

December 2018

UNITY News



President's News

I took over as Quartet President recently following Doreen in this role. We do manage to have a variety of events to enjoy thanks to our Programme Committee. In September George and I hosted a meeting at our home where our sister-in-law, Marianne Summerfield, told her family story through the Holocaust and making a new life in England. Storytelling is part of our Lodge's "Life Histories" series and the theme for the 2018 European Heritage Day Events. Marianne gave a lively description, sad at times and amusing at other times of her life.

When one of our speakers had to withdraw at the last minute, Henny stepped in and organised a contribution evening when we each told of disastrous holiday experiences. Many resulted in much laughter.

Our latest, very well attended meeting was held at the Mill Hill Blind and Disabled Centre with a large group of Tenants also attending. Tom Nathan, as General Manager of Brent Cross Shopping Centre, gave us an informative and vibrant idea of his working life and of future plans for expansion. We had a lively array of questions to follow.

We had a big problem when people were leaving the venue which was upsetting. Although I had asked everyone to please check they were taking home their own coats, one person managed to take the wrong one and left another member extremely upset. Fortunately, by phoning around to those who had already left we were able to find the culprit and the coat was brought back to the venue. **IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE ALL CHECK THAT WE HAVE OUR OWN COATS WHEN WE LEAVE MEETINGS. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT SUCH A SITUATION HAS ARISEN. IT IS UP TO EACH ONE OF US TO CHECK OUR OWN BELONGINGS.**

Please do come to our most important programme of each year, **The Unity Lecture**, this year given by Jeremy Havardi on **Sunday 18 November** - see our Programme and also this reminder that it is an open and free talk, so bring your family and friends too. Subject--The Plight of Many Religious Communities Across the Middle East. Kindly let me know who is coming.

Recent reports from BBUK includes an update on the 175th Anniversary Leadership Forum in New York in October. The main speech was about the challenges and threats facing the global Jewish community and Israel. Jeremy Havardi's report has been sent to you under separate cover. The new President of B'nai B'rith International is Chuck Kaufman from Austin, Texas.

Alan Miller, President BBUK, sent a letter to the Congregation of the *Tree of Life Synagogue* expressing heartfelt condolences at the tragic loss of life in Pittsburgh.

We have a contingent of BB members marching under the AJEX banner at the Remembrance Sunday Service on the 18 November. We would like as many members as possible to join us there, either in the Parade or as spectators. The arrangements are to meet in Horse Guards Parade at 1.30pm to start marching down Whitehall for the service at the Cenotaph, led by the Chief Rabbi. We have the honour of our treasurer of First Unity, Ron Shelley, Vice President of AJEX as Parade Commander. Do email or phone Alan Miller to inform him if you will be joining the BB contingent. thepresident@bnaibrithuk.org or 01923 635899.

We are again making a collection for the Chanukah gelt appeal which will be used to purchase small gifts for deprived children of Qiryat Gat. Jo Bieber is collecting a suggested £5 from each member. Closing date for donations 19 November.

Marion Summerfield
Quartet President

News and Programme from First Unity Lodge

Message from Doreen Natoff, Quartet President before Marion.

We had a really fascinating evening on 16 September when Jonathan Farrell, Director for Student Affairs at 'StandWithUs' spoke about the current realities that Jewish and pro-Israel students face today on university campuses across the UK.

Jonathan discussed the history, strategy and tactics of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in advancing their anti-Israel message on University campuses and how *StandWithUs UK* is implementing a counter-strategy through educating and empowering student leaders to be faithful Israel educators.

Jonathan was joined by Eliana Friend, a Campus Liaison for *StandWithUs* at City University. The evening was well presented with good illustrations and generated many questions well answered on all topics

The next meeting I chaired was also very thought provoking. Sylvia Lewin and Phil Phillips talk on 'Whose Life is it Anyway.....' Dignity in Dying is the organisation which campaigns for a long overdue change in the law regarding assisted dying. 100 million people worldwide have access to a dignified death. The Falconer Bill of 2014 states that a mentally competent adult with 6 months to live and a terminal illness should be allowed to self-administer a drug to give him/her a way out of pain and suffering. Palliative care, sadly, does not help everyone. Human rights should apply - after all, whose life is it anyway? There are more safeguards with this law than without it. Nobody is forced to go down this route.

