights was travel, often combined with his other great passion, railways. He wrote about his first overseas trips as a student to Holland in 1953 and in 1955, by train across Europe to northern Italy, including a visit to Venice. Later in life he went on regular cruises, which were usually on small ships in the Mediterranean, but he also took a river boat trip on the Mississippi in 2019, which he wrote about in the January 2020 SJN. He took a cooking holiday in Greece, visited South America, and went on numerous trips to Europe by rail. He once wrote that he had visited about sixty countries, many of them on several occasions.

Godfrey had developed a deep interest in Jewish History, particularly locally in Brighton & Hove, and together with a small group of



Features

local people, brought the Jewish Historical Society of England to Sussex in 2003. He was active in arranging the branch programme and became chairman from 2008 to 2014, following which he was made Honorary Branch President. He then continued to act as guide and mentor to his successor.

He contributed to the work of Marcus Roberts in setting up a JTrails for the City and was for many years a regular guide at the beautiful Grade 2* Listed synagogue in Middle Street. He was instrumental in the placing of several Blue Plaques to notable Jewish residents in Brighton & Hove, in particular the Plaque to Henry Solomon, the police chief murdered in his office in 1844, and the Plaque on the former synagogue site in Devonshire Place. He was the instigator of the Anthology of the Brighton & Hove Jewish Community 1766-2016, to celebrate 250 years since the first record of a Jewish resident in Brighton, Israel Samuels, and he took great pride in the unveiling of the Blue Plaque, by the Lord Lieutenant, at 22 East Street commemorating this.



Godfrey had many notable attributes, but above all he had a wonderful memory, and was quick to correct factual errors about the Brighton & Hove Jewish community, or many other topics. His enthusiasm for history, not only of the Jewish community, but of a wide variety of subjects, particularly railways, will be sorely missed.

And another tribute from Doris and the SJN team

We at SJN will miss Godfrey

I will miss Godfrey

The whole community and anyone who was lucky enough to know him will miss Godfrey

He gave us the wealth of his knowledge, the sharing of his thoughts and dreams

He knew only how to give and did not ask to receive

His joy of life and living pervaded his whole being

A 'Mensch' – a man in a million

We are so fortunate to have had him with us for so many years.



Godfrey was instrumental in having over twenty of the local buses named after Jewish citizens of the city, most recently in 2020, when a new bus was named Alfred Huberman. Known as 'The Tailor of Hanningtons', Alfred was a Holocaust survivor, and a Windermere boy, who appeared in the BBC documentary "The Windermere Children". Godfrey himself once featured on the side of a bus.

He passed away on 29th September 2021 on board a Noble Caledonia ship, on the cruise to celebrate his 90th birthday which he had been looking forward to so much. A fitting conclusion to a remarkable life which can, perhaps, best be summed up in his own words in the April 2021 SJN:

"We all can do something positive, all for ourselves, some for others. No matter how restricted, ...whatever we can or cannot do physically or mentally, we can all do something positive. Live for today – carpe diem – and then we will have our tomorrows. Use your time - you can't save it, and who knows, you might not get that much more".

COMMUNITY EVENTS IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Contact the Communal Diary before planning your events.

Email: info@sussexjewishrepresentativecouncil.org

12 Features

Godfrey Gould in his element

Our cover image shows Godfrey taking some time out whilst visiting the Dutch Train Museum, the Spoorwegmuseum, in Utrecht, which is near Amsterdam.

Godfrey loved trains – as well as buses and railway station architects – and he is obviously very happy to be surrounded by a wealth of historical trains and the one behind him looks to be very modern. It is painted in a silver-grey and red livery reminiscent of a very famous train type which was launched in 1934 and was Holland's first diesel, the D3, and also, apparently, the very first streamlined train ever made. People bought platform tickets just so they could get a close look at it. The colour scheme was innovative: silver-grey with red trim and aluminium-coloured roof. It featured many technical innovations as well, such as sliding doors rather than hinged ones, like those found on British trains for most of the 20th century,



lowered steps for boarding, tubular steel furniture, aluminium baggage racks, sliding windows for additional ventilation and drum brakes instead of cast iron brake shoes.

Whatever type of train it is that provides the background to the picture, it looks to be in perfect condition but the body panels of the sensational D3, have become rippled with age so perhaps this was not the D3.

What can be said is that Godfrey probably had a great day out. This museum has a wealth of trains in its collection and also a number of model railway layouts, which are meant to be educational as well as fascinating to look at.

