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ROSH HASHANAH EDITION
NO. 9



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Editorial

Shalom everyone,

May 2023 has been rather an exciting time - we had two important celebrations: King Charles III celebrated his Coronation and the State of Israel celebrated their 75th Anniversary. Mazel tov!

At home, Cranbrook United Synagogue held its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 10 May and we extend a warm welcome to all members of the Board of Management who were elected or re-elected. Their names are shown here. We wish them all a hearty Mazel tov. As well as the AGM, in May we celebrated Shavuot with a "Speed Debate" over lunch with all the usual Shavuot food - plenty of cheese cake!

A New Events Committee has just been formed, and in future Magazines I hope to be able to give you a preview of activities taking place in the Shul! If there are any events you would like held in the shul, why not contact the Events Committee today.

I am delighted to announce that Simon Stern and Michael Silver have been honoured as Chatan Torah and Chatan Bereishis, and Norma Levinson has been honoured as Eshet Chayil. We wish them Mazel tov and look forward to celebrating with them over Simchat Torah.

Once again, we have updates from our Executive and Board Members, and excellent articles from regular contributors Chaim Levison in Israel, Yosef Cohen in Mir Yeshiva, Jerusalem, and Ruth Lyndon mentions more books we might like to read. I am delighted to welcome some new contributors to our Magazine: Barry Silver writes about a visit to Poland, and Eddie Leon encourages us to visit Ramla when next in Israel. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Many thanks to all those involved in the production and distribution of this magazine, and to all of our contributors. Please keep the articles coming.

The next edition of Shalom will be the Pesach 5784 Edition. I would be delighted to hear from you. You can email me at stanton.philippa@gmail.com and I will keep any articles sent for the next magazine.

The Magazine Committee - Linda and Barry - join me in wishing you and your families a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

Philippa Stanton
Editor

*Cranbrook United
Synagogue*

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The Chief Rabbi's Rosh Hashanah Message 5784

The term 'Yamim Noraim' (Days of Awe) contains within it the key to transformative living.

Unetaneh Tokef, at the heart of our High Holyday Musaph prayers, commences: "Let us now proclaim the power of this day, for it is awe-inspiring..."

Awe is an emotion that is often elusive and fleeting, but when experienced, it can be unforgettable and life-altering.

Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, defines awe as the experience of "vast mysteries." In a widely acclaimed paper, written together with the noted social psychologist, Jonathan Haidt, Keltner identifies five spheres of experience which give rise to the feeling of awe.

1. Threat. When we encounter someone or something which has the power of life and death, such as a powerful natural disaster.
2. Beauty. When we see a striking piece of art or place of rare natural splendour.
3. Ability. When we appreciate in someone or something, an extraordinary talent.
4. Virtue. When we experience extraordinary acts of goodness which inspire us.
5. Supernatural Causality. When we feel the manifestation of the Divine in our lives.

Fascinatingly, these spheres of experience combine in the most extraordinary way on our Days of Awe.

Standing before our Creator on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we meditate upon our mortality and the gift of life. We are struck by the beauty of the sea of white in our Shuls and the rousing melodies of our prayers. We recognise in Hashem the capacity to help shape our lives and His boundless virtue to forgive us, no matter how frequently we err. Above all, our Days of Awe enable us to experience the hand of Hashem on our shoulders, comforting us, guiding us, and pushing us to fulfil our potential.

Significantly, in an extraordinary series of studies, Professor Keltner showed that people who had reported experiencing more awe in their lives, were more charitable and more altruistic. Reflecting on these studies, he wrote, "awe imbues people with a different sense of themselves, one that is smaller, more humble and part of something larger. In the great balancing act of our social lives, between the gratification of self-interest and a concern for others, fleeting experiences of awe redefine the self in terms of the collective, and orient our actions towards the needs of those around us." No wonder, therefore, that our Unetaneh Tokef prayer concludes with a call to engage in prayer, penitence and charity.

With this in mind, may our forthcoming Yamim Noraim, filled with heartfelt introspection and awe, inspire us to be more compassionate, more giving and more connected to our fellows. Let us strive to live each day with a renewed sense of purpose and a deep appreciation for the awe-inspiring moments that await us.

Valerie and I wish you all a shana tova umetukah, filled with awe and bountiful blessings.



Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE



Rosh Hashanah Message



Dear Friends,

On behalf of my family and myself, I want to take this opportunity of wishing you all a Shanah Tovah, a good year, filled only with health and happiness. May this year usher in only blessings and peace for us, Israel and the entire world.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are just around the corner, and some of us may be facing this prospect with a sense of dread. This dread is not only because of the importance of these two spiritual moments in our calendar. Instead, it is about the thought of being inside a Synagogue for three or more hours, listening to a cantor or Chazan singing in a language that we may not understand. Instead of participating, we might find our minds wondering, but how does one participate when one does not know how? How do we connect, when we don't know what we are connecting to?

I thought it would therefore be worthwhile to give some pointers as to how to survive the high holy days - and perhaps more than survive, thrive on these special days.

MINDSET: The overarching theme of Rosh Hashanah is one of coronating G-d as the king of the world. If He is the king, then we are His subjects. I am sure you all remember how earlier this year King Charles was crowned King of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, how millions of people thronged just to see this spectacle. There is a sense of excitement, of occasion, of pomp and ceremony.

It is not just anyone who gets to crown the King. None other than the Archbishop of Canterbury was assigned to this awesome responsibility. You can well imagine that he dressed carefully for this moment, that he had prepared every word and every action that he took was rehearsed.

The wonderful thing about Rosh Hashanah is that it is not just the powerful, religious and influential who have the honour and responsibility to crown the king. It is you and I, the common man and woman who have this rare accolade. This is therefore more than just a visit to a Synagogue. It is high drama, something that doesn't happen every day. Hopefully, we can arrive at Synagogue with that outlook, knowing that not only is the King getting coronated, but we are the ones who will have the privilege of putting the crown on G-d's head. It is a sobering thought, but also a highly encouraging one which gives us an idea of the high esteem in which G-d holds us.

CONTEMPLATE: If you look at the prayers, you will see that we talk about a moment when the entire world recognises G-d's rule over the world. They emphasise how wonderful that moment will be - how there will be no wickedness in the world, how crime will disappear, how wars will stop, and how we will live in peace and happiness.

This idyllic world can occur to the extent that we see ourselves as subjects of G-d himself, and crown Him over us. Our relationship with G-d is the beginning of the domino effect that will bring us world peace, safety and security. It starts with us. This is a time to think deeply about our relationship with G-d. Is He a being that we are constantly aware of? Is He a being that we only think about as we beg the traffic warden not to give us a parking ticket, or at those sublime moments when everything seems meant to be like a wedding or a birth of a child?

If we are not feeling so close to that sense of the infinite in our lives, we need to think about how we can inject that feeling into ourselves. How do we increase our sense of the godly in this world? What small incremental steps can we take to enhance our spiritual lives? What Mitzva (commandment) in the Torah speaks to us that will help us to bring his reality to the fore? What is reasonable for us to attempt? This awareness is no small thing: it is the beginning of the creation of a new world, a world where there is no crime, and no war. A world of meaning and a world of happiness.

The prayers are there **not only** to tell us about the awesomeness of the day, they are also there to help us gain perspective about our relationship with the Almighty. The closer we get to that sublime relationship, the closer we bring the world to its perfection.

JOIN IN! There are many songs that are sung on these special days in Shul. The Chazan does not sing them because he wants to show off his operatic voice - the purpose of those songs is for us to join in, singing together. There is something magical about people making music together. It creates a sense of unity, of togetherness and of belonging. Singing lets us think more emotionally - the songs are there to make us feel, and the more we sing along, the more we are going to feel something. It doesn't matter if you are the greatest soprano or the worst baritone in the entire world, what matters is that you join in. Our sages tell us that when we sing songs together it lifts us spiritually on to a high level, so that we don't only say the words, we mean them and we feel them.

So, when we come to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, join in! Contemplate our role in bringing the world to a sublime state, think about what we can do to help to bring it that one step closer, and have a mindset of excitement and anticipation as we coronate the King of all Kings.

Leshana' Tova, Tichateveinu Vetichemeneinu Lachaim Tovim.
I wish you all a good year - may you all be inscribed for a good life.

With love

Rabbi Steven and Siobhan, Maga and Talia Dansky



Chairman's Report

I would like to start by thanking you all for putting your faith and trust in me once again and as I said at the AGM, to quote Magnus Magnusson:- "I've started so I'll finish".

Talking of the AGM, this was held on Wednesday 10th May 2023 and on a positive note, was extremely well attended. However, the meeting was, to put it mildly, quite a feisty affair and I was surprised by the aggressiveness being shown towards the Honorary Officers.

There are two issues here, firstly the Honorary Officers and Shul Council are all Volunteers; we undertake our duties because we care about the Community and have the courage to "Put our heads above the parapet". We certainly do not deserve to be spoken to in such an aggressive and antagonist manner.

