

בית הכנסת קהלת יעקב

The Congregation of Jacob Synagogue
incorporating

חברה ישראל ובקור חולים

Chevra Yisroel & Bicur Cholim & Stetziver Synagogue

Over 100 years of service to our community

The Jacobette Volume 5 News Letter of the Congregation of Jacob



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Another year has passed, and what a year it has been. Lots more fun, some more fundraising, and a step further to completing the renovations to our Shul.

The Congregation of Jacob is stronger now than it has been for years. We are blessed with a loyal community – and you should all be proud to be a part of it – I know that I am.

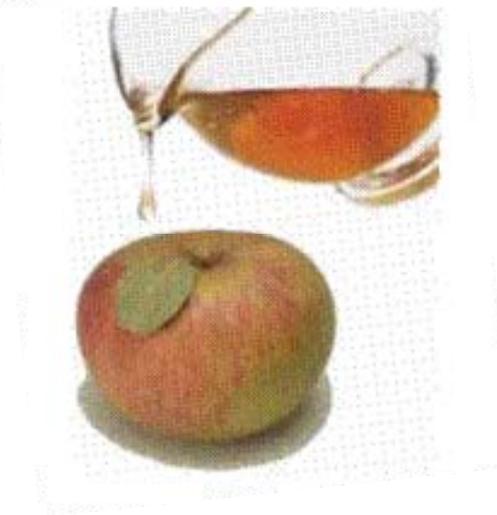
It gives me great pleasure to present to you this year's edition of our magazine.

Thank you to everyone who has written articles for inclusion in this edition.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a Happy New Year.

Michael Gold

michael.gold@congregationofjacob.org



Where do we get the inspiration to continue the vast undertaking that is our community and its continued success. Perhaps we need look no further than the sacrifice Abraham our forefather was willing to make with the binding of his son Isaac and articulated in the Torah reading of the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

The heroic efforts that the vast majority of our community make to ensure that we have a regular minyan for every Friday night, Shabbos morning and Yom Tovim is truly remarkable. Our brand of hospitality and welcome is second to none, for a small community with limited resources. Frum menschen to the most secular of our faith all join in tefillah (prayer) in perfect unity says reams about the ruach (spirit) of the kehilla (community).

Our shul has had something of a transformation from an elderly community to a shul our younger members call 'cool'.

My challenge to those who have never visited our shul, you really do not know what you are missing. If you are within walking distance of the shul, pencil in your diary or personal organiser to visit. Those who live a distance Purim and Chanukah is a delight to behold so what are you all waiting for?

My thanks for the wonderful support given by all the diverse age groups. From the babies who enliven the congregation with their wonderful vocal sounds to our singing. There is a wide array of talent so vast it would need a page to describe the various gifted individuals.

I hope that my mother together with all the ill people of the community make a refuah shelaimah.

Whatever challenges we are presented with, I know with the people around me, we will cope and move forward with the building and the community increasing.

Kasima Kasiva Tova.

Rev. David Brandes



Thank you Jackie for your efforts

London Marathon- April 2006



Jackie completed the London Marathon raising money for us.

Here are the official results for:
JACQUELINE V. LEVY

Runner No.: 2512 - Nationality: GBR

The Building
Continues

Position

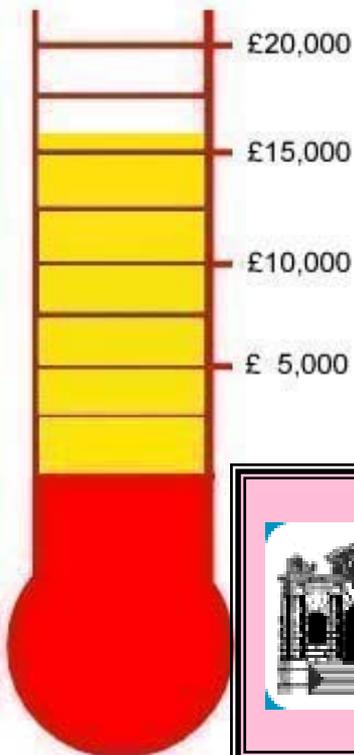
Overall: 25527
Gender: 6486
Age group: 2513

Splits

KM10: 1:05:29 KM20: 2:13:50
HALF: 2:21:23 KM30: 3:26:29
KM40: 4:43:20 FINISH: 4:59:07



Total collected to date - £16,000
A community effort
Thank you all



We Need Your Help

Our community is struggling to regenerate our synagogue. Not only the restoration of our building, but the regeneration of the number of people in our community.