We selected this picture from the ones presented to us, because it is so very Godfrey. The tribute to him shows his community side – organising Blue

Plaques or proposing names for the Brighton & Hove buses amongst his many other public works. Anyone walking into Godfrey's hall would take note of the model locomotives on display shelves here and there; he was immensely knowledgeable about railways. Indeed, some of his Zeh Rak Da'ati columns were devoted to trains and to the politics surrounding them.

Chanukah Recipes from Europe

These 2 recipes, chosen for Chanukah, have been taken from *Hazana*, by Paola Gavin, ISBN 978-1-78713-042-5. It is a wonderful book of Jewish vegetarian cookery from around the world.

From Italy: Apple Fritters (Fritelle di Mele)

Ingredients:

4 tart apples, 4-5 tablespoons brandy, olive oil for deep frying and icing sugar for dusting.

For the batter: 125g unbleached plain flour, pinch of salt, 1 teaspoon sugar, 1 egg, separated, 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, 3 tablespoons dry white wine

Method:

For the batter, combine the flour, salt and sugar in a bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the egg yolk, olive oil, wine and 75ml (5tbs) water and mix well, then gradually stir in up to another 75ml water to make a smooth batter. Leave to stand for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, peel, core the apples and

cut into rounds about 5mm thick. Place in a shallow bowl and pour over the brandy. Let the apples steep for 30 minutes.

To finish the batter, in another bowl, whisk the egg white until stiff and then gently fold into the batter. Working in batches, dip the apple rings into the batter and deep-fry in hot oil until golden on both sides. Drain on paper towels and serve at once, dusted with icing sugar.

Serves 4-6.

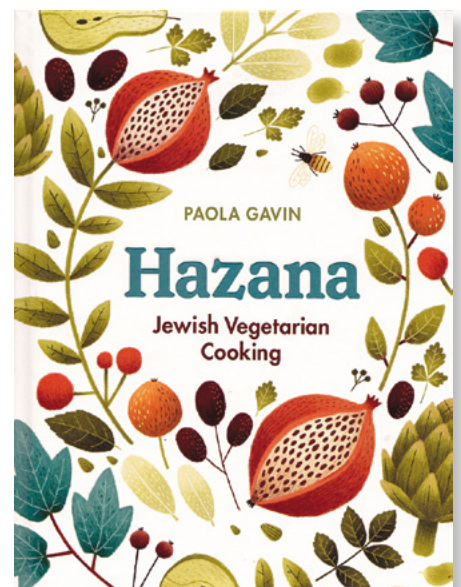
From Germany: Potato and Apple Latkes (Kartoffel Latkes)

Ingredients:

675g potatoes, coarsely grated, 1 small apple, coarsely grated, 1 small onion, finely chopped, 2 large eggs, lightly beaten, salt and freshly ground black pepper, olive oil, for shallow frying.

Method:

Mix the potato, apple, onion and eggs together well. Season with salt and pepper. Heat a thin layer of oil in a



heavy frying pan. Working in batches, drop in heaped tablespoonfuls of the mixture and flatten with a fork. Cook over a gentle heat until golden on both sides, then drain on paper towels. Serve hot.

Features

Stories from Romanian Moldova – Chanukah

by Miriam Beza

My brother-in-law, Tony, comes from a frum family of Stefanesti on the Prut River, nowadays part of the Republic of Moldova. This is the story he told me.

In my childhood home, Chanukah had a special charm. At that time, North Moldova found itself in deep winter. Ice flowers covered our windows and among them our Chanukah threw out millions of sparkles. Outside it was snowing heavily, snow blown away by the krivatz (the Siberian wind), but indoors it was warm and a holiday atmosphere prevailed. All the family gathered around the table: daughters, sons-in-law, nephews, cousins and guests.

Grandfather sat enthroned at the head of the table. Tall, with a deep voice, he would sing the light's blessing of the Chanukah: "Boruch ata Adonai" in Hebrew with strong Ashkenazi Yiddish inflexions. All replied in a chorus: "Amen, Amen"!

Grandmother, meantime, was busy bringing to the table dishes hot from the stove, according to our tradition: varenikes, pastries filled with potatoes and fried onions, smouldered in goose schmaltz, varenikes made out of

lokshen with fried onions and goose scratchings stuck together in a ball, and potato latkes made of raw grated potatoes mixed with egg and flour and fried in oil.

Editor's Note: you may also know Varenikes as Pierogi.

We children gathered round the grandparents waiting for the presents and coins – the Chanukah gelt. Coins came from all other guests as well, sometimes our small hands couldn't hold on to all the small change received and many rolled on the floor in all directions. What noise we made when we started shouting, "Who lost the pennies?" "They're mine", "No, they're mine", we all shouted. We even brought our money boxes with us to slide in our new treasure.