Secondly as a Community, we face enough problems from outside; I fail to see why we have to create problems from within. We should all be able to come together and work together, rather than against each other and I urge you all to help us. We know we might not always make the right decision for you, but I can assure you of our best intentions. We are all approachable and would be only too happy to discuss any suggestions you may have. We only want the best for our Community.

Over the past year, I have had numerous people speak to me regarding the events that we host and during some conversations, rather the lack of events. I spoke at some length during the AGM about the restructuring of the Events Committee. This has now been set up and there is a list of names and email addresses on the notice boards in Shul. If you haven't had a chance to see these lists, then please feel free to contact me or the Office and we can provide you with this.

It is our sincere hope that this restructuring will result in bigger and better events taking place during the year. Once again we need your input. Should you have any ideas of an event you would like to see us hold, then please contact a member of the committee; I'm sure they would be only too happy to hear from you and I'm also sure they will ask you to get involved in organising the said event. By doing this we can all work together and hopefully there should never be the need to take a call complaining about the lack of events, as this way you can only blame yourselves.

We have held a number of events this year and amongst these, Purim was extremely well attended and Shavuot was another great success. The Ice Cream Kiddushim were very much appreciated and again thank you to everyone who helped out. Also Kol Hakavod to Simon Stern for the wonderful Speed Debating session that he arranged. We believe that this was a first as it has never been done before by any Shul and once again the turn-out was amazing. I can assure you all, the Executive and Shul Council are working so hard to try and make our Shul happy and inclusive and to be the Hub of our wonderful community. We urge you all to support us and should you have any concerns, please call us, we are only too happy to listen and where we can, implement any suggestions you may have.

Finally, I would like to thank Claire and all the Ladies that help and prepare the food for the weekly Kiddushim and other events; thank you to the Executive and Shul Council for their hard work and enthusiasm which helps to make my position so much easier; thank you to our Admin staff for helping to keep the Shul running and thank you to Rabbi Dansky and Reverend Newman for all your hard work.

I wish you all a happy, healthy and sweet New Year and well over the Fast.

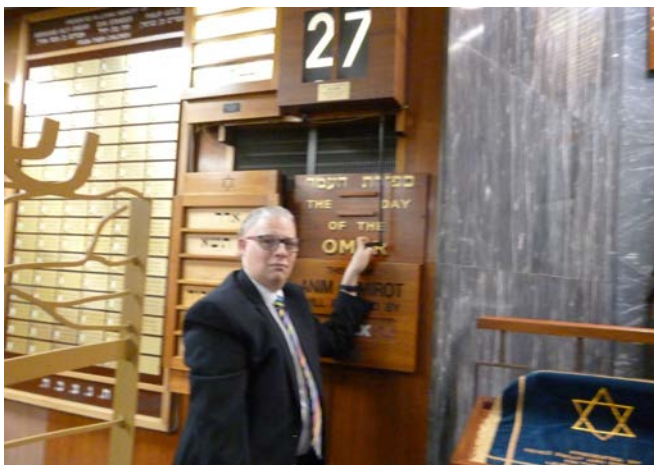
Bernard Berman

Chairman, Cranbrook United Synagogue

What Page are we on in the Siddur?

Philippa Stanton

Some years ago, I heard a very good record by a young man complaining that it was impossible to find the correct page in the siddur in shul on a Shabbat morning. There were several different siddurim available and it was difficult to find out where you were. It was no good peering over your neighbour's shoulder - he was sure to have a different siddur to you; and if it was the same one, he was probably just as lost as you were, and had been surreptitiously looking over the shoulder of his neighbour, who might have been just as confused!



Having been a regular shul-goer for many years, I can usually find my way around the siddur I prefer to use, but visitors to the shul for Simchas etc, sometimes look completely lost, and I have often been asked to find the place for them in a siddur I rarely use.

However, since Cranbrook United Synagogue came into being, there has been no problem for me! I simply give visitors a printed card and point out the number shown on the Board, explaining to which column in the card they should refer for their own special siddur. This saves a lot of time and trouble and prevents any irregular shul goers showing their ignorance!

As regular Cranbrook shul-goers know, the two Boards, presented in memory of Morry Finkeltaub and Icki Stein, one in the men's section and one in the ladies' section, are kept up by Robbie Spill. Robbie is meticulous in ensuring that these boards are correct, so visitors should have no trouble in following our beautiful service, not only on Shabbat, but on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as well.

We look forward to seeing you in shul.

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Maayan Meeting

Vicky Portnogy

On Sunday morning, 12 March 2023 my mother and I attended the pre-Pesach Ma'ayan talk and brunch hosted by our fellow congregant, Norma Levinson. About fourteen ladies were present and during the course of the morning three different lady speakers attended and gave a ten minute explanation about various aspects of Seder night.

Two other synagogues were also hosting parallel events and the speakers alternated between the various communities.

Our first speaker, Sharona discussed gratitude - we were all asked to think about what was important to us about our own Seder nights. Some ladies thought about their own family traditions, the songs and different tunes that they have sang down the generations. For others it was a chance to remember lost family members and for others it was a chance for new generations to contribute.

The second speaker, Rebbetzen Shoshana, discussed the hidden meaning of Chad Gad Ya extremely

passionately and made the valid point that the Jew will always survive; no matter how many times throughout history people have tried to persecute the Jews, we continue to survive all attempts to annihilate us.

The third speaker Shira, the Jewish Studies teacher from Hasmonean High School, discussed the traditions and immersive nature of the Seder. We were asked to close our eyes and put ourselves in the place of Yocheved, Moses' mother; imagining how she would have felt just before leaving Egypt.

In summary, we were left with the amazing impression of the power of the Seder through the generations. How important it is to share these experiences, traditions and our faith with the generations that follow so we can continue the line. Our people have been singing these same songs for hundreds of years and will continue to do so. It really was a fantastic morning, spent in the presence of our fellow congregants and it has made us feel ready to face the enormous task ahead.



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View from the *Wardens Box*

I'd like to begin by thanking all those volunteers who have helped Harold and myself throughout the year. Special thanks, in no particular order, to Bradley Mervish, Mervyn Lyndon, Leslie Linder, Michael Darwin, Robbie Spill and Martin Bloomberg, whose help has been invaluable in the smooth running of the service.

My thanks also go to Rabbi Dansky and Reverend Newman who's work and support has been very much appreciated.

On a personal note, I would very much like to thank Harold Marco for all his work, much of it behind the scenes throughout the year under the most trying of circumstances.

This year has seen us guarantee our weekday minyanim for all our services. Three days a week with the services held at the Federation Synagogue in Clarence Avenue and the rest of the week in our Shul. Securing our minyanim is key to every shul and is the life-blood of every shul. Now all our members who wish to say Kaddish on the yartzeit of a loved one will be able to do so.

Our plans for the year to come are exciting and progressive and we very much look forward to many Simchas and a successful and healthy year for our kehilla, the wider north east London kehilla and all of Kol Yisrael.

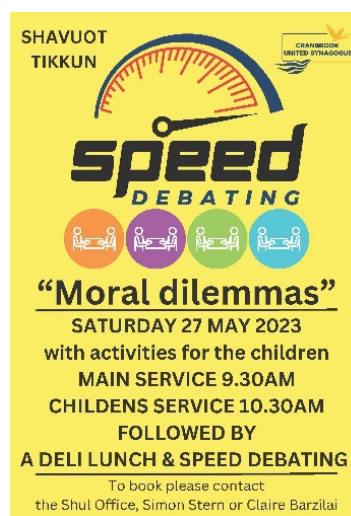
Wishing you all a happy and healthy New Year.

Simon Stern

Warden, Cranbrook Synagogue

View from the *Balcony*

This Shavuot, we were looking for something to engage our community; to get them involved in learning in what we believe is a unique and enjoyable way. Simon Stern devised a "Speed Debating" event on realistic moral issues with a deli style lunch.



Everytable nominated a captain who re-read the dilemmas and encouraged those on the table to come to a consensus. There were five questions all of which were moral dilemmas. The tables had eight minutes to debate the rights, wrongs and the morality of the given situation. They then had a further two minutes to reach

a consensus. Simon compered the event, giving us the questions, fielded any queries and asking every table for the answers.

Simon then asked for the responses. Rabbi Dansky then gave the halachic answer to the dilemmas using sources including the Roma, Rambam, Rashi and many others.

It was a huge success. We believe that this is the first time that an event of this type has ever taken place within the United Synagogue.

Claire Barzilai

Vice Chairman

Our Community

Welfare Minister

I continue with my normal work, looking after the community in general. I attend lavoyers and stone settings, where I am able to help those close family members, and deal with welfare matters with both telephone calls and visits.

As Chaplain to King George Hospital and Queens Hospital, I visit both hospitals on a regular basis and also visit other hospitals if I know of a member who has been admitted. I also visit members at home to give moral support whenever I can. I rely on members informing the office if they or a loved one go into hospital, or is ill at home and wants a visit.

