

July 2017

# UNITY News



## *From The President*

Dear Everyone,

I must begin my message by thanking two wonderful teams of people in our Lodge. Firstly, Sylvia and her dedicated group who organised the most amazing weekend which we all spent together in Hunton Park. Every taste was catered for, we had laughs, we had surprises, we had the most special time. The sun shone, the hotel and its grounds were just perfect. You catch a flavour from the photographs in this edition of the Newsletter.

The following week-end the Fundraising Committee, ably chaired by Adele, organised the *Evening with Lord Winston*. Not only was it a financial success, but everyone had a very enjoyable evening. The buffet table groaned with goodies, the Prosecco flowed and we all enjoyed the way Lord Winston regaled us with stories, memories and thoughts for the future.

We are so lucky in our Lodge to have so many people prepared to help in so many ways. None of the above could have taken place without the support of so many of you. Going to these events, really feels like being at home – everyone is relaxed and friendly. While so many Lodges are struggling, we are so fortunate in having not only the numbers, but people prepared to get stuck in and work. So “thank you” to everyone who did their little bit to make such a success of these events.

The area groups are still in the process of growing. The Edgware Group has been reconstituted and recently had a very pleasant afternoon hosted by the Budds. Thank you to Sylvia and Sidney. The Hampstead & Golders Green Group, the Harrow & Stanmore Group and the Whetstone Group all meet regularly. I am hoping the Finchley & Hendon Group will soon be a regular feature. If anyone is not involved in a group and would like to be included, please get in touch with me.

Summer beckons and soon many of you will be going on holiday. I hope you have a lovely time and come back refreshed to join in our activities. At the end of the month my time as President is up and I want to thank you all for your help and encouragement. In a change to the order of the Quartet, Hilary will be taking over from me.

Before I finish, I hope those of you not in the best of health find the summer sunshine will make you feel better and happier.

With every good wish,

Jo

***PS Please read my piece about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Page 9 of this issue – we do need your memories to bring it to life!***

News and Programme from First Unity Lodge

# An evening with Lord Robert Winston

The Fundraising Committee of Adele, Judith, Vivien, Marion and Barbara needed to raise awareness and money for the Ukraine and Qiryat Gat feeding projects.

Our first meeting ran something like this :-

What are we going to do? We need a really enticing event, something different.

A theatre trip? No, West End seat prices are exorbitant. A film evening. We could hire a cinema.

What about a quiz. No, no, no, you either love them or hate them and our Lodge does not support quizzes. Also, there are five other BB Quizzes going on in the next few months.



Well, what about an after dinner speaker? YES good idea. Someone famous, interesting, entertaining, who will speak for free. And, we will hold the event in June or July. Fine everyone was happy and we all had coffee.

Lord Robert Winston was contacted and he agreed to give an after-dinner speech but it had to be in May. This was not an ideal date but as we now had a speaker, we accepted.

And so on to the next committee meeting where we discussed the format of the event. But wait a bit, he is giving an after dinner-speech !! A catered meal was out of the question, yet it had to be special. After much discussion we arrived at the idea of a smart buffet and a Prosecco Reception.

We all had more coffee, arranged another meeting and went away to cost the food.

Next, we thought about ticket prices. Too high no one would come, too low and we won't cover our costs. £25 was agreed with absolutely no raffle. Alf produced the flyer and Ruth G. would handle the tickets, but as we still did not know the topic for the event, we just called it an evening with LRW.

Costings ok, food sorted, preparations over, then came the bad news from the hall that we would have to put up our own tables and also that their sound system was not available. Again, Alf came to our aid and borrowed some equipment (with grateful thanks to Tony Clayden). The evening would not have been the success it was if Alf had not been sitting at a side table with his expertise and skill masterminding the sound system so everyone was able to hear. Visitors were also impressed by the standard of the buffet which was both a treat to the eye and for the taste buds.

Lord Winston presented a relaxed after-dinner speech, relating to us some worrying episodes in his early career as a doctor and then making us laugh heartily with his medical jokes. Sadly he regretted the lack of time that doctors now have to really talk to their patients. He spoke of the awe inspiring moment when results indicated that the fertility research worked, but then told us how hard a fight the medical profession had with politicians to allow the treatments to go ahead. Lord Winston indicated that removal of faulty genes was the next exciting stage in fertility investigation. We were all privileged to hear such an interesting speaker.

The fundraiser was a great success making over £1500 for BB charities.

Many thanks to everyone who helped and supported the event.

Socially it was a lovely evening and, of course, no one came away hungry.