Phil Phillips spoke about *Advance Decision* which is approved by law and enables a patient to make it clear to doctors and their own families what their medical wishes are in certain circumstances eg intubation, cpr (cardio pulmonary resuscitation). If you can tell the doctors yourself that is good, but what happens if you have a car accident or a stroke and cannot speak for yourself. Some of us have a Lasting Power of Attorney for Health which we pay for but a problem can arise if one member of the family does not agree with the others. If the Advance Decision is made after the Lasting Power of Attorney then that takes precedence.

We all found the topic and the presentation very thought provoking and we were discussing it well into teatime. They gave us very good pamphlets and other handouts.

FAMILY NEWS.....

We send our sincerest condolences to Linda Forman and her family on the loss last week of her sister Shirley. The funeral took place last Friday at Bushey cemetery.

Mazeltov to:

Sue Green whose son, Michael, has been appointed a High Court Judge.

Iris Markson on the birth of a beautiful great-granddaughter in New Jersey, USA, sister to her 16 months old brother.

Reva Hill on the birth of a grandson to Rose and Yehudah Reva Hill in Israel.

Viviane and Jack White on the birth of a granddaughter, Michelle, in Tel Aviv.

Robert Bruckner on his engagement to Daphne.

Wishing Sylvia and Walter Weg speedy recoveries.

Michael Heppner has a new email address:



B'nai B'rith UK - Newsletter October 2018



Dear Members

Having just returned from the 175th Anniversary Celebrations of the founding of B'nai B'rith in New York, I thought it would be timely to update you on the latest news appertaining to us as members of B'nai B'rith in the UK.

The Global Leadership Forum which took place alongside the Gala Dinner was a tremendous experience for both Edna and myself in bringing us into contact with members from sixteen different countries including as far afield as Australia, Uruguay, Chile, Israel, Canada, Europe and of course the USA. To exchange ideas and experiences, to understand the common issues that affect all members of our worldwide community, helped to bring clarity and perspective to our own situation. This did not make us feel any easier about the position of Israel, Zionism and the Jewish community, in fact it increased our concerns for the future.

A full report of the event has been written by Jeremy Havardi, Director of our LBIA, and is included with this month's Lodge programme. He gives an excellent description of the sessions we attended and I can tell you that the political team, lead by our CEO Dan Mariaschin, is absolutely on the ball and on top of the game in defending Israel and advocating for Jewish and humanitarian causes.

As an NGO at the UN, B'nai B'rith is in an excellent position to act as "The Global Voice of the Jewish Community". It was made clear that we have to speak out loudly in our defence and for Israel. That allowing, the repetition of the age old untruths about Judaism and the incessant lies about the foundation of Israel as a homeland and haven for the Jewish People have to be challenged. Certainly, the challenges faced by our students who wish to embrace liberal causes but remain true to their Zionist principles are an area of great concern. They face judgement by a different set of standards from those applied to other religions and states.

The new President of B'nai B'rith International is Chuck Kaufman from Austin, Texas. We were able to spend a considerable time both with him and Dan Mariaschin which allowed us to talk about the situation in the UK

I am also happy to tell you the work of the LBIA and of our Heritage and Culture programmes, along with our efforts to establish a Young Professional network are very highly regarded and greatly valued. Our charitable projects in Israel and Ukraine, our support of the Jewish Armed Forces, our trips abroad plus the great efforts of our Lodges and their members to achieve the goals of B'nai B'rith are very much appreciated and highly valued by BBI.

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On other issues, I am happy to report that the events of our European Days of Heritage and Culture were all very well supported and many non - Jewish people visited synagogues and historic houses. Thanks to all of you who participated.

The BBUK trip to Ukraine in May 2019 became oversubscribed within 24 hours of the release of the information and a second trip to the Ukraine will now take place in September 2019.

Please continue to support our charities in Kiev and Qiryat Gat where we hope that the Chanukah Gelt Appeal will put smiles on the faces of the children at the Kadima After School Centre.