I continue to hold regular "Coffee and Chat" meetings on Zoom once a fortnight on Tuesday afternoons which are very successful - we are at present taking a summer break, but will be back! We also hope to arrange more functions in the shul hall.

Gillian, Iris Taylor and I went to Westcliff on Wednesday 12 July and visited a number of members of Cranbrook Synagogue who now live in the Westcliff area. Westcliff shul were very hospitable and provided refreshments and we also provided refreshments! We had a nice chat and caught up with Shul matters. We were received with pleasure by the members who look forward to seeing us on many more occasions.

I would like to thank Bernard Berman, Claire Barzilai and Iris Taylor for their help. My special thanks to Harold Marco, who continues to work exceptionally hard for the community; we wish him a complete refua shlamo. I also value the support of the Executive, Members of the Council of Management and our Administrators.

Once again I must thank my wife, Gillian, who also volunteers to help those who are less fortunate, and is the most wonderful help to me as Welfare Minister.

Gillian and I together with our children and grandchildren would like to take this opportunity of wishing the entire community a very healthy, happy and prosperous New Year and well over the fast.

Reverend Gary Newman
Community Welfare Minister



Yom Kippur is nearly upon us. It is the day in which we go through a process which will allow us to gain forgiveness from the Almighty for the things that we might have done wrong during the year. It is a day of fasting, a day of prayer, and most importantly a day in which we contemplate how we might have disappointed ourselves, and how we can improve in the following year.

One of the lesser-known ideas about Yom Kippur is that in the Jubilee year, which occurs once in fifty years, a Shofar horn is blasted. The Shofar is not blown on any day, but is blown specifically on the day of Yom Kippur. What on earth does the Jubilee year have to do with the Day of Atonement? What connects these two ideas?

There are various laws which take place during this Jubilee year. The first is that the land is left fallow, as it is the last in the cycle of seven sabbatical years. The second is that any slave who is indentured can now become free. Each person can return to their original home, even if their home is now mortgaged to another.

Essentially the laws show a sense of freedom. The land returns from a state of being indebted to others, slaves are given freedom, and the land itself is free from work. This idea is expressed in the Torah by the word "D'ror" which means freedom.

It is interesting to note that the word "D'ror" has a completely different translation. It refers to a swallow or a sparrow. The Zohar, the most mystical source of the Torah has this to say about sparrows, and its connection to the Jubilee year:

Rabbi Elazar began with the following verse: "The bird has found a house, and the sparrow has found her nest" (Psalms 84:4). The birds refer here to the birds of the sky which make their nests in the wild. There are some who make their nest in a person's home like a sparrow, and the sparrow is not afraid. Why? because it is completely free, from the day it makes a nest and hatches chicks, it lives in the house for 50 days, and then afterwards the sparrow leaves it forever.

Zohar, Tezvave, 70:1

This mystical source tells us that of all the birds,

the sparrow has perfected the art of being free. Whereas other birds return to their nesting grounds, the sparrow can leave and not return to its original home. It is not defined by what happened to it in the past. It is able to make a new future for itself wherever it wants. No matter how comfortable the sparrow is in its home, it simply flies away and makes a new home somewhere else.

This source tells us something very important about change and growth. If we want to grow as people we need to be able to leave our pasts. We can literally let it go. All those things which hold us down, all those things which we believe define who we are as people, all the traumas we may have experienced, and all the "baggage" that we take with us through our lives can just be left in the house, just like the sparrow who flies away from its home without a backwards glance. That doesn't mean it's easy. We might have to mourn that loss. We might have to stop and consider how difficult it is to let go.

The Jubilee Year reminds us that we can make that wholesale change in our lives, and we announce that this idea is best expressed on Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement. This is the day in which we decide that it is possible to press the reset button on our lives. It is time to look at the things that we have done in the last year, the negative attitudes we might have had toward each other, and possibly to G-d. It is time to think about how those thoughts and feelings have stopped us from being free to be better human beings. We are tied by our own egos, our thoughts and beliefs about how things "are" and this prevents us being truly free. It leaves us connected to resentments, dislike and depression, and possibly guilt when we think about how we may have disappointed ourselves and others.

It is time to think about what our lives could look like, what we could look like as people who are free. This is the miracle of Yom Kippur. It allows us to be free, to let go, and to transform into the people we were always meant to be. It allows us to think about how happy we could be, how we could increase positivity into the world and energise one another. We can fly like the sparrow. It isn't easy, but there is nothing as emancipating as true freedom.



Something Special for Shavuot

Linda Stanton

I did not know what a Speed Debate was, so when I found that we were celebrating Shavuot with one, I was rather intrigued. When I went to the shul on Shabbat 27 May, I found it was beautifully decorated with vases of flowers and pot plants.

After the Shabbat service and kiddush, we had an excellent lunch with all the usual Shavuot food - plenty of cheese cake!

Over 100 people joined in the lunch and speed debate. Each table appointed a delegate to give the answers to the questions. We were then asked several moral questions. It was great fun discussing these with the members of our table before we gave our answers to our delegate. I found some of the views rather surprising!

After we had answered each question, Rabbi Dansky gave the Halachic answer. There were five questions in all. They seemed rather complicated: they referred to lost and found money; an incorrect bill; an incorrect price charge and an email coming to you by mistake implicating someone else in fraud!

I must say some of the Rabbi's answers did not coincide with what we had agreed.

I should like to thank all the people who helped in organising this event as I found it most enjoyable.



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CST wishes our community a peaceful, healthy & safe New Year

This Rosh Hashanah, we look forward to being able to join together and celebrate as fully as we have been able to for some time. Throughout the pandemic, CST has been here, working to continue to protect our community, navigating the many challenges that the last two-and-a-half years have provided.

Reports of anti-Jewish hate in the UK reached an all-time high in 2021 when Israel was at war; events in Buffalo, New York and Colleyville, Texas have shown that extremists from across the ideological spectrum often hold antisemitic beliefs at the core of their worldview, and are prepared to carry out terrorism at any time, anywhere. We know from bitter experience that hatred festers in times of economic uncertainty and that, unfortunately, the Jewish community suffers the sharp edge of society's need to find a scapegoat. We must be alive to the dangers that confront us.

In light of these realities, and as the world returns to something approaching what we knew before, CST's commitment to guaranteeing the safety of our community to the best of our ability is unwavering. This is a duty we always approach with a great sense of responsibility, humility and pride. After a period when all activity has been somewhat limited, we

emerge strong, focused and ready to play our part in facilitating the thriving of Jewish life in the New Year.

To fulfil this purpose, we rely on the work and dedication of our fantastic volunteers. They are the people without whom our entire mission would fall apart.

Our volunteers receive the most up to date training in modern-day security tactics. On our training courses you will be given the knowledge and skills needed to not only protect yourself, but the friends, family and community you are perhaps sitting among today. Our dynamic sessions, delivered by expert instructors, will not only educate you on the various threats to the Jewish community, but also how to combat them. Physical training in self defence, problem solving under pressure, teamwork, camaraderie and fun are all components of the course. All CST's training courses are free of charge.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a CST volunteer security officer, or any other training offered by CST please contact us at recruitment@cst.org.uk.

From everyone at CST, we wish you a safe, Happy New Year and meaningful fast.



Scan the QR code to visit CST's social media accounts

www.cst.org.uk

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Security Update

Our immediate area has seen the killing of an innocent young girl walking home at night. It was a violent murder and our condolences go to the family.

I would like to take this opportunity of reminding our members that **all of us** must play a part in ensuring the safety of our fellow members.

Only a few weeks ago a complete stranger entered the building. Nobody stopped or questioned her. She had free access to the entire building. Unfortunately she was a beggar. Who knows what she took.

We ask that each of you remain vigilant when entering and leaving the building. Sadly, we live in dangerous times and cannot afford to be complacent. Your co-operation is vitally important. Should a stranger try and gain access we would advise the following: -

- Ask if they have booked in with the office
- Ask their name and address and whether they have proof of identity
- Ask why they are here
- Ask if they know anyone inside the building who could vouch for them

IF IN DOUBT KEEP THEM OUT. Close the front door and call 999.

This is our Synagogue - it is up to each and every one of us to protect it and our members.

The CST has a monthly report published today itemising all the Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. For example: "Jews organised the COVID virus. The vaccine was produced by Israel to control the world." This is no joke. 112 conspiracy theories are active on the net.

Please help report every incident no matter how small. We cannot do this alone.

Jeff Faber

Security Officer

Message from the President of the United Synagogue

Isaac is at the heart of the Torah reading on Rosh Hashanah. On the first day of Rosh Hashanah we read about his birth. And on the second day we read about the *akeida*, the binding of Isaac by Abraham as he prepares to 'offer' his son to God.

Why is Isaac the central character of the Rosh Hashanah Torah reading? To answer this question we need to look first at *Pirkei Avot*, Ethics of our Fathers. The second *Mishnah* in the first chapter reads:

"Shimon the Righteous was one of the last of the men of the great assembly. He used to say: "The world stands upon three things: *Torah*, *Avodah* [the Temple service], and *Gemilut chasadim* [acts of kindness]."