Adele Gibson



## FAMILY NEWS.....

Mazeltoiv to **Adele Gibson** on her grand-daughter's engagement.

Mazeltoiv to **Margaret Arenias** on the birth of a great grand-daughter to her granddaughter in Israel

Mazeltoiv to **Hilary and Tony Sinclair** on the birth of their first great grand-daughter to their grand-daughter.

Mazeltoiv to **Iris Markson** on the birth of a great grandson to her granddaughter in New Jersey, USA.

We wish a speedy recovery to **Ursula**, Michael Heppner's wife, after a long illness

**Michael Levin** thanks everyone for their good wishes on his recent stay in hospital.

It is with much sadness that we announce the passing of **Ruth Bruckner**. Our thoughts are with Robert and the family at this very sad time.

### MOSAIC SESSION

I had participated in two Craft sessions- one with Bunty and one with Ruth Bruckner. Both were very enjoyable so I decided to set a session up at home for us to meet again. It took place on Wednesday 26th April.

Present were Bunty Phillips, Susan Jacobs, Sylvia Lewin, June Gilbert , Jo Bieber and myself.

I bought some small mirrors - each set on a white surround and suitable for decoration with Tessera (tiles). Some lovely results were achieved -as shown on the photos.



Thanks also to Alan for taking the pictures and to June for "photoshopping" them!

From the feedback I received it was a most enjoyable event and I am quoting from an email sent to me by Sylvia Lewin :-

*"I want to thank you for a delightful afternoon, spent making beautiful mirrors under your excellent tutelage. The entire atmosphere was very pleasant so that everyone left with*

*a smile on their faces-and a mirror to hang up at home. Thank you for the Craft section of the afternoon as well as the wonderful spread on your beautiful mosaic table. "*

Judith Usiskin

## First Unity Lodge Weekend Away

***Geraldine Auerbach assembles a report from many participants to give you a flavour of what went on.***



On 12 May 2017, 32 Lodge members decamped to one of England's beautiful minor stately homes on what seems to have become our triennial weekend retreat. The usual smiling team were there to greet us - George and Marion Summerfield with Sylvia Lewin and her programme team of Jo and Charles Bieber, Sue and Gabby Kessler, Doreen Natoff as well as others as we secretly handed over our mathems\* to Sylvia. (\*See explanation at the end of this article).

There was huge enthusiasm for all the intellectual, fun, and challenging activities that were packed into what was virtually just one and a bit days. Although it was pretty full-on, it never felt pressurised nor rushed. Bearing in mind our varying levels of fitness, forgetfulness, creativity and other 'senior concerns', we could do things either fast, medium or slow – even long or short.

It all started, for those who had arrived early enough, with a walk led by Doreen and Marion. Doreen said: 'After an initial downpour – we were blessed with ideal walking weather. We strolled down to the canal and then along the foot path in a northerly direction. The sun shone on the beautiful flowers, trees, quaint canal boats as we listened to the charming bird songs. Marion suggested we walk as far as a bridge behind which we could see a wind turbine (not a windmill). Marion's son, Gary, had worked there some years ago. So, the 10 of us enjoyed a comfortable two-hour amble – a delightful start to a great weekend.'



The official welcome and Kiddush were held in our private function room and dinner was taken in the 'Conservatory', just for us. The young hotel chef bent over backwards the whole weekend to provide us with original and tasty fish dishes – sea bass, pollock, cod and haddock in inventive combinations – never having to resort to the dreaded poached salmon. Even the dining ambience changed as we took breakfast and lunch in the regular dining room but on Saturday night we dined in the 'Board Room'.



After dinner, we wondered if we really knew our fellow Lodge members? Who was it that had slept for four months with a loaded rifle strapped to their wrist? Who babysat for Peter Mandelson? Who smashed a synagogue chandelier? This task, arranged by Sue and Gabby Kessler got us all guessing and chatting to each other about the list that we were given of quite astonishing episodes in people's lives.

Peter Lewinsohn, (pictured right) who came with Linda Forman said: 'A most enjoyable time was had by all as we tried to work out who had done what. It was George who had slept with the rifle. This was during the Suez Canal crisis when, he was doing his National Service. The 'fedayeen' were creeping in to the tents at night, and it was used as a counter measure to prevent their rifles being stolen. It was Charles Bieber who smashed a light in the synagogue during a service. Being



well over six-foot-tall, lifting the Sefer Torah high into the air on the Bimah was not a good idea.