We need each and every one of you to come through our doors and help make a minyan. Why not join us by becoming a member?

We also need your donations. Money is very short and we have lots to do. Why not try your hand at organising a fund raising event. We need innovative people to take up this challenge. Is it you?



Thank you to the Heritage of London for awarding the shul £4,000 towards the renovation of the front roof.

You Can Be
A Part Of It

connection to the congregation

*A message about prayer, community, the Jewish East End
and the Congregation of Jacob.*

The big problem in our own Jewish communities is that people have forgotten the need and the importance of prayer.

It's not something unique to this era. Throughout time Jewish people have been busy running their *kishkas* off or fervently gossiping about a *ganef*.

When did we actually find time for devotion in our prayers?

This is especially true in northwest London, the place of my youth. Stanmore...Mill Hill...Edgware...Pinner...Bushey...Hair on Broadway...au pairs...neatly trimmed lawns...Mercedes...Jewish princesses...the inwardness and limited thinking was as bad as any stifling ghetto; a ghetto for the mind and the body. It may not be Poland but it was a ghetto through and through.

Now this was not a ghetto that was materially poor and of strong spirit...like a Lodz ghetto or a Venice ghetto of Jewish history gone by. It was completely the opposite...decadent, obsessive, self-absorbed and full of ego and flash harrys.

I never felt part of a *shul* community...I never accessed *davening*...I never saw anyone who I looked at and felt...wow...I never saw any leaders. Not until I was in a youth movement...where the communal spirit and youth leadership provided autonomy and creativity.

However, this need for connection was always missing in my young adult life...that was until I came to the Congregation of Jacob.

When I first walked through the doors, you immediately enter the synagogue (well a small front room but you are practically in the *shul* already). A smiling face greets you at the door (on most days!) and the feeling is like walking back into a tiny corner of time gone by.

This small little *shul* evokes memories of the *shteebls* of Eastern Europe...a devoted congregation, a constant swaying rhythm of prayer and a warm heart for anyone passing through its doors.

What I found when I came into the Congregation of Jacob was a kind greeting, a welcome manner and strong spiritual dedication in keeping a tiny memory of the Jewish East End alive.



After northwest London and high holydays where the atmosphere was disunified, the chatter in the upper gallery always whispering 'what is she wearing?'

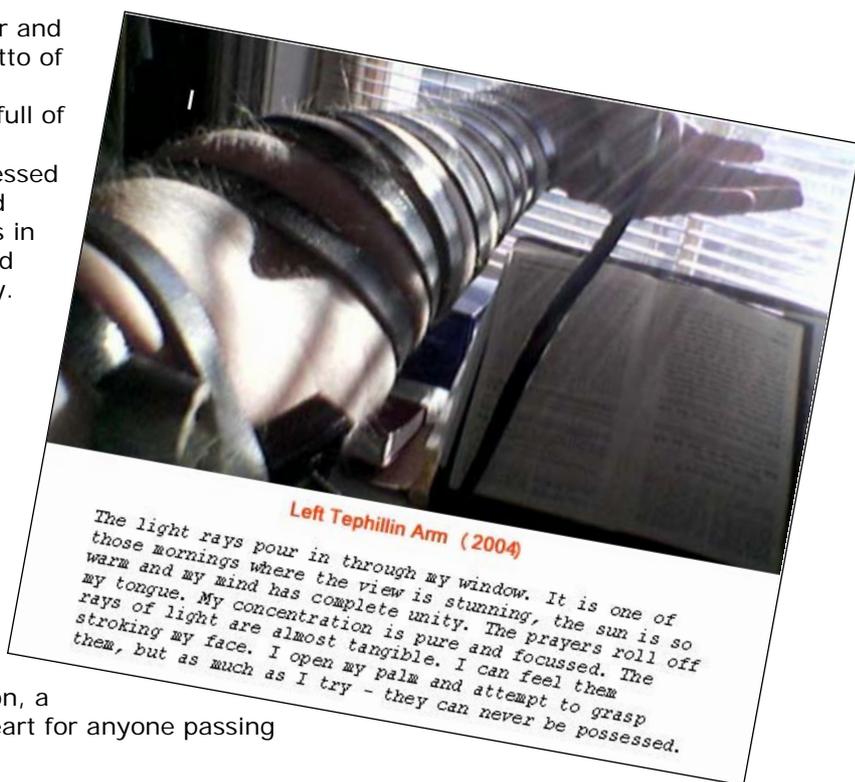
I had finally found a place with real spirit.