Three pillars are identified, without just one of which the world would no longer sustain itself. I'd like to suggest that *Torah* is how God connects with us, *Avodah* is how we connect with God and *Gemilut chasadim* are how we connect with each other.

The Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Judah Loew, c.1512-1609) explains that each pillar is associated with one of our forefathers. He says that Abraham is the pillar of *gemilut chasadim*, acts of kindness. He and Sarah were known for their open tent policy to welcome guests.

Isaac was willing to be a 'sacrifice' to Hashem during the *akeida* making him the pillar of *avodah*, service.

Jacob was the pillar of Torah study, described as 'a simple man, dwelling in tents' – the tents, according to the French Torah commentator Rashi (1040-1105), of the yeshiva of Shem and Ever (Genesis 25:27).

We see now why Isaac is so central to Rosh Hashanah. Not only do we take time out each year to think how we can 'sacrifice' ourselves to God, but since the destruction of the Second Temple, our prayer services have replaced the Temple services. We spend many hours in shul thinking about our shortcomings over the past twelve months and how we can improve ourselves in the coming year.

The United Synagogue has three similar pillars: Jewish learning, Jewish living and Jewish caring are not just three things we offer, but three ways to connect to God. This year I invite you to see how else you can get involved. It might be through Jewish learning with your Rabbi or Rebbetzen. Jewish living encapsulates our warm and welcoming services across our shuls as well as Jewish lifecycle events, kosher restaurants and our young people's provision through Tribe. Our dedicated 'Community care' groups across our shuls help hundreds of people in need with Jewish caring, supported by our US Chesed team.

The emblem of the *akeida* is the shofar – the horn taken from the ram Abraham sacrifices to God in place of Isaac. This is one of the reasons we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. This call to action and this reminder of the centrality of service are also why we've incorporated a shofar in the new United Synagogue logo you will start to see over the coming weeks.

Whatever path you choose, we look forward to seeing you. Thank you for being part of the United Synagogue and a *shana tova u'metuka* – a happy and sweet new year to you all.



Michael Goldstein
President, United Synagogue



President: Michael Goldstein
Treasurer: Maxwell Nisner
Chief Executive: Jo Grose

Trustees: Rachel Hartog, Claire Lemer, Fleurise Lewis, Simon Mitchell, Tristan Nagler, Nicola Rosenfelder, Saul Taylor, Jacqui Zinkin

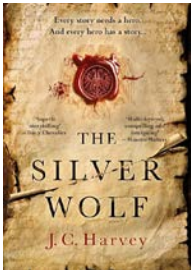
A FEW MORE BOOKS TO

While Away The Time

Ruth Lyndon

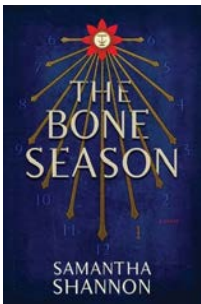
I have tried to broaden my range of authors but still get drawn back to my favourites!

Here are a few different authors that I have read recently. I hope you like the sound of them and will try them.



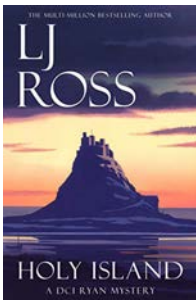
J C HARVEY – THE SILVER WOLF

This is a debut novel set in Europe during the Thirty Years War in the mid-17th Century. She has quite a curious style of writing, in the present tense, and sometimes directly to the reader but you do get used to it. It's the story of a man who you first meet as a vagabond child and his history as to how he becomes one of the most feared fighters of his age. There are lots of intriguing characters in the book which is intended to be the first of a trilogy so I look forward to reading the others.



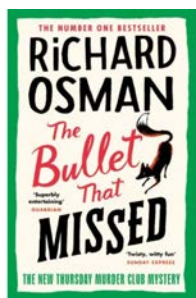
SAMANTHA SHANNON – THE BONE SEASON

This story is set in an alternative London. In the mid-19th century, Lord Palmerston decides to outlaw any form of magic or clairvoyance. Sounds strange? The reason why Palmerston chose to do that eventually becomes clear but the story is about characters who have gone “underground” and how they manage to eke out a life for themselves while still appearing to be “normal” people. This is an amazing book full of courage and friendship with a heart racing ending. Again, the first of a trilogy but definitely on my list to complete. (I actually have already bought them but I am pacing myself!)



L J ROSS – HOLY ISLAND

This is a detective novel, part of a series and again based on a central character. All the stories are based in and around North East England and this one is set on the island of Lindisfarne. This is not the first in the series but again you find out enough of his back story for it to make sense. There is enough humour in it to alleviate the murder and mystery and the fact that the island is cut off from the mainland by the tides twice a day plays a very important role. Is the murderer a local and if so, which one of the 100 inhabitants will it be?



RICHARD OSMAN – THE BULLET THAT MISSED

A return to the Thursday Murder Club gang, this book is as delightful as the earlier ones in the series were. The characters are so well drawn and the plot so devious that I doubt you will guess the outcome. There is a new cold case to solve, this time the death of a news presenter so the gang become involved in television broadcasts and showbiz egos. Couple that with a death in a prison, a would-be psychopath and an ex-KGB colonel and you get the gist of the book! But, as always, everything comes all right in the end. There are some very poignant moments in the book, bearing in mind the age of the participants but nothing too sad for too long. A light hearted and enjoyable read!

Other books that I have read and enjoyed but don't have the space to go into detail about were: Alexander McCall Smith's *The Quiet Side of Passion* and Robert Galbraith's *The Ink Black Heart*. However, a word of warning, the latter book comes with lots of swearing, all in context but it might not be for the faint hearted!

Poland

ONE IN SIX MILLION

Barry Silver

For many years I have been talking about going to Auschwitz with friends and also with my father; but due to the cost of the trip, it was only a dream. Then an opportunity arose to spend two days in March in Poland. It was a journey that I didn't want to do, but I felt obliged to see what happened over eighty years ago. Along with three friends and my father, aged 81, we left home at 3 a.m one Sunday morning for Stansted Airport to meet the group.

Once we arrived with our one piece of hand luggage at Krakow Airport, we were whisked straight away to visit the Old Synagogue in the Kazimierz district of Krakow, which was known as Alta Shul in Yiddish. It is the oldest synagogue building still standing in Poland, dating back to the 1400's. The synagogue was ransacked by the Germans during World War II, and during the occupation was used as a warehouse. In 1943, thirty Polish hostages were executed at its wall, where there are plaques dedicated to them, and it is currently operating as a museum.

After that we went on a coach trip to Ghetto Heroes Square in the Podgorze district of Krakow. This is a concourse of 13,000 sq metres, completely paved with grey sienite rock. There are a series of slightly larger than normal bronze chairs, totaling 70 on a virtual grid of about 5 metres by 5 metres and all facing the same direction towards the crematoriums. Each of the 70 chairs represents 1,000 of the last 7,000 victims that had remained in the Ghetto until March 1943 and symbolize loss and absence. The reason for using chairs was due to the testimonies of survivors, who described the ghetto as a succession of removals, where children were filing along the pavement each carrying a chair on their head.

After this we went for a traditional Polish lunch which consisted of a spicy tomato soup to start and then filled vine leaves.

After lunch we went to Schindlers Factory where we heard the story of Oscar Schindler and how he saved so many Jews and then we went to a photography exhibition near the hotel.

We stayed at the Hotel Helena Rubenstein, which was named after a Polish & American businesswoman, art collector and philanthropist who was a cosmetics entrepreneur.

In the evening we went to a restaurant and walked through the main square in Krakow and home to the gothic towers of St Mary's Basilica. On the way back to the hotel we saw a number of Chassidic Jews in a hall at a celebration. It brought light to what was a dark day and then prepared us for the following day, I would never forget.

The following morning after an extensive breakfast (I think I beat my record on how much Smoked Salmon I could eat), we got on the coach for what would be my longest and hardest day in Poland.

We arrived at Auschwitz.

This was a place where Jews were kept in barracks. You had Jews who oversaw other Jews and they had better living conditions but were still very bad and basic. Many Jews from around the world lived cramped up in rooms. Outside was an area for hanging people who had tried to escape or done something wrong in the Nazi's eyes. This also included an area where they were shot too. Jews were also brought to areas to watch, to show them what would happen if they stepped out of line.

They were made to work at the camps with very little or no food and were very ill through malnutrition. Living areas were disgusting and many Jews died from diseases there, due to the conditions.

We then travelled to Auschwitz II -Birkenau.

The first thing we saw was the sight that everyone

takes a picture of and I have seen many posters with... the long train track that goes into the camp. In there we saw the cattle truck that held around 90 people and it came from all over the world including as far as Greece.