Then, 'dreidel' games started. On the dreidel's sides four letters were etched: N G H S (nes gadol haia sham). Hebrew words meaning: great wonder happened there. Each child put a bet on the letter that would show up when the dreidel stopped turning.

Ah, long kept memories to cherish and to pass on to our children.

Never Again

by Dorit Oliver-Wolff BEM

I come from Hiding, Sirens, Bombs Smoke, Fear Chaos and Hunger.

I come from a long line of persecuted people,
Nazis, Swastikas, Star of David, Running and Air-raid Shelters,

Marching with pioneers, Dancing, Singing, Spotlight,
Applause and Travelling, Having Babies.

Being a Mum,

Remembering,

Remembering,

Where do I come from? I really don't know any more. Does it matter?

I just am.

Being a Holocaust survivor is not just a title, it is part of one's existence and stays in you for the rest of your life. I wish to point out that at a very early age I decided that I am not going to be a VICTIM, but a SURVIVOR. Living in constant fear of being discovered as a Jew and consequently killed, is a stress that never goes away. Hunger, discrimination and dehumanisation are all part of the memories that are deeply engrained in us; the Holocaust survivors. Like other Holocaust survivors I had to learn to live with those memories and do my best not to allow my past to rule my life.

The word that has followed me since I was very young, is 'why'?

I was only six years old when I realised that being Jewish was a death sentence. Being Jewish meant that Nazi soldiers had the right to persecute and kill us. Why us, and not the next-door neighbour? Why anybody? What is different about us that we had to be singled out and forced into concentration camps and gas chambers? We were dehumanised, targeted

and hunted. We were robbed, starved and executed. Now I am 85 years old and the question I am still asking is 'why us?' This question will never stop being relevant.

Having lived through the Holocaust and witnessed things that should never happen, I am dedicating the rest of my life to sharing my story for the benefit of the young generation. I wish to help them understand that antisemitism and all other forms of prejudice can and must be stopped.

If any of us hope for a better future, in a world without hatred and prejudice, then we have to change our attitudes today. Instead of nurturing fear and hatred against other peoples, we should learn to build bridges of understanding and tolerance. We cannot be bystanders, or watch things happen.

Bystanders who do nothing to prevent prejudice are equally complicit in the consequences of hatred, as are the perpetrators. We must never allow hatred to overtake humanity's right to life and dignity. It must be understood that everybody has an equal right to life, freedom and equality regardless of their religion, creed or colour.

We, as Holocaust educators have the duty to teach and promote an understanding of equality and mutual respect. We must be relentless in revealing the consequences of hatred and prejudice and preventing it where it exists. There is no "them or us" there is only "us".

I wish to give my most sincere thanks to the dedicated ambassadors and Holocaust educators, whose tireless efforts and commitment sustain our cause. Without their help none of this would be possible. Through their efforts the aspiration that, "The Holocaust must never happen again," can become a lasting reality.

I love you all.

14 Features

A Surprise in Lower Normandy

by Brian Megitt

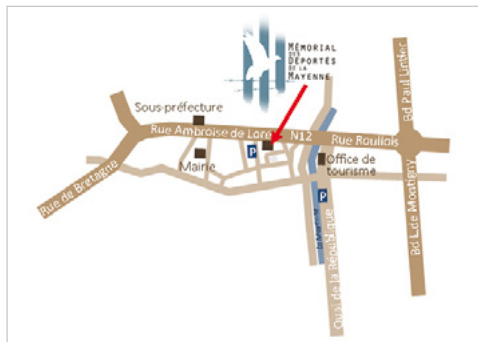
Exploring the small towns and countryside of an unsung area of Normandy recently, we came across Mayenne. It is a small town that has butchers, bakers, supermarkets and even a hypermarket. It also has a modern museum housed in what remains of an ancient chateau plus views across the countryside from what were once the town's fortified walls. Walking around the streets we discovered what has to be described as a hidden gem.

Anyone travelling around Normandy and Brittany will find small museums dedicated to the Second World War and the struggle of the local people against the might of the Nazi occupiers. However, in Mayenne we found something else. Some of you may have read Caroline Moorehead's excellent book, *Village of Secrets*, which is all about how local people in remote villages defied the Nazis in Vichy France. It's a true history that may be new to many, but what we found in Mayenne came as a complete surprise - le Mémorial des Déportés de la Mayenne, which claims to be a unique site in the whole western part of France.



France has tried hard to hide its history of collaboration with the Nazis, especially with regard to the way it used internment camps and handed its Jews over to the Germans for transportation to the death camps. Now, however, books like *Village of Secrets* are revealing the horrifying truth in black and white. So, to see this museum telling

the story of the deportation of people from this area, just sitting amongst the houses and offices on a main street, came as a shock.



