

The Congregation of Jacob Synagogue

בית הכנסת קהלת יעקב

Incorporating

חברה ישראל ובקור חולים

Chevra Yisroel & Bicur Cholim & Stetziver Synagogue

JACOBETTE Volume 8

Special points of interest:

- Sandra and David Get Married
- Elliot cycles to Paris
- A New York traveler returns
- Another great communal Seder
- Chanukah at Kehillas Ya'akov

A Fresh Look for Kehillas Ya'akov

On arriving next time at Kehillas Ya'akov, just take a look up before entering and you will see a frontage restored with the help from The Veolia Environmental Trust.

been made possible as well through the unceasing generosity of congregants and members.

Speaking about the project, Revd David Brandes, says: "It was a privilege to partner with the Veolia Trust and we are honoured that they awarded us funding to complete restoration work on the front of the synagogue."

The Executive Director of The Veolia Environmental Trust, Margaret Cobbold, added,

"It is always a pleasure to see the completion of a project we have supported and I hope this work means that the synagogue will continue to serve the community for many years to come."

Now with the work on the frontage complete, we are focusing efforts on completing the stabilisation of the rear exterior party wall, and making more accessible the outdoor toilets – critical for some of our older members, as we approach again the winter months.

An award of £5,000 through the Landfill Communities Fund has helped fund the work that will ensure that any passer-by cannot fail to notice us in future. The work is part of our ongoing restoration programme, which has



Something truly amazing is happening at The Congregation of Jacob

A Note from the Editor — Michael Gold



"A half-truth is a whole lie".

Rabbinical saying

Five years I have been involved with the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue. When I started coming to the services and later got involved with the restoration and the publicity, it seems hard to believe that we were standing on a crumbling concrete floor, in an unheated, inhospitable atmosphere and there were holes in the roof, the ladies gallery was derelict with damp and water pouring through the walls.

Today the building is warm, brightly lit, freshly painted with all the floors intact. The ladies gallery is open, the community is growing and people are no longer saying

that "they thought the Congregation of Jacob was closed".

We are making noise; weddings, festival celebrations and bar mitzvahs are celebrated openly in the heart of a very diverse Tower Hamlets community, who on the whole are also excited that there is religious freedom in their borough.

With racial tensions high in parts of the world we must not forget that we still need to be vigilant; but this year saw the wedding of Sandra and David in Jubilee Gardens, witnessed by our members and by both our Jewish and Gentile neighbours alike.

No one in our part of the East End of London is in any doubt – The Congregation of Jacob is going places – and I am proud to be a part of it.

It is with great excitement that I have been asked to be editor of the magazine again this year. I hope you all enjoy reading it, and may be next year you might want to enhance this publication by contributing an article yourself?

I wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

Michael Gold

Pat Weinberg — Dearly missed

Our heartfelt condolences to Charlie Weinberg and his family at the loss of his precious wife Pat who was an extremely pleasant and good natured woman who did anything to help other people.

We assembled for her Stone Setting at Cheshunt cemetery on Sunday 6th September 2009, where she was given the respect that she was due.

Our sympathies are with Charlie and their family.

A Note from Our Warden — Rev David Brandes

This year I am writing this article in collaboration with my wife Sandra. It has been an extremely busy but rewarding year for our community. Most of the building has been completed in the past few years but this year we have completed not only the interior of the building but the 3 roofs and the external parts of the shul. The toilet located at the rear of the shul has been totally refurbished together with the courtyard walkway and most of the walls. One of the major challenges was finding sufficient funding for the building works that I had to dig deep into my savings. Another was supervising the builders for the past few years that was a major undertaking.

Our achievement has been remarkable as the majority of the funding came from our small but very generous community. The Veolia Trust has helped with funding for the front exterior of the building.

We hope to have a removable Succah this year so we can utilise the courtyard and space more efficiently.

We are pleased to announce our Chatanim this year **Frazer Praag – Chatan Torah**. The Praag family have done so much to help our shul especially Arthur and Shirley.

David Russell our Chatan Beraishis. Our jet setter who has now returned from his wanderings and are pleased to have him on board again.

David is a mensch who likes to help people and we are fortunate to have him with us.

Sandra is hoping to set up a ladies guild representing all ages who

can view the shul from their perspective and see how things can be improved by hosting weekly and monthly events. Tendayi has made large inroads with a regular tasty cholent in winter and autumn.