For the first time in my life...this was the only *shul* I had ever been to in Britain where I felt a connectedness in my *davening*.

The Congregation of Jacob represented a small community...but its devoted patrons hit me like an oasis of light. I remember the power of my first Yom Kippur *davening*...for the first time I felt unified prayers from a unified community...truly connected.

I have to say that I often *daven* alone. I am an infrequent *shul* goer. I have often felt that I could only reach a platitude of peace and connection to G-d when I was alone. But, as I am sure that you are all aware...this is not the common Jewish way.

This community spirit is very much represented by the small cohesive community at the congregation of Jacob. Nevertheless, the struggle to complete an east end minyan has almost become a cliché of Stepney folklore. Some local synagogues have conspired in kidnapping members of the *shul* down the road to complete a Saturday minyan. I have you not.



Left Tephillin Arm (2004)

The light rays pour in through my window. It is one of those mornings where the view is stunning, the sun is so warm and my mind has complete unity. The prayers roll off my tongue. My concentration is pure and focussed. The rays of light are almost tangible. I can feel them stroking my face. I open my palm and attempt to grasp them, but as much as I try - they can never be possessed.



In many ways, the congregation came to symbolize this undying spirit of what was East End Jewry. For me, as an artist and filmmaker arriving in the east end to document what I found...I found a place where Judaism was strong...connected and passionate...all the ingredients missing in my own decadent northwest London.

You can have your glitzy charity galas and your Gucci *shul* outfit but I would not swap it at all for a kiddush at the congregation of no more than a few crackers and a bit of *shmaltz* herring...and a service where the *davening* calls back to the *devekut* (devotion) of the old world...the *Heim*.

This small island of peace that is Congregation of Jacob is an echo of the spirit of the old world...of the *shtetl*. In many ways the Jewish East End was the final connection to the heartlands of Jewish faith...Eastern Europe and the Pale of Settlement.

The congregation of Jacob stands as a tiny link in time...an unbroken spiritual chain to the past. This little place says a big thing. Don't forget who you are and where you came from. Being Jewish is to never forget. This is my interpretation of connection.

Elliott Tucker is a Jewish filmmaker and artist. Based in the east end he produces and exhibits films and artworks that explore Jewish spirituality, identity and mysticism. He has recently produced a short film on Jewish east end boxing and is currently in production for a feature documentary of the Jewish east end. This project is has been supported by JEECS, Steven Berkoff, the Chief Rabbi and Sir Arnold Wesker.

If you have any photos, film footage or artefacts from the east end please email Elliott at `lternative productions: elliott@xlternative.com

Security Notice

Please be vigilant

We are in a time of turmoil. We have seen the devastating effect of terrorism in London.