June Gilbert told us how one night, aged just 16, on the way home from an evening at the theatre, she sat in the wrong end of a train and landed up in an unknown town in the middle of the night! With the assistance of a taxi driver she spent an uncomfortable night in a convent. The Mother Superior made the stay conditional that she had to leave by 5:00 am, so that no one would be aware of her stay! And it was Jo who had been a minder for the baby, now Lord Mandelson!



There was hardly time to engage with the next session. As Irene Fine said: 'Charles (on the floor above) led a wonderful session of What If?' He started with – 'What if Germany had not had to pay so much reparations at the end of WW1?' We discussed whether the difficult terms of the peace treaty had led to Hitler, German rearmament and WWII? There was so much discussion that we decided to retire to our beds before any more topics could be discussed.'

Enid Gurvick wrote: 'What, we wondered, could Sylvia possibly want to be doing with our most disliked gifts?' At 10am on Saturday morning, all was revealed. Our presents were displayed on trestle tables, each numbered. We were given slips of paper, to enter our names, and say which gift we liked the most, and which the least. A huge and varied choice confronted us: soaps, and toilet paper, a vase, a tie, a garden gorilla and a necklace. When we had all made our choices, these were given to Gabby, and whilst he organised which item had the most votes for the best and the least liked, we each, as Sylvia held up each item, gave the reason for bringing our particular contribution.

There was much hilarity to follow. The mysterious 6-inch spiralled wooden item, turned out to be an exercising tool to roll under the feet. The small sharp metal object, with a point on the end, was thought by some to be a garden tool for sowing seeds, or to make holes in cork or leather, or maybe inseminating cattle? When Susan Jacob's blanket was displayed, she commented how much nicer it now looked than at home. Irene offered a magnificent life-sized one-eyed doll to anyone who wanted to have it and when the copper kidney shaped deep cooking utensil was displayed, Ronnie Auerbach insisted that it was really for putting around one's neck as a soup protector whilst eating. Walter said the reason he brought the cuff-links engraved with sushi emblems, was that he never wears cuff links, and hates sushi.

The winning least liked gift was a very long tailed leather whip, contributed by Hilary! She told us her mother had bought two of these whips in Hebron, one for Hilary to keep Tony in order, and one for Hilary's brother, to keep Adele in in order. David Kalms said how much he would now like to have the whip!



The winning most liked gift belonged to the Auerbachs - this was a beautiful stained glass round bird bath on a stand. The glass would look wonderful in a Synagogue window, but as Geraldine pointed out; it was completely impractical for the garden, as the water would become filthy with green algae and any birds would knock it over and smash the glass.

Many suggestions followed about what to do with all the unwanted items. Ronnie said they should all be auctioned, or taken to a charity shop, and re-purchased for our next such event.

Thanks to Marion's and Gabby's imagination and hard work, we all enjoyed a great fun session -

Saturday mornings will never be the same again! To finish off, Tony Sinclair's 'Worst Gift' Notice, is very telling. It said something like 'being made treasurer of First Unity Lodge – again!' As Hilary said, we could all get rid of our unwanted gifts, Tony is lumbered with his!!'

After the coffee break we had more challenging matters to put our minds to. Everyone had been asked to bring a short article for discussion, in small groups.

Harvey Liebner's group gives an example of the diversity of subjects discussed. The first topic was about a large Sefer Torah that was found in Portugal. Harvey says: 'This account was taken from a Jewish Chronicle article. It is approx. 500 years old (the Torah not the JC article). It was found by a builder as a house was being demolished but the builder kept it for six months before handing it over. It is known that many Spanish Jews moved from Spain to Portugal during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. In fact, some Jewish people became fishermen, so they could be alone in order to pray.'

The picture right, shows the intense concentration on the topics. The second discussion in Harvey's group, he says, was about a school visit to Auschwitz. 'One of the group leaders mentioned that the younger children were, in general, laughing and joking at the beginning of the tour but by the end became much, much quieter. The third discussion was about the Liberal Party Manifesto (from the Daily Mail) reportedly to re-settle 50,000 Syrian refugees from the camps, into the UK which would cost approx. £4.3 billion. Controlled immigration is very important but how many should be allowed into the UK? Someone mentioned the problem of Sweden (a liberal country), which has caused many Swedish people to question their liberal attitude. There is a synagogue near Malmo which has suffered vandalism, not by right wingers, but by immigrants from Arab countries.