On the Heritage day on Sunday 13th September 2009 we have managed to obtain Denise Phillips who is an excellent cook and she will be giving a demonstration on cookery for the New Year.

We would like to thank all the community for the wonderful support received especially during our wedding on the 25th June 2009 – 3rd Tammuz.

We hope that we can capitalise on this good will for the following year. In particular a huge vote of thanks to Gerald for his endeavours in ensuring the Seder nights both in the shul and our home were such a success and Ron for his diligence in ensuring the shul looks so clean.

Eliot Szabo completed his 300 kilometre ride to Paris and we hope that people will generously support him on behalf of the shul.

We would like to thank all the Board of Management for their help during the past year. Also our community that includes you for your support and financial help when the coffers were very low.

More importantly we need to increase the number of people attending our services on Friday night and Shabbos.

Rev. David and Sandra Brandes.



Miracles sometimes occur but one has to work terribly hard for them."

Chaim Weizmann, first President of the State of Israel

From the East End to the Lower East Side (and back again)

“Life in New York will be like London, just a lot more Jewish,” I was told before heading out to study at New York University. So though I was sad to leave the East End and Kehillas Ya’akov, I looked forward to exploring my new home for the next 18 months in the Lower East Side.

I was fortunate to find a wonderful congregation at the Eldridge Street Synagogue, the oldest East European synagogue in New York. Similar to Kehillas Ya’akov, it is a small, but committed, and incredibly warm minyan; that proudly mount their shul

strap line over the entrance: “Your Arrival is our Survival.” There is such great ruach and the kiddush is truly something to write home about too, though naturally that is not the only reason I made it along each Shabbos!

When arriving for my first Shabbat service at Eldridge Street, we were praying in a room barely large enough to hold the minyan. Today, following the completion of a \$20 million restoration, prayers have moved upstairs to the 850-seat sanctuary, though sadly with not quite yet the number of congregants to fill the pews

– though like us they are working on increasing numbers too! .

Returning back to the East End, I will certainly miss Eldridge Street. It is a special synagogue, with a wonderful welcoming community, just like Kehillas Ya’akov. If you are ever passing through New York, and you want to drop in – then I can highly recommend the experience. Though like me, just remember to come back again!

David Russell

Pesach Seder Nights

This year in the shul we held the communal Seder on the first Seder night with 28 people attending this annual event. The participants were from across the globe and the cuisine reflected traditional English cuisine with hors d'oeuvres, chicken and potatoes, assorted meats and fish and a variety of vegetables and desserts. .



Gerald had warmed these dishes as they were frozen when they arrived and illustrated our need for a large

oven. His superhuman efforts enabled us to have a sumptuous and warm meal. He was ably assisted by a couple of very competent waitresses.

The service was conducted by Rev. David Brandes and Frazer read the Ma Nishtana. The ages of the assembled varied from Jeannette age 1 to Alf Kreitzman age 95 (sadly Alf passed away 28th August 2009 and he will be missed by our community). He was always supportive towards our shul and read the haftorah as

often as he could with the same enthusiasm).

Monty Passes gave us some very interesting stories about his family and their close connection with the shul (Abraham Shwalbe was his grandfather – co founder of the shul).

As per usual the community rallied around and helped clear up the premises in the traditional good natured East End way.

Next year in Jerusalem – which will please Gerald we suspect.

Eliot's Challenge

My challenge was to cycle from London to Paris in 3 days. It was a charity event for St Josephs Hospice and I was supporting 2 charities, the other one, of course, The Congregation of Jacob Synagogue.

I felt proud to be doing this and was determined to succeed.

DAY 1. 19th August. 7am the team met up and so our journey from London to Newhaven began. Unfortunately for me my knee popped and the medics advised me to stop but I would not. We were still in England so my determination kicked in and I kept going. the medics taped my knee up and fed me pain killers every

hour. We got to Newhaven and boarded the ferry at 10.30pm. Four hours later we arrived in Dieppe and now had to cycle to the hotel. We covered 92 km. I was feeling exhausted but just kept going until 4.40am.

DAY 2. 20th August. We had a short sleep and set off

after breakfast to cycle to Gournay en Bray. It was hilly countryside and gruelling at times. We had a short stop for lunch, then continued the journey. After a while the medics lifted me off my bike



and insisted i had a half hour break. After completing 87km, we stopped for the night.