We then went to the huts. We saw all the displays which included possessions left behind by people sent to the chambers. The amount of clothes, shoes, glass frames and children's items were unbelievable and made you feel cold. We also saw the underground tunnel where Jews walked to go into the gas chamber. It was frightening.

I asked the guide how he can tell these horrific stories of such suffering every day. He replied that he has to switch off, when he leaves, to go home to his wife and family and blocks out his day job.

At the end I was asked and tried (very badly) to blow the shofar. A significance to us all that everyone should hear the atrocities that happened here.

Whilst walking back, we could hear people singing and we walked to one of the huts.

It was there we saw some girls from Menorah School in North London singing. It was so beautiful to hear this after such a horrific experience. One of the leaders asked us where we came from and he told us that these girls were touring Poland and then spending nine months in Israel, before heading back to the UK. We then looked around this hut where Jews also were housed. Then as we left, we saw the girls again, but they were praying against a wall in memoriam of the Jews that were persecuted and killed for just being Jewish.

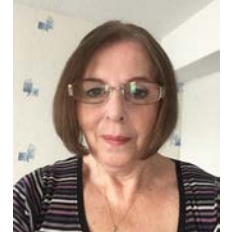
We then left and made a stop on the way to the airport to see an old synagogue, listen to a speaker and look round the museum full of old artifacts.

Whilst waiting at the airport, we reflected on how intense the last two days had been, what we had really learnt and taken away from this experience. To me, I was just one proud Jew who was still alive. This was due to the 6 million that perished before me, so I could have a life of freedom. I had learnt what our ancestors went through. I had felt even closer to my religion and appreciated what a good life I have, that is full of opportunities.

But for me the best part of it was, that I experienced what I had always wanted to see, learnt about the Holocaust at the place where it happened and I had shared it all with my 81-year-old father and my friends, to remember for a lifetime.



FROM OUR Women's Honorary Officer



Lorraine Silver

Many of you may remember me working with Claire Barzilai as joint Honorary Women's Officer when the merger took place and we became Cranbrook United Synagogue. In May 2023 I was elected as the Synagogue's Honorary Women's Officer and I look forward to working on behalf of our Women members. However, I also look forward to working with Claire as she is now Vice Chairman.

In conjunction with Claire, we have decided to send out a survey to our Women members. In the past the following had been organised: a Hebrew reading course, a challah bake, the Ladies' lunch and learn and the Ladies' dinner at the Aviv Restaurant where we had a good 'mootle' with one another. However, we want to hear from you what you would like from the Synagogue. Before lockdown a Ladies/Mother & Daughter Bat Chayil was being discussed. Ladies would you be interested in this? Please put on your thinking caps and let us know your ideas for Women of ALL ages. We also need to know if you have any expertise in anything - for example a home craft where we could run an evening event.

I belong to the United Synagogue's Women Officers' whatsapp group. It has been interesting to read what other Shuls have organized for the Ladies. This year we have chosen Norma Levinson as our Eshet Chayil (Woman of Worth) and we will be honouring her, together with our Chatanim, during Simchat Torah. We hope everyone will enjoy the celebrations. Whilst our Ladies cannot read the prayers for the Royal Family or State of Israel, women can still read a synopsis of the parsha that will be read during the service. Would you like to say Kaddish and need some help? Please let us know.

I have also been elected as Co-Chair of the events Committee alongside Philip Powell and have already had meetings regarding future events. Quizzes are always popular, but would you be interested in having a Ladies' only quiz, a challah bake, a talk on influential Women in our community?

As always I wish you a happy and healthy New Year and well over the fast.

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Yom Kippur War

October 6th 1973 – October 25th 1973

Malcolm Nathan

It is now 50 years since the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War.

Yaffa and I with our son Ayal (who had just turned one) were staying with my in-laws in Ramat Gan for the holidays and that Friday night was Kol Nidre. Not being an observant Jew then, I still felt it my duty to go to shul to hear the start of the Yom Kippur service. People were going about their normal lives and nobody had a clue as to what was about to happen.

That night at about 2am, I woke to hear the sound of planes and helicopters flying overhead; not knowing what was going on I stood on the balcony with my father-in-law trying to see the lights of overflying aircraft and trying to fathom out what was happening and also discussing the situation. Our main concern was that our son should not wake and be frightened with all the noise going on around him.

That morning I went off to shul, which was in a school near the family home, and I then noticed that young men were leaving shul very quietly and quickly. I left to see if my family were safe and that was when we heard the sirens go off. All apartment blocks have Air-Raid Shelters and when I got home, my in-laws and Yaffa had gathered our son with a few things to go into the shelter. One of the most important items that was taken was a radio so that we could understand what was going on. Ayal (who had just turned one) thought that this was great fun and was running around the shelter without a care in the world.

As it was the High Holy Day season, Israel had sent home the vast majority of armed forces to be with their families. The Egyptians (in the South) the Syrians (in the North) the Jordanians (in the west) - all the Arabs - noting that Israel was severely weakened, colluded with other Arab countries to attack Israel on all fronts.

When I first got to Israel in June 1967 on the day of the ceasefire, it was exciting. The Six- Day War was

over and Israel was no longer a pushover. This time it was frightening. During the previous six years the Soviets had supplied the Arabs with so much weaponry (the latest tanks, artillery, planes, guns, boats) and training, they had advanced to such an extent that Israel could not believe this was really happening. It was truly beyond comprehension.

The Syrians were pouring down the Golan Heights. The Egyptians crossed over the Suez Canal into Sinai. The Jordanians in force moved into the West Bank and Jerusalem, and the Lebanese were wondering if they should show support for their Brothers. In the North the Syrians had advanced to within a few kilometers of Haifa and the Northern Towns and fortunately the Arabs had run out of fuel, ammunition and more importantly their HQ did not believe how far advanced they were.

In the south General Arik Sharon was brought back and within a short space of time had surrounded the Egyptian Army crossed the Suez and had retaken Sinai.

I was fortunate that I had an estate car and my job was to make sure that I could get reservists to their base or to an area where they would get army transport to their base. After about ten days I decided that my best situation would be to go to the Kibbutz that I was on in 1967, as a number of their members went to fight and I could help out wherever I could.

During the three weeks of the war, 2656 soldiers lost their lives with 7251 injured and 294 were taken prisoner of war.

During this three-week period there were times when I thought "am I ever going to see my family again" and I have to add that whenever Yom Kippur comes around my immediate thought goes to those three weeks in October 1973.

As an aside in July 1974 our 2nd son Amir was born!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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Visit the Clandestine Naval and Immigration, and Madatech Museums

Meet experts from Israel's High Tech Industry

Visit cutting edge Start Ups

IDF morning visiting an Iron Dome

Enjoy an Israeli wine tasting with an expert

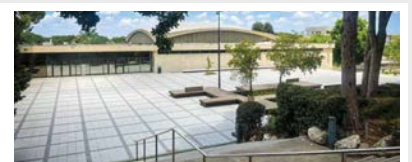
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Ladies Tea & Chat

CRANBROOK UNITED SYNAGOGUE

The first Thursday in the month @3.30pm

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RAMLA

Israel



Eddie Leon

As my son and his family live in Israel, I have visited them on numerous occasions. There aren't many places that I have not seen. On my recent trip to Israel, I made a special journey to see the city of Ramla just 20km from Tel Aviv and near where they live.

We visited the Ramla Museum, which was established in 2001. The museum documents the town's history from its founding in 716 AD until the present day. The permanent exhibition shows archaeological finds including a hoard of 376 gold coins found in Ramla, which dates back to 750 AD and originates from all over the Islamic kingdom. This treasure, weighing 1.6 kg of gold, is considered to be one of the most significant Islamic treasures found in Israel.



We visited The White Tower, which includes the White Mosque. This was first built in the 8th century AD and renovated by Sultan Saladin in the 12th century and again by Muhammad ibn Khalhoun in the 13th and 14th centuries. It served as a watch tower. From the top there is a panoramic view of the entire area from the Mediterranean coast. In the west you can see Tel Aviv and in the east you can see the Judean Mountains and Samaria. Between the square towers and the White Mosque are three subterranean water reservoirs (closed to the public).

The Great Mosque was built in the middle of the 12th century AD. This was originally a church - one of the few that survived the Crusaders. A minaret was added in the 13th Century.

The Pool of Arches was built in 789 AD. We spent many hours going round the place and visited the underground lake, which we paddled through on a hired rowing boat to see the beauty of early Muslim architecture.

A most interesting and enjoyable trip and well worth a visit.



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WITH

REV GARY NEWMAN

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Happy 75th Anniversary TO ISRAEL

Philippa & Linda Stanton

On Wednesday 26 April 2023 we began our celebrations of Israel's 75th Independence Day in London with Technion UK at a Lunch with Hodaya Avzada, who is Head of Politics and Civil Society at the Israel Embassy, London. Hodaya was political advisor for the Embassy of Israel in New Delhi, India and has been instrumental in fostering positive relationships between Israel and India.