The fourth item was about climate change. History shows that it has been going on for many years. It seems that famine, war and illness, unfortunately, (or fortunately), does keep the world population down. Now, it seems that ebola is starting to return in West Africa (although it is still early days!). The fifth item was about whether our Royalty visit Israel? It seems that Saudi Arabia is getting rather upset. But there have been private visits by the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles. And the sixth item was about prunes! They are dried plums and contain copious amounts of Vitamin C and Vitamin K and also provide large amounts of fibre. It is also very politically correct for vegetarians!! All groups had a similar great variety of topics to get their heads around including the London garden bridge over the Thames as a waste of money and potential banning of the bris in Norway.

After lunch on Saturday, there was time for a schlof, a swim or a walk around the beautiful landscaped grounds of the estate – until at 5.00pm when those brave enough, assembled for what Sylvia called 'creativity time'.

Margaret Arenias, writes: 'For this we divided into eight groups and worked together for about an hour and a half to make a collage on a large piece of cardboard. We were given a huge selection of materials and bric-a-brac including coloured paper, wool, buttons, straws, beads etc, collected by the organising committee. We used glue to attach everything.

We were five in my group led by Sue Kessler; Doreen Natoff, Miriam Godfrey, Doreen Gould and myself. We decided together on the theme of 'Monet's Garden'. We each worked on different sections of the collage. My area was background trees and shrubs while others designed the famous bridge and decorated the lake with lovely flowers representing water-lilies'.

The titles of the other groups were: 'Garden by the Sea', 'The Time of Your Life', 'You promised me a Rose Garden', 'As The Good Book says', 'Seek and You Shall Find', 'Fan-tasy' and 'Melange de Couleur'. There were no prizes, but I think we all found it a very satisfying experience and great fun, and the time passed very quickly.'



It's not often that we can watch a feature film that includes a friend of some of our lodge members – but we even managed that. The film was about Bronislav Huberman collecting and saving great musicians thrown out of European orchestras from 1933 – and taking them to Palestine in 1936 to form the Palestine Symphony Orchestra. You can just imagine the shock or contrast in their lives – but they were grateful in the end that their lives were thus saved. And so, a great orchestra was born, first performances of which were conducted by the great Toscanini. The person some of us knew in it was Mira Ross, whose father Zvi Haftel was one of Huberman's' students, whom he collected and took with him. Zvi became one of the key leaders and managers of the orchestra bringing many famous conductors to Israel and even persuading Mr Mann to part with a lot of money to create a great auditorium!

And to end our Saturday there was a special champagne birthday party with a specially baked cake by Hilary to celebrate the 'coming of age' of our worthy members which included Hilary, Sylvia, Marian, Doreen, Charles and also included Linda Forman. They composed a special song for the occasion and if you listen carefully you can just about hear it?



After breakfast (being discussed by Ruth and Margaret here) on Sunday there was a stimulating talk by David Janner-Klausner, about which way Israel is heading and how the fulcrum of the pendulum is moving even as it swings. Ruth Gordon summarises his talk *Israel At The Crossroads* thus:

'Our speaker David Janner-Klausner, had spoken at our weekend five years ago and was invited to return. David is amongst other things, an entrepreneur who is an economist and geographer born in Israel but has spent half his life in England. He has worked for two key Jewish organisations – a decade as an Israeli local government specialist and he has a particular interest in issues relating to the Arab minority in Israel.

He was also UJIA's programme director from 2007-2013. (He is married to Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner). David explained that since last speaking to us on the same subject five years ago, the crossroads had shifted towards to the political right. One road was the constant discussion between the one state/two state solution and the other was the continued problem of how exclusively Jewish Israel should be. The roads were difficult to navigate and unfortunately he did not see an early resolution to the problems.



David said that his attitude towards Israel was very much determined by his upbringing and his family, particularly his mother who was Dutch and had come to London with her family at the age of fourteen just prior to WWII. She had joined the Dutch army in exile after graduating from Oxford and went to Israel in 1949 and lived there for 30 years as a temporary resident, never becoming an Israeli citizen. She abhorred nationalism after what she had seen happen in Holland, where the majority of the Jewish population had been killed under Nazism and she had never wanted to 'belong' to any one nation, feeling that being British was the least of two evils. However his father, an Israeli citizen whose great uncle was the youngest delegate at the first Zionist congress in 1897, felt that a strong Israel was the answer to anti-Semitism'.

David felt that although there was constant criticism of Netanyahu, large amounts of resources have been shifted into Palestinian control during his leadership. He said that in his opinion

'...the diaspora was affected by Israel's actions – perceived or actual – and how Israel treated its minorities always had an impact on how Jews were treated in other countries'. David ended his interesting talk on a not very positive note but we all pray and hope that a good solution will soon be in sight.



