

בית הכנסת קהלת יעקב

CONGREGATION OF JACOB SYNAGOGUE

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The Jacobette Vol. 9

Newsletter of the Congregation of Jacob Synagogue



On Shul Website



Photograph by Sandra Brandes

Message from Editor

I am pleased to be Editor of this year's shul newsletter and am enjoying the challenge of this new role. I hope that this will inspire more women in the community to contribute; not only to this magazine but to wider activities in the shul next year.

During the past 12 months, we have been involved in so many different activities. These include Presentations at the Historic Royal Palaces: Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace and Tower of London. We also welcomed pupils to the shul from various local primary schools.

I have established a regular kiddush after the shabbos service that features salads and dips one week and fish meals another week. During the winter months we now have a regular vegetarian cholent. We have a special Kiddush for birthdays and anniversaries during the year.

This year my father Abraham David, has been given the honour of Chasan Torah and is joined by Abraham Daniel as Chasan Beraishis. This illustrates the rich mix of Sephardim and Askenazim within our community and it is hoped this will be a successful partnership for the future.

I hope Gerald can maintain his weight loss. Following his last sponsored diet, he raised significant funds for the shul and his efforts are much appreciated by everyone.

Wish you all a Happy New Year.

Sandra Brandes



Rosh Hashana Message 5771

We are now in the month of Elul leading up to the New Year of 5771. This is the time to prepare ourselves for the Rosh Hashana – the day of judgement - when our fortunes for the coming year are decided, so it makes sense to put some effort in to improve our chances of a positive result.

No-one would think of attending a court case against them without preparing the best possible defence. This thought should inspire us to do whatever we can to 'prepare the best case' in our upcoming heavenly court case presided over by the 'Judge of Judges' Himself!

So what should we do to prepare?

The Talmud advises us to improve in the three areas which Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) describes as the 3 pillars on which the world stands – Torah, Prayer and Kindness to our fellow man (or woman).

So an extra daily prayer (e.g. Psalm 27), an extra 10p (or more) per day in the 'pushke' (charity box) and learning an extra little something in (say in the Chumash) will all stand us in good stead. We also blow the Shofar daily in shul as part of our preparations – to wake us up as it were!

So you see, it is not all that difficult. The A-mighty isn't looking for earth shattering achievements but rather small but significant improvements.

We are assured that in the merit of this we will be blessed with a good and sweet New Year.

Wishing the stalwart members of Congregation of Jacob Synagogue a year of good health and prosperity and a successful minyan throughout the year!

Ephraim Potash



Photograph by Elliott Tucker



Photograph by Elliott Tucker

Message from Chairman

For my sins I am the Chairman of this shul. I realise that we are “fast” approaching Yom Kippur and I hope that all our sins will be forgiven and we will be written into the book of life.

At our family shul, the Congregation of Jacob, we have a happy diverse group of people from babies to congregants who are over 90 years of age. For the past few years we have celebrated weddings and barmitzvahs, most of which you can see on our website. The shul has moved towards the 21st century but our roots are still Orthodox. We remain a diverse group, our beautiful shul is still in existence and continues to serve the Jewish community in East London and we are endeavouring to improving the various different elements of the shul.

I was born 56 years ago and lived in Sidney Street, not far from where the shul now is now situated. I live in Oxfordshire and it's a long walk! Luckily I have transport by way by coach and stay in the refurbished room at the top of the shul. We still have lots of people who live in the area and others living in Scotland, Israel, New York and many other places. It has been nearly 3 years since our mother passed away and I still miss her influence, particularly with regard to what I should do for the shul. I am sure my brother David feels the same way. As you know, David married to Sandra in June 2009 and there is now another influence within the shul to enhance David's role as Reverend and to help him run our shul.

At present we are open on Friday nights at 6.30 pm and five minutes before Shabbos in the winter months. In addition the shul is open on Saturday mornings at 9.10 am and all the Holy Days and which will be listed on the leaflet and website.

Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the services (maybe not on Yom Kippur), surviving the fast will be good.

We welcome your comments or suggestions on the magazine so please contact Sandra Brandes, (Editor in chief) or send an email.

Over the past 10 years we have upgraded and repaired the shul to the beautiful standard which we see today and which everybody seems to enjoy.

Gerald Brandes

Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law)

It was an extremely special honour to be selected as *Chatan Torah* (the groom of the Law) the last *aliyah* of the Torah, *V'Zot Habrocha*. I was called up and stood under the tallis (prayer shawl). It was a very emotional and proud moment for me and my family. I was followed by David Russell being called up as *Chatan B'reishit* (the groom of Genesis).

This demonstrated our celebration marking the conclusion of the annual cycle of reading from the Torah and the beginning where we renew our spiritual connection with the Torah. We celebrated with joy on a physical level which enabled us to reach a higher level of spiritual understanding.

All the Torah scrolls were removed from the ark and carried around the bimah (podium) in a series of seven *hakafot* (circuits). Although each *hakafa*, need only be one circuit, around the synagogue, our dancing and singing with the Torah continued much longer. We were the loudest and proudest congregation in East London and probably could have been heard in North London at some stage. The festivities continued late into the night with everybody enjoying themselves.

Frazer Praag



Pesach

Seder night in shul

This year the catering for the first Seder night ran more smoothly as the menu was fish. This meal was served for 30 people in the shul and our community was treated to a really wonderful seder. The difficulty with a Seder night was that we are limited by the number of people who could attend and we are always over subscribed because of the homely atmosphere of the event.