Exactly 75 years since 14th May 1948, we attended in London the "From Israel with Love" show - a brilliant celebration of Israel's 75th Anniversary, organised by Technion UK. Speakers at the celebration included Baroness Deech DBE - British academic, lawyer, bioethicist and politician; Gil Hoffman - Israeli journalist and political correspondent; and Nick Ferrari - television presenter and broadcast journalist. Performers included Gal Atari - one of the most famous Israeli singers and actress who won the Eurovision Song Contest held in Jerusalem in 1979 as part of Milk and Honey, Israeli Actors Noa Bodner, Harel Glazer and David Djemal and Yuval Havkin, a specialist in musical composition. It was a fantastic show which kept us bouncing in our seats and joining in the songs! A wonderful way to celebrate Israel's 75th Anniversary!

But this was not the last of our celebration of Israel's 75th! We decided to join Technion UK on their Israel trip on June 1st and spent twelve wonderful days in Israel! The weather was great, and we spent the first few days relaxing by the pool at our Tel Aviv hotel before joining our friends for an exciting time.

During the trip we renewed acquaintance with several interesting people. Major Keren Hajioff, a member of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy think tank and a reserve duty officer in the military, gave us an update on Israel's political position with its allies and opponents. David Horovitz, who made aliyah from the UK 40 years ago, is the founding editor of The Times of Israel - the most-read English news source about Israel worldwide, with over 10 million daily readers. We received a comprehensive briefing from Superintendent Micky Rosenfeld, with updates on the current security situation and foreign affairs



in Jerusalem. We also met again with Neil Wigan OBE, the British Ambassador to Israel since June 2019, who provided a comprehensive update on the current state of British-Israeli cooperation and collaboration. He also shared the news of his impending move to become the UK Ambassador to Kenya.

We visited a couple of 'start-ups' which have been helped by Technion. 70% of crops worldwide depend on bees, and BeeHero has developed tools to provide beekeepers with a frictionless setup and operation process which increases crop yield and quality while enhancing the health of the bees.

Navina AI is a Tel Aviv-based startup tackling the data overload in the healthcare industry, which aims to deliver a more humane approach to healthcare, powered by artificial intelligence.

One evening, we were invited to Ida and Ray Symons' villa where we met Adam Montefiore, who guided us through the historical journey of Israeli wines, sharing fascinating anecdotes about their evolution and explaining the unique wine-making process which gives Israeli wines their distinct character. We also watched the film "The Red Sea Diving Resort". Having previously heard the compelling story of the secret Mossad-led mission to evacuate Ethiopian Jews to Israel in the 1980's, we had wanted to see the film for some time. After the film, we met Yola, the female Mossad agent who was involved in the actual operation. Yola explained that some parts of the film were not completely accurate but had been introduced by the filmmakers! She shared some fascinating

stories with us, answered questions and spent the rest of the evening with us.

We visited several museums - the ANU Museum of the Jewish People, the Sa'har HaGai Museum and the Clandestine Immigration and Naval Museum, located in Haifa.

On one of our tours, we were joined by two soldiers from the IDF's public communications division, who took us to high-security areas. We saw the Iron Dome located "somewhere in Israel", and met the commander of the interception centre. She explained about the workings of the IDF and the Iron Dome, and told us of recent incidents involving missile attacks and the rapid response required by her team. There is 24-hour surveillance by the team, who must be ready at any moment in case there is an air attack needing a response. Not all attacks are responded to, only if the unit feels that it will endanger lives. If the missile is destined for an empty field, no action will be taken. There is a limited number of Iron Dome missiles, and each one costs approximately \$50,000.

We then went to Israel's Northern border with Lebanon, a region of historical significance and present-day tension. Our IDF guides offered expert insight into the area; detailing the past conflicts that have taken place at this border - a region shaped by strife and volatility, where skirmishes and larger-scale conflicts have left indelible marks. We later saw one of the numerous tunnels that had been built by Hezbollah, with the sole purpose of infiltrating Israel from Lebanon past the UN blue line in order to carry out fatal terrorist attacks. These tunnels represent a significant aspect of the security challenges Israel faces, particularly along its border with Lebanon.

Whilst in Haifa, we toured the Baha'i Gardens and took a ride on the cable car, which was built to assist Technion students in their daily commute across the hilly cityscape. This helped students to balance their demanding academic schedules with part-time jobs at high-tech companies such as Apple, AWS, and Intel.

We then visited the Technion Visitor Centre where Nitzan was our friendly and knowledgeable guide, who showed us the state-of-the-art facility, detailing the history and achievements of the Technion.

"Formula Technion" is an enthusiastic and passionate group of students from Israel's Technion Institute of Technology which was established in 2012 by a group of 20 mechanical engineering students. This project is carried out by the students

during their spare time. Since their first competition in 2013, they have designed and built a new race vehicle every year, competing in Europe's Formula Student competitions. The team now comprises of 70 members from various departments. Initially, they focused on combustion engine race vehicles, but in 2021 began to design and build electrical combined autonomous vehicles.



Photos by Adrian Korsner

We later met with Professor Kaplan, who became the Dean of the Department of Material Science of Engineering in 2010. Prior to his current role, he was the vice president of research. He explained how it is important for Technion to have the best Faculty members as this helps the students. He also outlined the importance of external contributions and support to fund Technion's research and innovation that will contribute to Israel's future.

We were delighted to be able to attend a talk delivered by Professor Uri Lesmes of the Biotechnology & Food Engineering department, who spoke passionately about food technology in promoting healthy aging. He mentioned the Healthy Aging Center at the Technion, an initiative he co-leads with Professor Shai Shen-Orr of the Faculty of Medicine and Dr Noga Ron-Harel of the Faculty of Biology. The Centre is dedicated to improving the quality of life for senior citizens, a challenge that has become increasingly vital as life expectancy continues to rise. We took the opportunity to inform Professor Lesmes that not all people over 80 years old were "past it"!

Following the tour, we attended Technion's Board of Governors Meetings, where we sat in on some of the fascinating lectures, Honorary Fellowship Conferment Ceremonies and met several members of Technion. It was an most exhilarating experience.

Battim

WHY ARE TEFILLIN SO EXPENSIVE?



Chaim Levison, Jerusalem

The process for making Tefillin is both long and complex requiring a variety of skills. Each step from the preparation of the materials, through the production of the components and their assembly needs to be done 'Lishma' -with the proper intention, therefore the words 'Lshem Kedushat Tefillin' (for the Purpose of Sanctifying Tefillin) is recited at the various stages of the manufacturing process. Tefillin are assembled from three components which are all produced from the hides of kosher animals: the parchments, the boxes and the straps. The parchments which we call 'Parshiyoth' are placed into the boxes called 'Battim' (lit. houses), the straps, which are attached to the Battim, are used to tie the Tefillin around the arm and the head. The four Parshiyoth of the Tefillin are written by a certified Sofer on 'Klaf' (parchment) made from the hide of a very young calf. The tanning process for the klaf is very meticulous because it must be smooth enough to write on with a quill. All the 3188 letters must be perfect just like the letters of a Sefer Torah. The Tefillin worn on the arm, the 'Shel Yad', has one compartment and all four Parshiyoth are written on one long piece of klaf but in the 'Shel Rosh' worn on the head, the Parshiyoth must be written on four separate pieces of klaf as they have to be placed into four separate compartments.

I'd like to explain how the Battim are made to show the complexity of Tefillin manufacture. In the Pesach issue of the magazine, I mentioned in my article that there is an opinion that the first Tefillin were made from the hide of the Paschal Lamb, I think many people were surprised to find out that those little black boxes are made of leather. We usually think of leather as being soft and flexible like the Tefillin straps. The Battim, on the other hand, are hard and rigid. Up till some decades ago, all Tefillin Battim were made from the hides of sheep but since these skins are relatively soft the Tefillin were often damaged and lost their perfect square shape, required by halacha, rendering them invalid. Through modern technology, the quality and durability of Tefillin Battim has improved since nowadays, all good Battim are made from hides taken from the neck and head of an ox or bull where the skin is very thick but also soft. The ability to form Battim from these thick hides was made possible by the invention of the modern hydraulic press and therefore, only today can tons of pressure be applied to form the thick hide of a bull into the intricate shapes required for Tefillin.

After the hairs, fat and any remaining flesh are removed by placing the skins in large vats containing lime the hide is taken while still wet and



Hydraulic Press and the formation of The Shel Yad



Formation of Shel Rosh

soft and placed into the press where it is formed into the shape of Tefillin. This process can take several months since at each stage the hide requires moistening to make it malleable. After forming it in the press it is left to dry for several weeks then moistened again for the next stage until the perfect square is formed. The making of the 'Shel Yad' is 'relatively simple' compared to that of the 'Shel Rosh' since the latter has four compartments which must all be formed from the same hide and again made into a perfect square. The hide must be bent and squeezed into separate compartments without tearing it which would create a hole and render it invalid.