We arrived in time for it to open after lunch but had to wait nearly forty minutes to be let in because of a lack of staff. The wait was well worthwhile.

The museum, which pays homage to all deported persons from the Mayenne department who were sent to concentration or extermination camps during the Second World War, centres around two complementary spaces: that of memory and that of vigilance. Each space is in sections, so that the first rooms explained what was happening in the war, especially the Holocaust and how it affected the local people. There were numerous display cabinets with copies of letters, items brought back from the camps and items of clothing. Really meaningful and moving, were individual stories displayed in pictures and with video of personal testimonies told by the few survivors. The last room told the truth of the deportation story.

Along two walls of the room were displayed hundreds of postcard-sized cards. Each card was colour coded; mainly blue, red or yellow and featured a picture of the person and what happened to them. Blue cards signified labour camps. However, the majority were red, showing that the final destination was a concentration camp. The people so designated in these categories were, in the main, members of resistance groups. None was Jewish. The number of yellow cards was comparatively small in relation to the red ones but all of the people identified by the yellow cards were Jewish, yellow signifying deportation to an extermination camp, in the main to Auschwitz, but some were to Treblinka or Sobibor. It seemed that most of the Jewish deportees had come to settle in the Mayenne from somewhere else, such as Poland.

Spending time in that room brought home the scale of deportation that must have happened all across France. The area around Mayenne is rural. There are farms and forests and a few small villages dotted here and there but the main population is bovine and quite a few of the small villages have been developed since the end of the war, so one would suspect that the population in the region was much smaller then than now. Given that argument, the deportations around Mayenne must have had a major social impact and left no family untouched, as many did not return after the war and most perished - whether in a death camp or not.

The objects brought back from the Nazi camps, the exhibitions, timelines, walls with names, written and oral testimonies of the deportees, are presented in a special atmosphere and adapted for everybody. More than a place of memory and reverence, the Memorial is a place of sharing, of artistic expression, of information and watchfulness. Having followed a school group of the equivalent of sixth form students being guided around the museum, who reacted at what they were being told with sombre faces, it struck us that the truth of the Holocaust and France's part in it was being told to new generations. We felt this to be a positive sign that France's Second World War history education is changing.

Dara Horn's "People Love Dead Jews. Reports From a Haunted Present"

A book review by Rabbi Dr Andrea Zanardo

In October 2018, after the tragic attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh, which left 11 Jews dead, Dara Horn discovered how difficult it was to explain to her children that there are people in America who hate Jews. Six months later, a gunman opened fire in a synagogue in San Diego, killing an elderly worshipper and injuring several others, including children. Dara Horn noticed that the media reported, "only one victim" as if the low number could lessen the horror. Within months, in New York, ultra-Orthodox Jews - the most visible part of our community - became the target of a wave of attacks, one of them deadly. The criminals were predominantly black and Latino gangs, making it difficult for the liberal press to talk about antisemitism. This time, however, mention was made to "the context", racial tensions due to gentrification (of which, by the way, ultra-Orthodox Jews do not benefit at all ...) as if the crime was less severe.

Dara Horn records her thoughts following these attacks and between one episode of antisemitism and the next. She realises how people love Jews - when they are dead. Anne Frank, for example, is immensely popular, and her trust in humanity's good nature is often evoked as a heart-warming message. She wrote these words before she was deported to Bergen Belsen, where we cannot know if she kept this optimistic faith. No one wonders whether Anne Frank kept such a belief when she was confronted with the horror.

Dara Horn takes the readers to China, where the government carefully maintains Jewish buildings and venues in Harbin, now devoid of a Jewish population. Russian rule first and then the Japanese occupation caused the end of this community and the collaboration of the non-Jewish population. Jews had lived in Harbin for only one generation, they arrived at the end of the XIX century and the vast majority left in the '30s. They were mainly immigrants from Russia and by no means completely welcome. The widespread antisemitism, to which the Russians gave free rein, and the Japanese occupation are barely recorded. The Chinese too, love to narrate how beloved their Jews (now dead) were.

In Europe and America, dead Jews are recurring characters in books and movies about the Holocaust, but their Jewish identity is somehow erased. They are evoked in order to teach something to humanity. They matter because of the 'message' they are supposed to send. Their stories are narrated to exemplify how a man can be evil towards other men; in these narratives, antisemitism becomes an example of evil. To 'universalise' the message that dead

Jews are supposed to convey, the 'particularities' of Jewish life (religious practices, Hebrew language, Zionism) are removed.

So, it can happen (and it has happened) that an employee of the Anne Frank Museum is asked to remove his kippah to preserve 'the neutrality' of the place and the 'universality' of Anne Frank's 'message'.