Our 2 year old star Jeannette read the ma- nishtana in Hebrew and Russian to the amazement of the assembled community. The majority of people really appreciated the seder as many live alone but most have a strong connection with our shul.

We are always pleased to welcome Monty Passes who always has positive and encouraging words for our community.



Seder night with Sandra and David

This year, the second Seder night was held at the home of Rev. David Brandes and his wife Sandra who very kindly invited several friends and neighbours, including myself to celebrate the service and partake of the Seder meal with them.

Those present included David's brother Gerald and Jeannette aged 2, the little daughter of Yulia and Leon Goldman and last but not least, Joey, the parrot who kept us all entertained with his antics (in his cage, of course).

It was a lovely evening, the atmosphere was warm and informal and the meal was excellent and plentiful.

All of us who attended enjoyed it immensely and would like to thank the Brandes Family for their kindness and hospitality.

Shirley Shrieber

Cultural Awareness Talks

Our brief was to present to the staff at the Historic Royal Palaces an overview of our faith thus illustrating our beliefs, traditions, cultural differences, diet, language and dress.

The presentations were conducted in PowerPoint format and the material was researched by Rev David Brandes and David Russell with assistance from Sandra and Tendayi. We all participated in the presentations which were well received by the staff.



Hampton Court Palace

Our first presentation was at Hampton Court Palace on 12/4/10 for approximately 35 minutes with a large group of staff. It was really stimulating for both presenters and audience from the perspective of the questions posed by the staff and responses received.



Kensington Palace

This was followed on 13/5/10 with a session of one hour at Kensington Palace to a smaller group of staff and we exhibited religious articles around the table where we all sat. The event was very interactive and generated a lot of interest from the staff who were very pleased to guide us around the Palace and share their knowledge of the palace with us.



Tower of London

The last venue was on 7/6/10 for 45 minutes in "our own backyard" There was a large group of staff comprising the Beefeaters and other members of Tower of London staff. We found the Tower of London a most fascinating place to be, especially as the Crown Jewels were in such close proximity to the place where we had our presentation.

The photographs were displayed after permission had been obtained from the Historic Royal Palaces.

Opening the shul's doors

Over the past year, we have welcomed a number of visiting groups to the shul. It is always a great pleasure to give a tour of the building, and to further explain the history of the Jewish community in the East End, to those are eager to learn, regardless of age.

Amongst the groups that have visited recently have been two classes from the Marion Richardson School in Stepney and a class of students from the Osmani Primary School in Whitechapel, led by their Religious Education teacher, Mrs Cockerton, who commented following the visit:

"I just wanted to say a HUGE thank you for letting the children visit the Synagogue on Wednesday and tell them so much about Judaism. They all really enjoyed their time with you and I think they really benefitted from the visit, as it really brought to life what they have been learning in the class."

In addition, we have also welcomed a group of cadets from the Tower Hamlets Metropolitan Police Force. The Rev. Brandes and David Russell have facilitated the groups, creating an interactive session which includes highlighting the architecture of the shul, demonstrating the variety of items used in a Jewish prayer service (from the shofar to the siddur) and taking questions on all aspects of Jewish practice and rites of passage.

We look forward to welcoming more groups to Kehillas Ya'akov in the year ahead, to give more local people the opportunity to see what lies behind the blue doors of the shul in Commercial Road and to step inside to discover a world that they have previously only read about.

Funding for a brighter future

The restoration programme at Kehillas Ya'akov received a boost at the end of this year with two new grants, from the Rothschild Foundation Europe and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Rothschild Foundation Europe has given funding for our shul. This grant for £4,399 will enable us to undertake further restoration work, in particular to take pre-emptive measures to prevent rising damp which was identified as a potential future problem for the building.

After a long process, a grant of £3,000 has been awarded to the Shul for capacity building work from the Community Chest of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

This will fund the installation of CCTV, as well as vital electrical testing and repairs for the interior of the building. We can also purchase a computer for our treasurer, Martin Alpert, which will help him with the bookkeeping – so vital for the smooth running of the Shul. Work on the electrical repairs has already been undertaken and we hope to have the CCTV installed by the end of the year.

David Russell

Recipe Corner

Vegetarian Lasagne specially for Pesach

Serves for 4-6 people

Mixture

2 oz vegetarian butter or margarine (kosher for Pesach)

½ pints (3¾ cups) of milk (kosher for Pesach)

Box of Matzos

¼ tsp of salt

¼ tsp of black or white pepper

2 eggs (yolks)

Sauce

Chopped tomatoes freshly chopped or tinned tomatoes (from Jewish Food guide for Pesach)

1 small finely chopped onion

1 clove of garlic

Add spices to taste

For Topping

Grated vegetarian cheddar cheese (kosher for Pesach)

Put vegetable or olive oil onto baking tray before adding layers of matzo and sauce until full

Cook in oven on Gas Mark No.4 (350-380°C) and bake for 25/30 minutes

Shirley Szabo

Registered in England as a charity

Registration number: X20677

President: Monty Rome

Chairman: Gerald Brandes

Secretary: David Behr

Treasurer: Martin Alpert

Warden: Rev. David Brandes

Web Master / Security: Michael Gold

Our thanks to Michael Gold for maintaining and keeping the website in such a splendid form.