The LBIA Breakfast Meeting with Mark Regev on 23 October was completely oversubscribed and for the first time we had to turn people away, a situation I regret, but one that shows how concerned we all are in the current political atmosphere.

Thank you for all your help, please continue to support your Lodge and encourage others to join so that we can make even more of an impact.

With very best wishes

Yours fraternally

Alan Miller
National President, BBUK

Email dated 29 October 2018 to Rabbi Myers, Tree Of Life Synagogue, Pittsburgh, USA.



B'nai B'rith UK
Established 1910

Dear Rabbi Myers,

On behalf of all the members of B'nai B'rith in the United Kingdom may I express to you and the *Tree of Life* congregation our heartfelt and sincere condolences on the horrific and tragic events of last Shabbat.

As fellow Jews of the Diaspora we feel a deep sense of shock along with one of absolute revulsion that your congregation should have been targeted in such a manner.

Many of us will also have been in Synagogue last Shabbat enjoying our freedom to practice our faith and the thought that there are individuals who are so mentally disturbed that they can inflict such an atrocity upon innocent people is appalling beyond words.

I assure you that your fellow Jews in the UK, along with all right-minded people stand shoulder to shoulder with you in solidarity, with compassion and with sympathy.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families, friends and indeed the entire Pittsburgh Community as you mourn those so cruelly murdered in cold blood in this outpouring of hate against the innocent.

We are now more determined that at any time to continue the fight against antisemitism and all racial and religious hatred.

You are in our thoughts and on behalf of our membership I wish you and all your congregation a sincere "Long Life" with the hope that you are all spared further suffering in the future.

Sharing with you in your grief,

Yours,

Alan Miller
President, B'nai B'rith UK

SINGING IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

On Thursday 8 November, Belsize Square Synagogue Main, Community and Children's choirs together with West London Synagogue choir and the Zemel Choir sang together in **A Service of Solemn Remembrance and Hope on the 80th Anniversary of Kristallnacht** (the night of broken glass) in Westminster Abbey.

As a member of Belsize Square Synagogue (the German community) and also of the Zemel Choir, I had the privilege of singing in the Abbey. As a 'yekka' (a German Jew who does everything to time and precisely), it was of special significance to me and my emotions ran very high. Yes, I was born in this country, but both my parents suffered greatly from family losses, the pain of which I still carry today.

We sang liturgical music in the German Lewandowsky tradition. New pieces of remembrance and we recited Kaddish. Three survivors spoke of their experiences during the war, of internment, concentration camps, loss and the Kindertransport, which saved 10,000 children lives. Three Rabbis spoke and our Cantor sang.

I think the most emotional part of the whole event was singing Hebrew prayers in the most important Christian church in the country. Having the Deans and Bishops in their ceremonial robes sitting in front of the Altar and all us Jews chanting was more than one can really imagine.

Another poignant moment was when the Youth Choir sang *Oseh Shalom* so beautifully. A reminder that there is a future for us all.

The ambiance and splendour of the building together with the acoustics is magnificent and left me with a glimmer of hope that perhaps, at some time in the future, we can live together and understand each other's religions in harmony and peace.

Yes, the service was wonderful and memorable.

Henny Levin

The murder of 11 congregants of The Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh was a tragedy.

WHY ARE JEWS HATED - 'The Pittsburgh Tragedy'

web page was created so that more would be aware of it.

You can find it at

<http://www.jewishwikipedia.info/pittsburgh.html> tragedy.html

GENOCIDE - Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January

Holocaust Memorial Day is held annually on 27 January, corresponding to the date on which the Russian army entered Auschwitz.

You can find details at <http://www.jewishwikipedia.info/memorial.html>

This page meets a second need - the definition of the term 'genocide' and how it occurs. This is very important as it relates to tragedies such as Rwanda and others which have seen the death of over 55,000,000 people since 1945 and why HMD is an interfaith date.

Holocaust Memorial Day is recognised annually by Barnet Council.

For details of past memorials go to

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/council-and-democracy/council-and-community/holocaust-memorial.html>

An interfaith memorial is usually held at Barnet Town Hall at Rickett Quadrangle, Middlesex University, The Burroughs Hendon, NW4 4BT

Tube: Hendon Central. Buses: 143, 113, 83, 183, 186 and 326

Disabled parking facilities and access are provided.