Our final goodbyes were over a leisurely buffet lunch. We felt as though we had been transported miles away

to a smiling and friendly heaven for about 42 hours. Our minds had been engaged, our hands and eyes– and our legs had been challenged. Our thanks for entertaining us – or helping us to entertain ourselves - go to Sylvia and David (whom we also thank for the lovely photographs), George and Marion, Sue and Gabby, Doreen, Charles and Jo, and all those that helped to create such a lively, enthusiastic and enjoyable weekend.

Don't leave it another three years George (pictured here with Marian and Geraldine) as who knows where we might all be by then!!

We were sad to leave this idyllic spot in Hertfordshire – but were glad to be able get back to reality in only about half an hour's drive!

\* A 'mathem' is a word made up by Tolkien for a gift that you are given but never intend to use and wait for the next opportunity to hand on to someone else. (I think some of us would be too embarrassed to hand on some of the unwanted gifts that Gabby had on display).



## **MAGIC MOMENTS! ADVANCE NOTICE**

As you should know by now, on Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017 we will be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of First Unity Lodge. The event will be a special tea party held at Goldsmith Hall, One Stonegrove, Edgware. Please make a note of this in your diary.

***Places are limited, so make sure you reserve your place as soon as the formal invitation goes out.***

**YOUR CONTRIBUTION:** As we would like to make this a really memorable occasion please let us have:

- ◆ Your memories of your time with us so that we can include them in the celebration
- ◆ Any photos of trips, events, etc would be very welcome
- ◆ We would also like to invite as many past members as possible, so if you are in touch with anyone connected to First Unity, please let us have their address
- ◆ We will be compiling a list of “lost and loved” and want to make sure that no-one is forgotten, so your help is needed here too

**Please send your contributions to me as soon as possible so that we can make our 50<sup>th</sup> a day to remember!**

**Jo Bieber**

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## B'nai B'rith UK's Bureau of International Affairs Newsletter May 2017

### 18<sup>th</sup> May: Event at the Albanian Embassy

Members of the Bureau met the Albanian Ambassador. We had the chance to express our personal gratitude for the role Albania played in WW2 and continues to play today as a progressive Muslim nation. We also discussed the warm relations between his country and Israel. The meeting lasted one hour.



### Research Paper

LBIA Director, Jeremy Havardi, has produced a research paper on the lead up to the 6 Day War and the current legal status of Israel's control of the West Bank. It will shortly be available on the BBLBIA page:

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He also produced some articles under the B'nai B'rith byline in *The Jewish News*, mainly on the subject of terrorism and democracy.

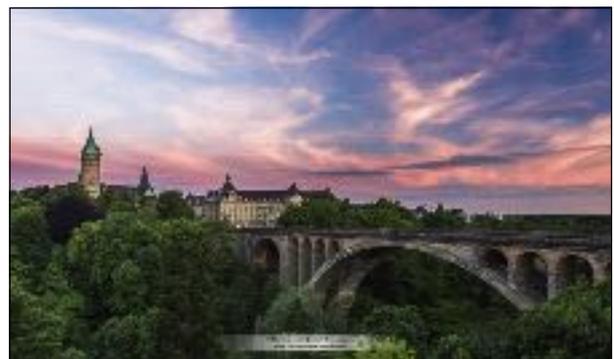
### 3<sup>rd</sup> May: Breakfast Meeting with Latvian Ambassador

The Latvian Ambassador, Dr Baiba Braze, addressed a gathering of BB members, Young Professionals and others about the Jewish community in Latvia during the twentieth century. She spoke about the impact of the community on her country's history, including independence, the dark days of the Shoah and its recent relations with Israel. She took questions afterwards from the audience. The event was generously hosted by law firm Howard Kennedy LLP



### B'nai B'rith talk in Luxembourg

JH attended the European Young Professionals event and gave a talk to around 50 young professionals about the work of the London Bureau, its values and goals. He also co-hosted a debate about tackling anti-Zionism in the UK which was well received.



B'nai B'rith



YITZCHAK RABIN LODGE

Registered charity No. 1074846

## Annual Soirée

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017, 7:00 PM

Debbie Diamond  
Jacqueline Curzon

*Violin*  
*Piano & accordion*

### Programme

Ernest Bloch  
Paul Ben-Haim  
and others

## Concert and Supper

£27.50 members    £32.50 non-members

Limited numbers    Advanced booking only

Funds raised will go to supporting key Bnai Brith causes:-  
Sick and elderly Jews in Kiev & Disadvantaged families in Qiryat  
Gat