Deeply upsetting is the disproportionate representation of 'rescued Jews'. There are so many stories of 'rescued Jews' (and of Gentile saviours) that we almost forget how exceptional they were. Rescuers and saviours are (rightly) praised. But, never mentioned are the general antisemitic prejudices at that time and the pro-German attitude they had to counter, to which they sometimes succumbed. Numerous Holocaust memorials and museums have been built all around the Western world, which attract cohorts of visitors. The stories narrated by these museums are painfully detailed. Visitors spend hours learning about them. They do love dead Jews. These museums and memorials have been built during the last decades because of the belief that the more we talk about the Holocaust, the more antisemites and racists will hesitate to spread their poison. Yet, the opposite has happened - antisemitism is on the rise, Jews are not safe, even in America, and here in the UK there was even the danger of having a Prime Minister called Jeremy Corbyn.

This situation raises very uncomfortable questions. Love for dead Jews is one of the most troubling trends in contemporary society. What shall we do about it? This book offers no answers. In its conclusion, Dara Horn suggests how we living Jewish readers should respond to this love for dead Jews. Be more Jewish, study Torah and Talmud a bit more, go to synagogue, and don't be afraid to affirm our Jewish identity and our love for Israel. In short, to counter love for dead Jews, we affirm our love for Jewish life.

This Rabbi agrees.

Dara Horn talks about her book on a companion podcast, which I highly recommend.

<https://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/adventures-with-dead-jews>

People Love Dead Jews. Reports From a Haunted Present

ISBN-10: 0393531562

ISBN-13: 978-0393531565



Fighting Fire with Fire

by Rabbi Dr Andrea Zanardo

Worrying news from Canada. An Ontario school board has decreed to remove all copies of 30 books deemed offensive to the indigenous population (among which is the comic Tintin). The students were then invited to organise a purification ceremony, which entailed burning these books. The ashes were then used as fertiliser to plant a tree to make amends for the sins of racism and land grabbing.

Yes, this is true! - burning books in 2021. I find this terrifying.

The news is worrying because it recalls the book burning ceremonies held almost a century ago by the Nazis and their collaborators throughout Europe. They aimed to purge libraries of the presence of degenerate and cosmopolitan (that is, Jewish) authors, reputed to be enemies of German civilisation. Jews were imagined as urban dweller enemies of the indigenous German peasant. But burning books was not a Nazi or "indigenist" invention. It was also part of the Inquisition's "work" in Catholic countries during the Middle Ages. The Inquisition, indeed, aimed not only to suppress Jewish practice but also to control and eradicate Jewish culture, in places where Jews were still allowed to live. What the bureaucrats deemed offensive, from Hebrew texts to entire libraries, were devastated; manuscripts and precious volumes were confiscated, and a purifying bonfire ensued. Book burnings quite often resemble religious ceremonies. This ceremony was imposed on Canadian students as part of a penance process. The monks recited prayers before the crowd burned Jewish books in medieval squares and as we all know, the fire had and has a role in the horrid Nazi liturgy.

How different is the flame of our Chanukah candles! On the one hand, we have a tremendous purifying fire that lasts for one night. On the other hand, small flames that last for half an hour but are repeated every evening, to remember the miracle of the Jewish people's resilience and our faith. On the one hand, the hallucinatory aspiration to create a pure society. On the other hand, the right of everyone to practice their faith in proper places of worship.

Indeed, on Chanukah, we celebrate the courage of that minority of our ancestors who refused to conform to the Hellenistic religion. Hellenistic culture loved to present itself as tolerant and inclusive. They built temples in which each divinity was represented, thus excluding those religions that do not represent their own divinities (for example, us Jews). Hellenism presented itself as tolerant and inclusive, but it was in reality based on conformism and denial of differences.

News, such as that coming from Canada and similar others, remind us that the just claims of marginalised minorities are often accompanied by a censorial fury that achieves nothing for the minorities, that the militants pretend to represent. Chanukah counters all of that. By celebrating Chanukah, we Jews counter any call for conformity. In these times of insurgencies and intolerances, it is important that we Jews make our voices heard and continue to profess loyalty to our tradition.

I wish everyone a happy Chanukah and a joyful celebration of our difference.

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- Brighton & Hove Jewish Housing Association. bahjha@googlemail.com
- Welfare at Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue/L'chaim project 01273 737223
- Welfare Co-ordinator at Brighton & Hove Reform (Karen Pettitt)
01273 735343 or welfarebh-rs@gmail.com
- Brighton & Hove Jewish Community Foundation at Ralli Hall.
Tel: 01273 202254 or rallihallcentre@gmail.com

Heroes

by Rabbi Hershel Rader

A Chanukah insight written at the time of Armistice Day

Every year, on Armistice Day and at services and events connected with it, we commemorate those who fell in the great wars of the twentieth century as well as others who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. We honour those heroes.

