



B'nai B'rith UK
Established 1910

Newsletter November 2017

To all members of BBUK

Welcome to this Newsletter which I hope will keep you up to date with all current matters “B'nai B'rith”

Ukraine Project

Due to ill health, Project Leader Alex Faiman, has had to relinquish the leadership of this core project. Malcolm Factor has now taken over the responsibility of overseeing the work and acting as our link to the project, which has now been redesigned and relaunched.

BBUK will be concentrating on the task of funding the provision of drugs and medicines to the elderly survivors of the Holocaust and Righteous Gentiles in Kiev. The scheme is administered by the B'nai B'rith Kiev Lodge, with whom we have a great relationship. Our target is to raise £8000.00 p.a. The provision of food parcels has been taken over by World Jewish Relief.

Please try your best to support this scheme, which is essential for the end users, who live in increasingly difficult circumstances. I know that the help of BBUK is very much appreciated and we will now be getting direct and regular reports from Kiev.

Qyriat Gat Project

During October, twenty six members BBUK visited Israel to see behind the scenes. The group visited Qyriat Gat to meet the organisers of the Foundation and to see their work in action.

We “joined” the orchestra of the Herzl School, met the organisers and children at the Kadima After School Club, and helped with the packing of food parcels for the “Feed a Hungry Family” programme which has been BBUK’s special project for over twenty years.



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BBUK Israel Portfolio lead, Walter Breindel, presented a cheque for £10,000.00 to the Foundation and George Summerfield of First Unity Lodge presented a further cheque for £3,500.00 to provide air conditioning at the warehouse and also to mark the Golden Anniversary of First Unity Lodge. Maureen Daniels of Yad B'Yad, presented £1,200.00 to provide essential equipment at the centre and First Lodge also made a generous donation.



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© Qyriat Gat

The generous contributions of our members and our Lodges continues to improve lives in Qyriat Gat.

Balfour Centenary

The contribution of members of B'nai B'rith to the momentous events of 1917 always warranted a special celebration.

Thirty members travelled to Manchester in September to “Follow in the Footsteps of Chaim Weizmann and celebrate the Balfour Centenary”. We had lectures on his life, his work at Manchester University, saw his homes and expanded our knowledge of this most famous of B'nai B'rith members. We were joined by members of Cheshire Unity Lodge.

On the anniversary of the Declaration, 2nd November, First Lodge of England held a special celebratory evening in conjunction with BBUK. ORT House was totally sold out, there were films, speeches and a top class panel made this an evening that will live long in the memory. A specially produced copy of the Balfour Declaration was presented to attendees and guest participants.

Abraham Lewin Lodge held a sell-out afternoon tea at Enfield shul, the LBIA welcomed Israeli Ambassador Mark Regev as the guest speaking on “Israel and the Balfour Declaration” at a Breakfast Meeting at Canary Warf and many Lodges had special evenings to mark the occasion.

See the Real Israel



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Greg Wand led a group of twenty six members to Israel during October where we spent a fantastic four days in Jerusalem and an even more incredible four days on

the Golan Heights. A full report is on www.bnaibrithuk.org but all those on the trip felt the experience deepened their understanding of the situation, both social and political, for the population of Israel and certainly hearing the rumble of artillery shellfire coming from Syria made a deep impression on everyone involved.

Looking forward to the next trip in 2020!

London Bureau of International Affairs

Jeremy Havardi and the team chaired by Tony Swabe continue to advocate issues of Jewish concern and those of Human Rights to the diplomatic community in the UK.

Many foreign embassies have been visited including the Swedish, Chilean, Albanian, Belarus, Portuguese, Slovenian, Australian and last week the Indian Embassy. This is in addition to meeting with Oxfam and also the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A very successful Breakfast Meeting was held with the Israeli Ambassador, Mark Regev about the Balfour Declaration and its implications for the establishment of Israel.



© A. Cohen

Jeremy has just published a book entitled *Israel and the Middle East: A fresh perspective* which is the result of vast research giving, an excellent in-depth review of the background and current situation in the region. A fantastic source of information. This is available for sale via Amazon, but will be available **free of charge**, in PDF format, to all BBUK members.

B'nai B'rith Europe

Regrettably, your Executive is still struggling to resolve the continuing problems surrounding our relationship with BBE.

It is now over two years ago that members of BBUK voted overwhelmingly to separate from BBE and revert to independent District status, a proposition that was then totally rejected by BB International.

After many meetings we thought we had negotiated a completely new deal with BBE, one that would have lifted all but a small financial burden from BBUK. This was rejected by their Executive last September.

However all is not lost, a new President of BBE, Serge Dahan of BB France, plus a new Executive was elected at the beginning of November.

The need for total financial reform and the political redirection of BB Europe is now obvious to all and Serge is determined to create major changes. We will restart negotiations again in January with the hope that we can support a reconstituted BBE, helping to fight anti-Semitism in Europe and aid the emerging Jewish communities of the Former Soviet Union.

European Days of Culture and Heritage

Our splendid team, led by Valerie Bello and Lydia Drukarz once again oversaw sixty events throughout the UK in September based around the theme of “The Jewish Diaspora”. Lodges put on special events, synagogues and Jewish institutions opened their doors to the wider community in what has become a highly successful annual event. The theme for 2018 is “Storytelling” which it is hoped will lead to the production of many interesting and original events.

BB Young Professionals

A growing membership is enjoying a great range of events targeted at the 35+ age group. The latest events coming up are:

1st December a Friday Night Dinner is being held jointly with Hendon United Synagogue. Cost for members £25.00

9th December an evening of Magic and Mystery in Temple Fortune. Another joint event, this time with Laniado Hospital and costs £40 including a buffet.

If you require information about either event please contact Valerie Tesler on vtesler@hotmail.com and she can book you in and place you on the mailing list via Facebook.

BBUK

It is with great sadness that I have to report that both the Leo Baeck Lodge and the Jerusalem Lodge will be closing at the end of this year. They have been in existence for seventy five and fifty years respectively. Increasing age and infirmity has finally caught up with both Lodges, preventing them carrying on. We thank their members for all the hard work that has been put into making B’nai B’rith such an extraordinary organisation that contributes so much to the Jewish community both here in the UK and abroad.

We hope that many members will be able to continue their involvement by either joining another Lodge or by becoming National Members.

On a more positive note moves are afoot to create a new Lodge in the Hertsmere area and an initial interest meeting is planned for January.

We have been approached by and held meeting with, the Foundation for Jewish Heritage and BBYO, both of whom wish establish a closer relationship with BBUK.

2018 will be the 175th Anniversary of the founding of B’nai B’rith, let’s make sure that we continue our important work into the foreseeable future.

Alan Miller
National President
B’nai B’rith UK