For more information call: 020 8359 2652. Email: mayor@barnet.gov.uk

Jack White

Aramaic – A brief history of an exotic language.

It is not always appreciated that Aramaic was the English of the day for nigh on 1700 years until the Arab conquest of the Middle East.

Originally, the language of the Armenians, by 1000 BCE it had spread to a string of kingdoms in what is now western Syria and came to prominence under the neo-Assyrian empire of 911-685 spreading throughout Mesopotamia and the Levant. At its height it was the language in what is now Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, Arabia, parts of Turkey and Iran, even reaching parts of India and China

Aramaic made up the books of Daniel and Ezra and would have been spoken by Jesus. The Gemara was written in Aramaic as was parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Talmud. Today we see Aramaic in Ketubahs and in the Kaddish, also in the first paragraph in the Haggadah and also part of the Zohar and other Cabalistic writings.

In days gone by Hebrew was considered the holy language whilst Aramaic was the one for general use and, of course, Hebrew is still the language that we use in prayer. However, Aramaic still persists in our services such as the Yakum Porkun prayer just prior to the prayer for the Royal Family but otherwise it has largely disappeared from use amongst Jews.

To trace its usage, one must revert to history. There were two principal periods of expulsion of Jews. The first occurred in 733 BCE when Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria destroyed the Northern Kingdom with Sargon II finishing the carnage.

Some of the inhabitants fled south to Judea but most went to what is now Iraq with a large contingent to Kurdistan. The other large expulsion was the Babylonian one caused by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BCE and 586. Here again Iraq was the area of exile - or Babylonia as it was at that time. When Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews the right of return to their ancestral home following the Persian victory over the Babylonians few did so as the exiles were quite comfortable in their new surroundings and this continued until their emigration to Israel in the early 1950s. The population of Jews in Iraq was considerable before this, with a percentage of 30% in Baghdad in the 1930s although they spoke Arabic and not Aramaic.

So, now to the Jews in Iraqi Kurdistan descended from those expelled by the Assyrian conquest. Theirs was a different lot. Kurdistan was a backwater and the Jews hardly developed during the 2700 years that they were there. Desperately poor and virtually cut-off from the outside world they were in no way comparable to their cousins on the outside, even to those in the rest of Iraq and beyond. Few could read or write, and there is a paucity of historical records as to their progress. So, Aramaic continued to be used there and in a few other areas as well. When, as a result of the War of Liberation they were forced to move, they found difficulties in adapting to life in Israel and to learn a new language as their knowledge of Hebrew was poor. Therefore, although the population of Kurdish Jews in Israel is a quite substantial one, it is only the elderly who have the knowledge of Aramaic and few who actually speak it on a day-to-day basis.

Aramaic, therefore, is virtually extinct. It is interesting that of the 7000 languages spoken in the world today half are expected to disappear in the next hundred years. Does it matter? I leave that to you.

Tony Wilder



An Israel Quiz by Jack and Viviane White



A The Flag of Israel (Magen David, Star of David)

1. When and why was the Star of David (Magen David) adopted as the central symbol of the flag of Israel?
2. When and why has the flag of Israel a blue hexagram on a white background, between two horizontal blue stripes?
3. The flag of Israel is the only national flag in the world able to combine the alphabet (Hebrew) within its design? Do you know how it does it?
4. How has the flag of Israel been linked to mythology?
5. What was the Jude Badge? How and why was it used by the Nazis?
6. What was the origin of the six-pointed star?
7. When was the Star of David adopted as a Jewish symbol?
8. Why was the largest Magen David flag in the world presented to Israel by the Philippines to commemorate 50 years of relations between them?
9. Where in Eilat can you find the world's largest Magen David mural?
10. Why was the Eilat mural painted?

B Menorah

1. When and why did the menorah appear in Jewish history?
2. What function(s) does the menorah now serve?
4. What is the design of the modern menorah based on?
5. When did the historical menorah disappear?
6. How did the historical menorah disappear?

C What flags are used by Israel?

D. What are the national symbols of Israel?

You can find any the answers by going to:
<http://www.jewishwikipedia.info/magendavid.html>