People seek to emulate their heroes. In a society where athletes are heroes; children want to grow up to be athletes. When singers and actors are heroes; children want to be singers and actors. We live in a time when, tragically, there are societies which honour men of violence and terrorists; in those societies youngsters aspire to violence and terrorism.

Who should be the heroes for the children of our generation?

Bob Dylan, a Nobel laureate and hero for many of my generation of youth, said "I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom". Who are the heroes we remember on Armistice Day? Ordinary young men and women. As General Norman Schwarzkopf said "It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who go into battle". We honour the 'foot soldiers'; tailors, accountants, clerks and shopkeepers. People who stepped up and were prepared to give 'their tomorrow for our today'. They are the true heroes.

We have these people in our Shul every Shabbat morning. I wonder, when the children of our community

come to Shul and see these frail, elderly gentlemen do they regard them as heroes? They don't look like Harry Kane or Raheem Sterling! But they were once young and strong and carried a gun. When my children and grandchildren visited my father, who was a sailor in the royal navy and whose ship was severely damaged by a mine on D-Day, did they regard him as a hero? I doubt very much if they saw him in that light.

Chanukah is also a time when we remember some of the greatest heroes of our people. The names are famous; Yehudah the Maccabee, his father Matisyahu and his four brothers – Yochanan, Shimon, Eliezer and Yonatan. They fought for the freedom to observe their religion; its beliefs and observances. Chana and her seven sons; who gave their lives for their Judaism. Chanukah, which is such a joyous festival, is a time to focus on those heroes who saved Judaism and their legacy to subsequent generations of Jews. It's a time to reflect on the fact that they were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice to ensure the continuation of their spiritual heritage to be G-d's people abiding by His Torah.

We are a lucky generation. We are not called upon to make the great sacrifices of our parents and grandparents. But we can speak out, no, we must speak out and act when we witness intolerable oppression and wickedness. We must act to perpetuate authentic Judaism. For if we don't, how can we be heroes to our children?

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We can change

by Rabbi Danny Rich

I am a birdwatcher, and thus the coming and going of the seasons is noticed by me in the appearance of a particular species. Commonly seen in winter, for example, is the Redwing, the UK's smallest thrush, with a creamy stripe above its eyes, and patches of orange-red under its wings.

Unsurprisingly one of my favourite midrashim is found in the Babylonian Talmud 108b and revolves around the interpretation of the famous chorus line: 'The animals went in two by two...'

God's initial instruction to Noah (Genesis 6:19): 'And all that lives, of all flesh, you shall take two of each into the ark to keep alive with you; they shall be male and female' appears to be amplified or amended by the later command (Genesis 7:2-3): 'Of every pure animal you shall take seven pairs, males and their mates, and of every animal that is not pure, a male and its mate; of the birds of the sky also, seven pairs, male and female, to keep seed alive upon all the earth'. A jolly good job really since, as soon as Noah and his family leave the Ark when the flood subsides, they build an altar and take 'of every pure animal and of every pure bird...burnt offerings... (Genesis 8:20).

The despatch of birds from the Ark to test the level of the waters and the confusion about what is a pure and an impure bird according to Torah, led the Talmud to observe:

The raven made a telling point when it said to Noah: 'You must hate me, for you did not send a scout from the species of birds of which there are seven pairs in the Ark, but from a species of which there is only one pair. If the power of the sun or the cold had overwhelmed me, would not the world be missing a species?'

The modern environmental debate is no longer about the saving of a single species but rather about the preservation of habitats and the security of the natural world at large.

The seasons are, of course, reflected in the weather and its changing pattern. Raging forest fires, torrential flooding and other phenomena demonstrate more starkly than any meeting of bodies or minds that something is happening in the natural world which may not be for the better.

We too - both individually and collectively - can change and I am immensely proud of the Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue which has been awarded the first ever Silver Medal by the Jewish cross-communal organisation, Eco Synagogue. For BHPS and its members this is just the beginning of our efforts to change our habits and to actively fulfil the partnership between God and humanity - God the creator and

donor and humanity the steward and recipient - as reflected by the Psalmist (24:1):

The earth is God's, and the fullness thereof: the settled land and its inhabitants...