Another reason why the manufacture of the 'Shel Yad' is 'relatively simple' in comparison to the 'Shel Rosh' is because the latter also requires the Hebrew letter 'Shin' on each side of the 'Bayit' (box). There is a normal three-headed Shin on the right side of the wearer and an unusual four-headed Shin on the left. These letters cannot be attached to the Bayit but must be part of it. A simple way to do this would be to again moisten the Bayit and place it into a press with a metal mold with the form of a shin sunken into it, upon completion of this process there would be a protruding shin. However, this process is unacceptable since the shin must be formed by a writing of some sort and this letter has been created by working around the leather rather than actually writing. In Halacha this is called 'Chak Tuchot'. Therefore, after moistening, a metal mold is used to form a shin as above, the shin is then coloured with a marker, placed into the press again with a flat plate to nullify the protruding

shin leaving just the flat, coloured letter. At this stage an L-shaped type of awl is used to push the loosened leather towards the coloured shin thereby raising it to create a letter by a form of 'writing'. In order to make an aesthetically pleasing letter the Bayit is returned to the press taking extreme care that the protruding shin fits directly into the sunken shin on the metal mold.

It takes the average Sofer about two and a half days to write the Tefillin Parshiyoth and as has been explained above the manufacturing process of the Battim is long and intricate, so it is understandable that Tefillin are expensive. So, if someone offers to sell you Tefillin for a few hundred shekels, even in Mea Shearim, you know something is wrong.



Formation the Shin

Mazel Tov

We would like to wish Mazel tov to all those who have celebrated an Anniversary, Birth, Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, Special Birthday or other Simcha.

BIRTHS

Mazel tov to Jan and Jonathan Meyer on the birth of a granddaughter, and to Jodie Beth Meyer and Paul on the birth of a daughter.

Mazel tov to Angela and Stanley Simmons on the birth of a granddaughter.

Mazel tov to Liz Levison on the birth of her great grandchildren in Israel.

Mazel tov to Dame Natacha Laniado on the birth of a grandson.

Mazel tov to Karen and Howard Sterne on the birth of a second grandson

BAR MITZVAH

Mazel tov to Ellis Levene on his Bar Mitzvah; to Elena and Gary Levene on their son's Bar Mitzvah and to Angela Levene on her grandson's Bar Mitzvah.

ENGAGEMENT

Mazel tov to Norma Levinson on the engagement of her grandson Daniel Shwartz to Devon Shoob.

Mazel tov to Shirley Vancliff on the engagement of her grandson in Israel.

MARRIAGE

Mazel tov to Michelle Bolle and Lilian Rosenberg on grandson Adam Bolle's marriage to Amy Green.

Mazel tov to Ian Grant on his marriage to Hannah Stephenson; to Pamela and David Grant on their son's marriage to Hannah; and to Jacquelyn and Brian Conner on nephew Ian's marriage to Hannah.

Mazel tov to Samuel Masters on his marriage to Sophie Tritschler and to Danielle and Darren Masters on their son's marriage to Sophie.

Mazel tov to Scott Kashket on his marriage to Claudia Gold and to Cheryl and Russell Kashket on their son's marriage to Claudia.

Mazel tov to Aimee Bean on her marriage to Ollie, and to Michelle Bean and to Ashley Bean on Aimee's marriage to Ollie.

Mazel tov to Monica and Phillip Cohen on their granddaughter's wedding in Israel.

Mazel tov to David Rein on his granddaughter's wedding.

SPECIAL MENTION

Mazel tov to King Charles III and Queen Camilla and all the Royal Family.

Mazel tov to Simon Stern who has been honoured as Chatan Torah.

Mazel tov to Michael Silver who has been honoured as Chatan Bereishis.

Mazel tov to Norma Levinson who has been honoured as Eshet Chayil.

Mazel Tov to all those graduating from University.

Mazel tov to two of our youngest members, Rachel and Ava, on graduating from WIJPS nursery in July 2023.



THE (JEWISH)

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

PART.1



Yosef Cohen

We've all heard of the Zodiac – twelve magnificent constellations that illuminate the night sky. In Jewish tradition, each star sign corresponds to a different month of the Jewish year. Let's explore the symbolism of each one, and why it relates to its time in the year.

Note: The Hebrew names for the constellations, with translations, have been used. The Latin name has been included in brackets.

Tishrei: Mozna'im – Scales (Libra)

Rosh Hashanah falls at the beginning of Tishrei, the great day of judgement on which G-d weighs the deeds of all mankind. During the ten days of repentance, we try to perform many mitzvot, to tip the scales in our merit.

Cheshvan: Akrav - Scorpion (Scorpio)

Cheshvan is also called "Mar Cheshvan" or "bitter Cheshvan" because of various sorrowful events that have occurred in it throughout history, including the great flood of Noach, the passing away of the matriarch Rachel, and the division of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. After the spiritual high that was Tishrei, the scorpion symbolizes the bitter sting of exile. But just as scorpions are active mainly at night and disappear during the day, so too, when Mashiach arrives all our hardships will fade away.

Kislev: Keshet - Bow (Sagittarius)

The covenant that G-d made with Noach never to bring another flood to the world took place in Kislev, in which G-d showed Noach the sign of the rainbow. (The Ramban, explains that there is a deep connection between an archer's bow and a rainbow – the latter is, so to speak, G-d's bow.) Also, just as the Chanukah lights pierce the wintry darkness, so does the splendour of the rainbow shine out from behind thick clouds.

Tevet: Gedi – Kid Goat (Capricorn)

Goats can jump notoriously high for their size, especially young ones. The beginning of Tevet is still Chanukah, and we remember the determination of the Maccabees, who put their trust in G-d and "jumped" – achieving seemingly impossible heights. In fact, the song of the goat, as written in Perek Shirah, is the verse "Mi Kamocha Ba'Elim Hashem" (Who is like You among mighty ones, Hashem?). This is the acronym of Maccabee in Hebrew, and is the verse from which the Maccabees derived their inspiration.

Shevat: Deli – Pail (Aquarius)

The Torah tells us that on the first of Shevat, Moshe began to expound to the Jewish nation the book of Deuteronomy, just as one raises water from a well to quench the thirst of their flock. The new year of the trees, Tu BiShevat, is the time when, as our sages say, "the majority of the winter rains have fallen, and now the sap begins to rise within the trees".

This is reminiscent of the water pail, which is lowered deep down, only to be brought up again full of lifegiving water.

Adar: Dagim – Fish (Pisces)

Just as the underwater world of the fish is invisible to us, yet we know of its existence, so too in Adar we witnessed the hidden Hand of G-d, guiding events towards our salvation. And despite Haman's wicked plans to annihilate the Jewish people, we survived and thrived, multiplying as do fish.

The remaining six signs will be discussed in Part 2.

Thanks to Rabbi Zvi Ryzman, whose works were used as invaluable reference.

Succot Quiz

1. What is the literal meaning of the word Succot?
2. What is the Hebrew date of the start of Succot?
3. When is it traditional to start building the Succah?
4. What is the maximum width of a Succah?
5. What does Succot commemorate?
6. In how many different directions do we shake the lulav and etrog?
7. In which of the following places is building a succah not allowed? Under a tree, on a ship, on a tall building, on top of a mountain?
8. The Lulav bundle is made from the branches of three different types of trees bound together, what are they?
9. What is the name of the Megillah we read on Shabbat Chol Hamoed?
10. Each of the four species relates to a different part of our body with which we should serve God. What are they?

My time in the

Chevra Kadisha



Claire Barzilai

A morbid subject for many I know, but I have always had a deep-seated fear of dying and what happens to the soul/body when you die. I was approached numerous times to join the Chevra but didn't feel I could do it. My anxiety was palpable. After some time and reflection, I felt ready to face my fears. After a preliminary interview to talk through what was expected of me, I was initiated into the Chevra and was trained on the job (so to speak).

The term Chevra Kadisha literally translates as "Holy Society". One is usually invited to join and would be approached by a practising member. The main function of being a member of the Chevra is to ensure dignified treatment of the deceased in accordance with Jewish law, custom, and tradition. Acts involving the dead are referred to as a chesed shel emet, an altruistic deed, for there is no possibility of reciprocity. We are told that since Moses cared for the remains of Joseph, he merited that G-d Himself oversaw his burial.

It is a Torah commandment to return the body to the earth upon passing "Unto dust shall you return" (Genesis 3:19). Our sages teach that this means placing the body directly in the ground with no coffin (Aron). In Israel, this is still the prevailing custom. When burial occurs in the Diaspora, earth from Israel is placed in the Aron. Jewish tradition requires that the person be buried in a plain, modest, casket. The casket must be made from material that will disintegrate in the ground, allowing the body to return to the earth as quickly as possible, and enabling the soul to attain true and final peace.

One of the key elements of a kosher Jewish burial is the Tahara, when the body is prepared for its final rest, until the resurrection of the dead when the Moshiach comes. A Tahara includes cleansing, grooming, ritually washing, and dressing the deceased's body. The Tahara is conducted mainly in silence only speaking when necessary. The team leader recites tefilah, special prayers, entreating

G-d to lift the soul into the Heavens and eternal rest.