DO NOT BE A VICTIM - Our security team and the police do all they can to protect you from threats both old and new. Things you can do to help yourselves are:

1. Try to walk in groups
2. Do not loiter outside the Shul where it is obvious you are Jewish
3. Report any suspicious behaviour to our security team on the door
4. Report unattended packages
5. Report all incidents that may be considered racist. This helps build a pattern
6. Most importantly, if you are scared to come to Shul or walk home, tell us in advance, we may be able to help

This Yom Tov, please spare a thought for those professional people who endanger their lives every day so that we may have a relatively safe life, and the ability to enjoy our freedom.

We pray that they should all be kept from harm.

Please also spare a thought for the soldiers of Eretz Yisroel, May Hashem send a speedy end to hostilities and let the World be at peace.

Amen

**No matter what your level of understanding.
Come along and be part of our growing community.**

**You are always welcome to join us for a L'chaim after the service
But not on Yom Kippur !!**

Quiz question: What is the connection between the Torah & Congregation of Jacob?

Answer: "The second blessing of the maariv (Evening Service) prayer ends off "for it (the Torah) is our life and the length of our days" from which we see that all the life giving energy that the Jewish people have, ultimately derives from our learning and observance of the Torah.

The Talmud relates that the first words that should be taught to a young child as it learns to speak are "Torah tsiva lanu Moshe morasha kehillas Yaakov"- meaning "Moses commanded us the Torah as an inheritance for the Congregation of Jacob".

Note the word inheritance is used. What is so special about an inheritance? One answer to this is that inheritance pays no attention to age, intelligence, merit etc. So a one day old child who knows absolutely nothing is legally the full inheritor of his father's estate. This means that every single Jew no matter what age, sex, financial situation, level of intelligence etc. is a full owner of the holy Torah the greatest treasure ever bestowed upon mankind.

Now how would we react if we heard that someone had just inherited a fortune but they didn't bother to take possession of it? "What a lost opportunity" we would say (or maybe even more colourful words!).

We mustn't allow ourselves to fall into that very same situation. If we have an opportunity to learn Torah it should be grasped with both hands – and especially when a Torah lecture is taking place in the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue itself!

For details of the next shiur go to www.congregationofjacob.org

Come and be inspired

Shiur once a month

With Light Refreshments



Ephraim Potash BSc. is a computer consultant of 34 years standing, currently working for Fujitsu and assigned to the billion pound Home Office Sirius Project.

But as a Lubavitcher, he is aware of the need to devote time to Jewish Education. Notable is his 27 years of lecturing at Lubavitch Project Return and a shiur in his home on Rambam running for 29 years. He is sought after as a lecturer on Judaism & Science and has generally been involved in Jewish Education from junior to adult level for 40 years.

He is proud to be associated with Congregation of Jacob in their heroic endeavour to revive East End Jewish life.

I met Jacqui when I was speaking at Limmud in December 2004. My talk was on my one specialist subject, The Literary Jewish East End. At the end of the talk, she came up to me and asked about synagogues in the area. She was living in Shoreditch as the time and wanted to a shul to daven. Naturally, there was only one place to recommend - Kehillas Ya'akov.

A few weeks later, she came to visit. Like us all, she was immediately taken by the beauty of the building and more so by the welcome that she received from the community. From then on in, she became part of the Congregation and her contribution has been invaluable.

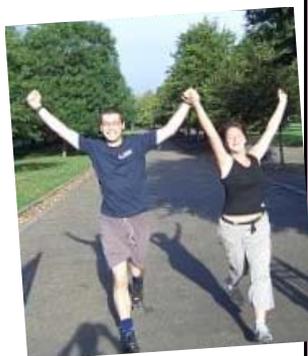
Not only does she serve as an ambassador, helping to spread the word about the shul to get more people through our door. As importantly, she plays the role of our chief fundraiser.

Last year, she conceived of the Labours for Jacob - where together we tackled ten sporting challenges across London to raise money for the repair of the roof. From swimming the Hampstead Heath pond to rollerblading around the Serpentine, she set a mean pace that left me following in her wake.