Events @ BHPS

Our building is now open for some services and events. We continue to stream some services by Zoom or sometimes on Youtube. Non-members are welcome to join us but please contact the office if you would like to attend in person or by Zoom. info@bhps-online.org. Final arrangements are subject to change. <http://youtube.bhps-online.org>

Friday Night Candle Lighting by Zoom at 7pm followed by Kiddush and an opportunity to meet and greet one another.

Erev Shabbat Services in the synagogue, led by Rabbi Danny Rich on Friday 3rd December and Friday 7th January.

Shabbat Morning Service

11 am each Saturday. Please check to see if the synagogue is open and whether the service will be streamed on Zoom or on Youtube. Arrangements are subject to change.

Rabbi Rich is leading Shabbat Morning services in the synagogue on the following dates:

Saturday 4th December

Saturday 8th January

Other Shabbat morning services will be taken by our team of lay readers.

Oneg

Friday December 10th at 7.30 pm, a talk online, following the 7 pm candle lighting and short service.

Lesley Urbach will speak about the Labour politician and cabinet minister Herbert Morrison and the 'Jewish' Question 1936-1945'.

Everyone is welcome to join these varied and interesting talks which allow time for questions and discussion. To attend, and for Zoom log-in details please contact the office.

Study Sessions

Rabbi Rich is leading a ten-part monthly study course on the Book of Judges. These will take place by Zoom. Contact the office for Zoom log-in details.

Thursday 2 December at 19.30 Session 5 – Yotam's parable.

Open Wednesdays

Members and friends get together every Wednesday 11-12, now in the building and via Zoom for either an informal chat or to listen to a prearranged speaker or guest. The login details are the same each week. Those members or friends without internet access can join us by landline. Contact the synagogue office for details.

Chanukah and Xmas

by Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

I was asked by a non-Jewish friend, whether atonement plays a part in Chanukah as it does in Xmas. At first, I did not understand the question. But then it got me thinking of the differences between the two festivals.

Whereas Xmas is one of the two most important days in the Christian calendar, Chanukah comes much lower down in priority in Judaism. In reality, there is no equivalence. Other than the coincidence of the season. Or perhaps in some much earlier celebration of the winter solstice.

Firstly, Chanukah is a post-Biblical, rabbinic festival. Biblical festivals outrank it and take priority. Not only festivals but every Shabbat, each week, are much more important. Whereas the Talmud mentions Chanukah in passing and with only a few paragraphs, whole folios are devoted to Shabbat and Biblical festivals.

Secondly, whereas Christmas is an absolute core element in the Christian faith, Chanukah is essentially a historical nationalist celebration of survival. It is marginal theologically.

Chanukah was always controversial. The victory of Judah Maccabee over the Syrian Greeks led to the recovery of the Temple and a measure of Judean independence. But the victory was never a complete one. It was a civil war too. Many Jews favoured Graeco-Roman culture and assimilation. For them, it was more important to be part of the Roman Empire and its cultures. The Maccabees stood for a commitment to traditional Judaism and national identity. Not very different from Jewish life today.

After Judah's generation, the Hasmonean dynasty slowly declined. It became a corrupt, Roman client in constant conflict with religious values and authorities (with the exception of Queen Salome Alexander). And this is probably why the two contemporary Books of the Maccabees were not included in the Jewish Biblical Canon. They were preserved mainly by Christians who saw the books as a manifestation of Jewish failure. And justification for the rise of Christianity as a more successful religion. There is even a theory that the name Judah Maccabee came to be associated negatively with the Judah who betrayed Jesus.

Although Judah did indeed re-dedicate the Temple (which is what Chanukah actually means), there is no record of the miracle of the lights on the Temple until long after the Hasmoneans. This is why the Rabbis of the Talmud emphasized the miracle of the oil rather than the Maccabee victory. Judah was not even mentioned. Whereas the Temple Candelabrum of the Miracle of the oil which has Biblical status, was seven-branched, the candelabrum used for Chanukah has eight. This underlines its lower order of priority. Another distinction between the sanctity of the Temple and a more mundane celebration.

By the time of the Talmud, the Romans had almost obliterated Jewish life in Israel. The violent uprisings of 70 CE, the responses to the Trajan and Hadrianic persecutions and of course the Bar Cochba revolt had all been disasters for Judaism. So that celebrating military victory seemed less appropriate to Jewish values and survival than negotiation. By medieval times, Chanukah regained its triumphalism precisely because Jews were beginning to seek an escape from constant oppression and humiliation. As Christmas came to

be associated with oppression and the attempts to convert the Jews, Chanukah became a statement of defiance again. The lights in the window were there to publicise the miracle of our survival and also an assertion of our identity in public as well as private.