The Chevra team treats the body with the utmost respect. The body is covered throughout the process and is only uncovered for the actual Tahara. In the spirit of modesty, women perform the Taharah on women, and men do the same for men. The ritual washing is the most spiritual part of the Tahara, the purifying of the body. I can honestly say at this point one can actually feel a complete sense of inner peace and almost transcendental calmness.

After the body is cleansed, it is dressed in shrouds (tachrichim). Unlike other religions and practices, a Jewish person is not buried in his or her usual clothing. Jewellery is removed and given to the family. The shrouds are simple and plain and made of white cotton or linen. Every Jew is dressed the same regardless of wealth or social standing. The garments are made without hems to signify their transience and have no pockets as we leave this world as we came into it, with no worldly goods. Men are generally buried in their own tallit. The Jewish funeral emphasises the spiritual over the physical and material. Prayers for the deceased are said during the Tahara. The body is carefully and gently put into the Aron and sealed.

In the four years I have volunteered, I am fortunate only to have worked on teams where the person who has died has been many years older than myself. This experience has helped me to overcome my fears as I know the deceased are treated with dignity and covered (respect). I consider myself to be very privileged to be part of the Chevra Kadisha and work alongside a wonderful group of women.

Condolences



**We offer our condolences to all those who have suffered a bereavement this year.
Our thoughts are with you at this time of sorrow.
To the family of each of the following members:-**

Betty Bernard
Isabel Burney
Ivor Clements
Sylvia Cohen
Audrey Davis
Louis Freedman
Norman Gershon
Barbara Gordon

Marie Gordon
Mary Grant
Ernest Green
Martin Gudde
Fay Rita Knott
Alfred Lawrence
Emanuel Levene
Sidney Lever

Lilian Levy
Rochelle Levy
Lillian Lewis
Alan Lipman
Estelle Mendoza
Martin Mercer
Ivor Miller
Vera Miller

Phoebe (Phyllis) Morris
Rebecca (Rita) Shaw
Gabriel Shine
Aubrey Siteman
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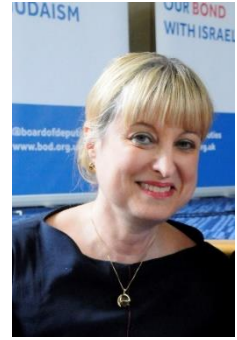
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JEWISH CARE

September 2023 / Tishri 5784

Rosh Hashanah - Message from the President

This Rosh Hashanah, I would like to focus on two wonderful events which demonstrate the esteem in which the Jewish community is held in this country. The first of these was the coronation of King Charles III in May. I was privileged to be invited to represent the Jewish community at the coronation. The King has said on a number of occasions that he wishes to be the 'protector of faiths' and he has been as good as his word. Having experienced King Charles' warmth towards our community on several occasions, I know he will be a wonderful monarch both for the Jewish community and the wider nation. I wish him much success.



Leading the service on that day was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. We were delighted that he accepted our invitation to be interviewed by historian and novelist Simon Sebag Montefiore at Bevis Marks Synagogue this summer. We invited every Board of Deputies-affiliated synagogue to send representatives to this wonderful event. The Archbishop spoke with great passion of his personal commitment to fighting antisemitism, the duty of care that universities have for their Jewish students and the historic relationship between the Church and the Jewish community. His views were both heartfelt and heartwarming for all who were there.

The Board's key work is in two areas. Firstly, we engage with politicians, civil society, and other faith groups throughout the UK at national, regional and local level, sharing with them the Jewish community's views about a wide range of topics including antisemitism, Israel, religious practice and social issues. Secondly, we work proactively to advance causes of great concern to our community. For example, we run Pikuach (The Jewish Ofsted) to inspect our Jewish schools, helping to ensure they provide an excellent Jewish education. We also have our Jewish Living Experience Exhibition, which is travelling around the country educating children and adults about the Jewish way of life, and we are developing a new online digital programme to teach non-Jewish children around the UK about Jews, Judaism, Israel and antisemitism.

There are still threats to the safety of our community. We have previously campaigned successfully to have both Hezbollah and Hamas proscribed in their entirety as terrorist organisations. We strongly believe that the Government has a duty to ban the state-sponsored terror group the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In July we held an event in Parliament which featured impassioned evidence from advocates of proscription.

There is still bias against Israel in the media. One particularly egregious example occurred recently when a BBC News presenter, in an interview with former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, said that "Israeli forces are happy to kill children". We contacted the BBC's Director General to protest in the strongest possible terms. On this occasion the BBC apologised swiftly for the unacceptable language, but we must continue to be vigilant and proactive.

This is but a snapshot of the extensive and varied work the Board of Deputies carries out for the Jewish community. We do all this on an extremely modest budget, largely funded by your communal contribution. We are very grateful for your support; please know that whatever your interests or concerns as members of our community, the Board of Deputies is here to advocate on your behalf.

I wish everyone a Shana Tovah and a happy year ahead.

Marie van der Zyl

Marie van der Zyl
President, Board of Deputies of British Jews

Mazel Tov - King Charles III

I was only eleven years old when the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth was held, but I was fortunate enough to watch it on television - black and white, of course! The "large" 14" screen (then!) was owned by my uncle, who invited the family to lunch and we all gathered round the set for this wonderful occasion. I remember there was a lot of excitement before the event - the newspapers and magazines had a lot of information about the ceremony - and I found a pattern for a Guardsman which I knitted for my small cousin - a red uniform with a large black busby! One of the cereals produced a layout of the palace. We collected guardsmen and other items from the back of the cereal packet, and would slot them into the base. I managed to collect all the guardsmen and other items, but the base was difficult to find. Eventually, my mother spoke to the assistant at International Stores - our local

grocery shop - and he got one of his assistants to go through all the cereal packets in the shop until he found one with the 'base' on the back!

Unfortunately, my sister Linda and I were unable to watch the Coronation of King Charles III as it took place on Shabbat, but we managed to celebrate the Coronation twice! On Shabbat Emor (May 6th) we attended a Kiddush at the shul, and celebrated again on Tuesday 9 May - Lag B'Omer - joining the KKL/JNF for a Coronation Sing-along with a delicious Afternoon Tea, where we reminisced! An excellent opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones!

We wish a hearty Mazel Tov to King Charles III and Queen Camilla and all the Royal Family.

Philippa Stanton

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Recipes

Pineapple Fruit Cake

Hilary Goldstein

Ingredients:

6 oz brown sugar
4 oz Tomar margarine
8 oz tin crushed pineapple
12 oz mixed fruit including cherries
8 oz Self raising flour
2 eggs - beaten
A few drops of almond essence (optional)

Heat Oven: Gas Mark 2, 150°C, 300°F.

Method:

1. Melt Tomar in a pan and add sugar.
2. Add pineapple but save 1 tablespoon of the juice.
3. Stir in the mixed fruit and cherries, flour, eggs and almond essence (if used).
4. Place mixture in a greased tin and bake for 2 hours.



Apple Roses

Claire Barzilai

Ingredients:

2 / 3 Pink Lady or other variety of red apples
1 lemon - juice
1 sheet ready rolled puff pastry
3 tbspn apricot jam
2 tbspn cinnamon
3 tbspn caster sugar
Icing sugar

Heat Oven: 180°C

Method:

1. Cut the apples in half and remove the core keeping the apple intact. Thinly slice the apples and put into a microwavable bowl with the juice of a lemon. Cover and microwave on high for 1-2 minutes to soften. Leave to cool.
2. Place the puff pastry sheet on to a lightly floured surface. Cut lengthways into 6 even strips. Brush each strip with apricot jam and sprinkle with cinnamon and caster sugar.
3. Start at one end of the pastry and place your apple slices halfway up the pastry (you will fold the pastry later). Overlap the apple slices slightly as you go. Leave a few centimetres at the end to stick the pastry together.
4. Fold over the bottom half of the pastry and roll from the end that you started placing the apples first. Lightly press the excess pastry to seal together.
5. Place in a greased muffin tin. Cook on a preheated oven for 30 minutes. Cool on a wire rack and dust with icing sugar.

The apple roses are delicious served warm with ice cream or custard. Enjoy!

ANSWERS TO 'SUCCOT QUIZ':

1. Huts or booths 2. 15th of Tishrei 3. Straight after Yom Kippur is finished 4. It can be as wide as you want, there is no limit 5. When the Children of Israel lived in temporary huts, on their journey through the desert towards Israel. 6. Six - (Up, down, right, left, forwards and backwards) 7. Under a tree. 8. Palm, Willow, Myrtle 9. Kohellet / Ecclesiastes 10. Lulav - spine (to stand in prayer); Etrog - heart (to love God); Hadassim - eyes (to study Torah); Aravot - lips (to pray and say good things).

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I'm Norman. And I am Norwood.



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