But when it came to the final labour - darts in Aldgate - her prowess for once lapsed. Needing to get back to the shul by 8 o'clock in order to complete the task in the requisite 12 hours, we had 30 minutes and all that was needed was Jacqui to hit the bulls-eye. 20 minutes later; still no bully. Though like in all that she does, she persevered and finally hit it. We raced back to the shul with a minute to spare.

That effort helped us raise over £2000. Jacqui did not stop there. In April she ran the London Marathon, and in four hours too! Her dedication, enthusiasm and constant good humour, is a lesson to us all - and long may she continue to contribute, as without her Kehillas Ya'akov would be poorer - in all senses of the word.

David Russell
Vice-Chairman



There are a few reasons why a person comes back to one Shul in particular. The downright practical one is proximity from this person's house. More frequently the social pleasure of meeting one's friends at the service is a stronger incentive. But what makes a Shul even more attractive is its community. Some Shuls have the gift of making you feel you belong as soon as you pass the threshold. The Congregation of Jacob Synagogue on Commercial Road is one of those rare places.

The refined interior of this medium size devotion place is matched by the warmth of the congregants. Whoever you are and wherever you come from expect everyone to take a kind interest in you and greet you in an heartfelt way. With much fewer financial means that most synagogues in London the Shul marks all the festivals in style. This year the delightful sukkah created with tender care by a group of congregants was an example of what a small but dedicated community can achieve.

More importantly the Shul is not about appearances. Spirituality is what really matters. And it's thriving thanks to the energy and commitment of Reverend David Brandes. The main events of the Jewish calendar pull the crowds in - full house on Yom Kippur and Purim - but the weekly services deserve as much attention as Reverend Brandes supported by a few congregants always leads an inspired and inspiring service.

The informal and friendly atmosphere that reigns in the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue makes everyone feel welcome. The older members of the community are the living memory of the East End and meeting them is a precious experience for anyone interested in discovering more about the heritage of this area. But what demonstrates that a Shul in the East End can still be a vibrant gathering place is that many young people devote themselves to revive the community and have elected the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue as their regular Shul.

Thanks to the dedication of a few individuals and the encouraging signs of an expanding community the hope is immense that someday full-house will be happening throughout the year. Whether you live round the corner, know someone who attends services there or are curious to discover by yourself the gem that is the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue, you can be sure that you'll be treated as a first class guest. Don't miss such a unique opportunity.

Sonia



Are you on-line?

You can receive our events notification e-mail.

Send a mail to
subscribe@congregationofjacob.org putting
the word "events" in the subject line.



Be part of something special

Do you know someone who is sick?

Have you told us?

**Please add names to our list for
prayer. Speak with Rev. David
Brandes for more information.**

Please find the time to
complete the Yizkor form if
required and return for the
attention of David Behr at the
Shul as soon as possible.

President: Monty Rome
Chairman: Gerald Brandes
Vice-Chairman: David Russell
Secretary: David Behr
Treasurer: Martin Alpert
Warden: Rev. David Brandes
Web Master / Security: Michael Gold

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Registered in England as a charity.
Registration number: X20677

Announcements

Deaths (We wish the families long life)

Ann Ash
Dennis Farber
Rebecca Julius

Births Mazel Tov to the Families

Mazel Tov to Darrel and Orna Abramson on the
birth of Yoelli Malka Abramson

Zalsberg and May families on the birth of
Millie Tia Isaacs

Mazel Tov to Ephraim and Toebe Potash on the
birth of a grandson Nossan born to Rabbi Shimon
Potash & family (London) and a grandson Shimon
Moshe to their daughter Shoshana & Yossi Laufer
(Rhode Island USA)

Mazel Tov to people with special Birthdays

Aiden Yitzchak Abramson – 2 Years Old
Jessica Goldstone – 2 Years Old

Mazel Tov to the Over 90s

Alf Krietzman
Albert Leiberman
Morris Isbitt
Max Levitas

Get Well Soon

We would like to wish all our members and their
families who are ill, a hearty get well. Unfortunately
there are too many to mention individually.

Please G-d you should all have a happy, prosperous
and very healthy new year.

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