DAY 3. 21 August. Gournay en Bray to Paris. Willpower was keeping me going now and every pedal took me closer to Paris. We circled and crossed the river Seine and finally after 112km we saw the Eiffel Tower. We had reached our destination. That night I was awarded

the most passionate rider. It felt so good and I felt I earned every penny, and would like to thank all the people who sponsored me.

Elliot Szabo

If you wish to do a sponsored event to raise money for The Congregation of Jacob Synagogue, please let us know.

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

Sandra and David's Wedding

For months before the joyous occasion it was the talk of the shul, the preparation, where the chuppa would be, the journey to the reception, then came the last minute



panics, a Jewish wedding wouldn't be a Jewish wedding without the last minute panics. And before you knew it the joyous occasions was upon us, it was a beautiful summer day, they certainly had individuals looking down on them.



Before the majority of the guests had arrived, the chuppa had to be transferred to the Gardens at the rear of synagogue, the poles were carefully carried round, followed swiftly by the canopy, the chuppa was then assembled.



We returned to the synagogue to see the vort and the signing of the tenaim. then the ketuvah was

prepared by Rabbi Ephraim Potash.

The guests began to arrive and extra chairs were brought around for those that could not stand, then first came the Bridegroom David, shortly followed by his enchanting Bride Sandra.

The Sun was shining as the soon to be married stood under the chuppa. Silence fell over the Gardens as Rabbi Potash began. David took a plain gold ring and placed it on Sandra's finger and recites in the presence of two witnesses, "Behold you are sanctified (betrothed) to me with this ring, according to the Law of Moses and Israel." The *ketuvah* is now read aloud, and was given to Sandra. There was beautiful singing from Arie Cohen and Zak Benarroch

Distinguished guests were then honored with the reciting of the sheva brachos, the happy couple then shared

a glass of wine and David then broke the glass to shouts of Mazeltov.

The happy couple then returned to the synagogue to break their fast and complete some formalities, the chuppa was dismantled and returned.

The guests then began to head off by car or by the thankfully supplied coach to the wonderful reception that saw not only different parts of Judaism, but all denominations become as one, the food and the speeches were very enjoyable, and the singing and dancing like you have never seen before carried on late in to the night.

We wish you both a hearty mazeltov

Frazer Praag

A New Year — A New Beginning

We are now in the month of Elul in the run-up to Rosh Hashanah 5770.

To understand what we are supposed to be doing now, the Torah uses a very simple but powerful analogy.

Everyone is very aware of the world financial crises that has been going on for some time now (and will hopefully end soon Please G-d). But how did all these financial institutions know that there was a problem in the first place?

Only by having accurate accounts is it possible to know how well the business is doing. At the very least, every business produces annual accounts and some in more sensitive markets will produce quarterly, monthly or even weekly accounts.

So it is with the Jewish people. We have an account with G-d and he has one with us. At the very least we should look at our spiritual balance sheet once a year and ask ourselves “How is my (Spiritual) business doing? Am I using my full potential or am I wasting time an opportunity? In what way can I make things better?”

G-d too is looking at the Jewish people as individuals and as a nation and is asking himself, as any good Managing Director would, “Is my people fulfilling the goal I have set for it? Should I keep the business going?”

So now is the time to strengthen the ‘business’. Attend shul one extra time

per week. Say an extra prayer per day, give a little more charity and more often and learn a bit of Torah every day. There is lots to choose from. The basic message is “If good is good, is not better, better”

This year is special in that it is 5770. In Hebrew this is תשע which means “you shall have salvation”.



Let us pray that indeed the coming year will be one of the true and final salvation with the coming of our righteous redeemer — Moshiach.

With best wishes for a good and Sweet New Year 5770.

Rabbi Ephraim Potash



Service times are available in print and on our website.

**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.**

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 !!