The ways we celebrate Chanukah now are different from Christmas. There is no tradition of going specially to the synagogue more than any other day. Festivities centre on the home rather than the synagogue. We play with dreidels and gamble for nuts and cards as a nod towards fate and the hope that our circumstances would change. Gambling is something we shouldn't do, in theory, during the rest of the year. Apart from the lights, we eat cakes, doughnuts fried in oil to parallel the oil of the lamps. But otherwise, life carries on normally until dusk when we light up. There are none of the restrictions of not working on Shabbat and Festivals.

It is true that today many Jews imitate Christmas with presents. I guess as a way of making their children feel they are not hard done by being different in a world where everyone else gets gifts. In my youth, we did not give or receive presents specifically for Chanuka but we did get Chanukah Gelt, usually small denominations! In the diaspora, we cannot avoid being aware of Christmas. But in many of our enclaves and in Israel at this time of the year, there is no competition. What goes on outside, passes largely unnoticed.

Then there was the question I was asked about atonement on Chanukah. For Christians, Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus and that is, of course, a happy occasion. But the tragedy of the crucifixion is present at Christmas, as much as joy. Jesus in death atoned for their sins. The Christian Mass involved the solemn act of atonement. The imagery of the church was one of suffering on the cross. So that being in Church on Christmas, in itself resonates with the idea of atonement. It is true that we too ask for forgiveness every day in our prayers for our misdeeds. But the awesome concept of atonement in the theological sense is reserved primarily for the Ten Days of Penitence.

We don't, as a rule, mix solemnity with happy occasions. The Bible uses the word joy, Simcha, with regard to festivals more than any other descriptive term. Chanukah still counts as a festival. It is a celebration of survival, which is overwhelmingly joyous. Atonement would be casting too serious a pall on a festivity.

Whereas Chanukah is a Jewish national celebration, Christmas, at least in its theory, is universal. Goodwill and peace to all mankind. Sadly, in human affairs, however great our ideas are in terms of our love for humanity as well as loyalty to our specific traditions, the theory too often is distorted and diminished by those who profess their religiosity. Humans have this capacity of thinking the loftiest ideals and practicing the worst betrayal of them.

None of this should suggest any lack of respect for other traditions and festivities. We should all strive to increase the amount of fraternity and wellbeing in the world. We should greet our Christian friends and neighbours and be happy with their happiness. While naturally being thankful for our different traditions. And as for joy, the more the merrier.

FRIENDS OF RALLI HALL

Where our Jewish Community Come Together



Ralli Hall

Where
Wonderful
Events
Happen

Community Centre

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81 Denmark Villas, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 3TH

Would you like to learn something new? Are you interested in a new hobby? Well, we have just the answer for you!

Our 6for6 Club is launching in January 2022, where 6 of you will join us at Ralli Hall for 6 weeks, enjoying clubs and hobbies that are run by our talented community members, for the community. Including refreshments, there is no cost to 'Friends of Ralli Hall' members for any courses, and non-members can join us for only £30 for each 6 week course. To join our 6for6 clubs, just call or email us to book your place.

Our first club, starting on Tuesday 18th January 2022 - 22nd February 2022 from 4.30pm-6.30pm in our Studio, is our **BASIC DIY SKILLS COURSE** which is suitable for absolute beginners, as well as those wanting to add to their current knowledge.

No previous skills are needed, this course will take you from the absolute basics in how to deal with household emergencies, simple and safe electrics, plumbing and general decorating. You'll be advised what tools you'll need, and hopefully achieve confidence in tackling jobs around the house. Think of the savings you'll make!!

Coming soon with full details and more clubs later in the year:

March/April: Jewish Music Appreciation

April/June: Scrabble Club

June/July: Mediterranean/Israeli Cookery

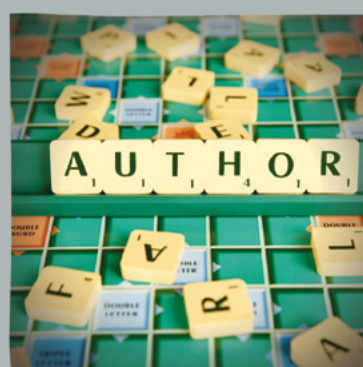
July/August: Model Aircraft Building

Talking of our 'Friends of Ralli Hall' memberships - we would like to thank all of you who supported us throughout the Pandemic. Renewing your memberships whilst our building was closed for 18 months was so very welcome, and your loyalty is fully appreciated by all of us who worked so hard to keep the building alive.

Our renewals for 2022 will be coming through your letterboxes soon - we do hope you will re-join and enjoy the many benefits of being a 'Friend of Ralli Hall'.

Wishing all our Friends and the community a very happy Chanukah.

Fond Regards, Maxine Gordon - Centre Manager



Music Appreciation