The Miracle of Chanukah

We have seen in our community not the oil of Chanukah lasting for the 8 days but the money and endeavours lasting for 800 days that has culminated in most of our beautiful building being completed to such a wonderful state. 50 years ago the community had to pay minyan men to enable Saturday morning services to occur now the vast majority pay for the privilege of attending our communal building by regular donations and work freely performed. That is the miracle of Congregation of Jacob.



and beat the London traffic to arrive full of cheer. They are welcomed to our beautiful premises by our reverend and members of the synagogue with their hearty smiles. Within minutes there is a keyboard set up and we have a group of very merry people singing many Yiddish songs with a special rendition of Ofen Pripetchik which brought back happy memories for our guests. After a few songs the teas & eat *sufganiyot* — deep-fried doughnuts. This commemorates an oil-based miracle. All those doughnuts, Oy gevalth all that

cholesterol, how we survive all that fried food, now that's another miracle of Chanukah. One of our guests Seymour then is asked to light the Menorah with Ben & Jordan watching on as if they were his guards. We the all burst in to a rapturous rendition of Maoz Tzur with an extra verse being recited by Seymour. A few more songs later, the residents are led back to their coach for the journey back, but with one difference they have had left with the warmth felt within The Congregation of Jacob.



Frazer Praag

So how do we celebrate this miracle at our synagogue, well a small band of residents of Nightingale Lane fight with

"We have refurbished the building to enable more people to enjoy the wonderful atmosphere in our shul. Our community is very friendly and people are made to feel welcome whatever their level of observance."
David Brandes, Warden

Be part of the family...

www.congregationofjacob.org

Jokes

One Rosh Hashanah morning, the Rabbi noticed little Adam staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the synagogue. It was covered with names and small memorial lights.

The seven-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the Rabbi walked up, stood beside the boy, and said quietly,

"Good morning, Adam."

"Good morning, Rabbi," replied the young man, still focused on the plaque.

"Rabbi, what is this?" Adam asked.

"Well, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in service."

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Little Adam's voice was barely audible when he asked: "Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur?"

-ooOoo-

Once, in Czarist Russia a *schnorrer* was soliciting Baron Rothschild for a handout. The *schnorrer* expressed displeasure with the sum he had been given. "Your son gave me twice as much," complained the beggar.

"Well, my son can afford to," said Baron Rothschild. "He has a rich father"

-ooOoo-

Moishe is driving around Kings Cross. He's late for a meeting, he's looking for a parking place, and can't find one.

In desperation, he turns towards heaven and says: "G-d, if you find me a parking place, I promise that I'll eat only kosher, respect Shabbos, and observe all the holidays."

Miraculously, a place opens up just in front of him.

He turns his face up to heaven and says, "Never mind, I just found one!"

-ooOoo-

A visitor to Israel attended a recital and concert at the Moscovitz Auditorium. Impressed with the architecture and lavish interior he inquired of the tour guide, "Is this magnificent auditorium named after Chaim Moscovitz, the famous Talmudic scholar?" "No," replied the guide. "It is named after Sam Moscovitz, the writer."

"Never heard of him. What did he write?"

"A cheque", replied the guide.

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

The Wedding of Sandra and David (Brandes)

After David first announced to his family and friends that he was going to marry Sandra, the big countdown started for what was to be a most memorable and joyous occasion. Admittedly there was a lot of running around to be done organising everything from the Caterer who prepared the most sumptuous food to the Band who created a real Ruach (atmosphere).

The day began in earnest with both Sandra and David getting ready for their special day. I turned up early thinking no one would be there and I was proved wrong because everyone who took part was eager to participate in this Simcha with the ambience of our now beautifully refurbished synagogue.



The start of proceedings were left in the capable hands of Rabbi Ephraim Potash who explained to those gathered the ancient custom of Kabbolos Ponim and Kinyan an agreement on David's part to fulfil his commitment on the engagement side of the contract which used to be a ceremony in itself. Naturally there was a L'chaim to get everyone in the mood and David and

Sandra hadn't reached the Chupah yet.

In advance David in true military precision had organised a team of people to set up the Canopy. The Chupah (Wedding Canopy) was set up in Jubilee Gardens and drew an extremely large crowd with the Police on standby in case of any trouble. They did a splendid job and maintained peace and harmony. We were delighted to see the presence of Dayan Grynhaus of the Keddasia Beth Din. Also in close proximity were Rev Halfon Benaroch from the Spanish and Portuguese

Congregation not to be confused with Bernard Benaroch and his son Zack who ably assisted me in the enhancement of the whole wedding ceremony and not forgetting Rev Naphtoli Tifenbraun from the Hackney and East London Synagogue.

There were a varied group of people anticipating firstly the arrival of the groom David who was treated to an augmented choir consisting of people from North and North West London and other parts of London. This was certainly a revival for the Jewish East End something that hadn't been experienced for many years. Finally almost in a Mexican wave

style the crowd moved sideways to allow for Sandra to make her way towards the Chupah and upon instruction from Rabbi Shindler proceeded to circle David 7 times to the tune of Eshet Chayil (A Woman of Worth – from the Book of Proverbs).

Once again Rabbi Shindler stepped in to deliver a most outstanding sermon to David and Sandra under the Chupah explaining the ceremony in its entirety.

The Shevah Brochos were conducted by various Ministers who all added in their own way to the Simcha and now it was time to head to the Wathamstow Assembly Halls. Unfortunately a very good friend of mine also with the name of David was using the portable satellite navigation system that Thursday and I got lost trying to find my way there.

Upon arrival I thought we had arrived at the wrong hall until a few familiar faces came and reassured us that it was the right place and that there was another wedding party going on at the same time or just finishing. Everyone was mingling and it truly was a relaxed atmosphere. Gerald, David's brother summoned everyone from the foyer into the hall by announcing that Dinner was about to commence not before we got David

Continued on page 11.....

The Wedding of Sandra and David (Brandes) continued from page 10...

onto the Dance floor and Sandra was taken into the Ladies section. This was truly the start of what was going to be a memorable and unforgettable evening. After a few minutes we all took our seats and David at the top of his voice made Hamotzi over the bread.

Whilst the waiters proceeded in serving everyone with the respective courses we paid close attention to Gerald's welcoming speech and the introduction of all the other speakers. I have to admit that I was getting a bit nervous knowing that my time was drawing closer and rather hoping that I would not repeat what had already been said. Of course it wasn't made easier with my Brother-in-Law Jes having high expectations pointing his video camera towards me. Jes always does an outstanding job when it comes to filming and I didn't want to make this an exception to the rule. I was relieved when the hall

clapped in unison at the conclusion of my speech. Although this can be taken in one of two ways that either they were happy or relieved that I had finished.

So after the speeches and thank you's to David, Sandra and her parents Avrohom and Rifkah on behalf of all the guests

from out of nowhere came what can only be described as rent a crowd. Because behind the Mechitza (Separation Barrier between men and Women in orthodox Jewish circles) the evenings proceedings were now going to be elevated onto an even higher level of excitement. To my pleasant surprise my cousin Shayala Gluck who had been at the Chupah earlier in the day and had been part of the augmented choir took to the stage with a friend

whilst some 30-40 Ruzhiner Chasidim danced to the latest Niggunim (Chasidic Song).

They all at this stage were quite intoxicated with free flowing alcohol after being suitably nourished by Mr Reich's fine cuisine. It was like a Jewish carnival as each person was dressed with a cowboy hat and they even brought on their Chasidic version of Mr Blobby a man dressed in an over inflated uniform. This was a wedding that I along with my wife and daughter will not forget for many years to come.

May I along with my family wish all friends and members of the Congregation of Jacob a Happy and Healthy New Year.

(Rev) Ari, Meryl and Tamara Cohen





The Jewish Mama's Kitchen By Denise Phillips



Denise Phillips is a professional chef, who trained with restaurateur Prue Leith and is now a leading name in modern Jewish cookery.

See Denise in action at The Congregation of Jacob
Jewish Heritage Day 13th September 2009
11:00am – 12:15pm
Entrance £10.00 – OAP £5.00

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

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.

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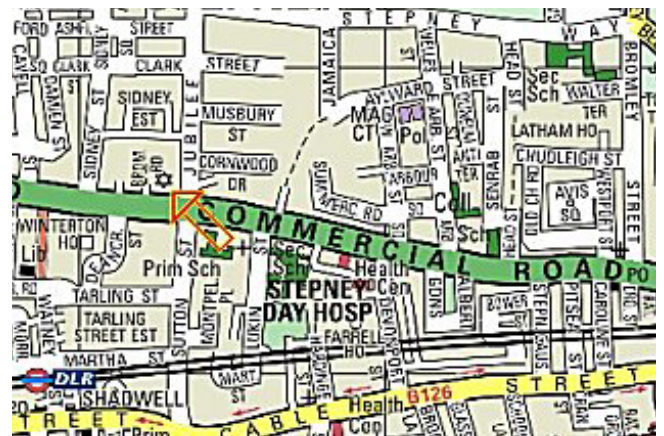
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Designed by Michael Gold