



Etz Chaim

Volume 28
Issue 4



Winter 2010



Community Rabbi: Rabbi Cliff Cohen
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Sam Holden

Thanet & District Reform Synagogue, 293A Margate Rd, Ramsgate, CT12 6TE
TEL: 01843 851164 - A constituent member of the Movement for Reform Judaism

Shabbat services and Festivals Calendar
Friday 5th November 2010 – Friday 25th February 2011
Cheshvan 28 – Adar Sheni 21, 5771

Kabbalat Shabbat services are held every Friday at 7.30pm
Shabbat Suppers start at 6.30pm for 6.45pm, followed by a shorter service at 8pm
Saturday services are normally on the first and third Saturday of each month at 10.30am
Torah breakfasts start at 9.15am, followed by a shorter service at 10.30am
(NB Festival times vary – see below)

As the calendar is prepared in advance, details shown may be subject to amendment,
NB January Shabbat services are the second and fourth Saturdays - call 01843 851164 to check.

NOVEMBER 2010

Fri 5 Nov, Cheshvan 28, 7.30pm

Sat 6 Nov, Cheshvan 29

Torah Breakfast 9.15am

Service 10.30am

Blessing for Kislev, Toledot

Fri 12 Nov, Kislev 5, 7.30pm

Fri 19 Nov, Kislev 12, 7.30pm

Sat 20 Nov, Kislev 13, 10.30am

Vayishlach

Fri 26 Nov, Kislev 19, 7.30pm

DECEMBER

Wed 1 Dec, Kislev 24 (no service)

Erev Chanukah, 1st candle

Thu 2 Dec, Kislev 25 (no service)

Chanukah 1st day/2nd candle

Fri 3 Dec, Kislev 26, 7.30pm

Sat 4 Dec, Kislev 27, 10.30am

Blessing for Tevet, Shabbat Chanukah

Mikketz

Sun 5 Dec, Kislev 26, 3pm

Chanukah Service & Party (5th Candle)

Fri 10 Dec, Tevet 3, 7.30pm

Fri 17 Dec, Tevet 10, 7.30pm

Sat 18 Dec, Tevet 20, 10.30am

Vayechi

Fri 24 Dec, Tevet 17, 7.30am

Fri, 31 Dec, Tevet 24, 7.30pm

JANUARY 2011

Sat 8 Jan, Shevat 35, 10.30am

Bo

Fri 7 Jan, Shevat 2, 7.30pm

Fri 14 Jan, Shevat 9, 7.30pm

Sat 22 Jan, Shevat 17, 10.30am

Yitro

Wed 19 Jan, Shevat 14, 7pm

Erev Tu b'Shvat Seder

Fri 21 Jan, Shevat 18, 7.30pm

Thu 27 Jan, Shevat 22,

Holocaust Memorial Day

Various East Kent locations to be advised

Fri 28 Jan, Shevat 23, 7.30pm

FEBRUARY

Fri, 4 Feb, Shevat 30, 7.30pm

Sat 5 Feb, Adar I 1, .30am

Shabbat Rosh Chodesh (2nd day)

Torah Breakfast 9.15am

Terumah - Service 10.30am

Fri 11 Feb, Adar Sheni, 7.30pm

Fri 18 Feb, Adar Sheni 14, 7.30pm

Sat 19 Feb, Adar Sheni 15, 10.30am

Ki Tissa

Fri 25 Feb, Adar Sheni 21

Shabbat Supper 6.30pm for 6.45pm

Followed by a short service at 8pm

Shalom and Welcome to Etz Chaim!

As we race towards that season which tends to be Festive whichever path you follow, there's plenty to keep you busy in the next few weeks! The ever popular Chanukah Party is on 5th December, and we have exclusive inside information that the Havdallah Club members are planning informative entertainment as always. And once Chanukah is over, in the secular new year we have the Tu b'Shvat Seder and Holocaust Memorial Day in January and a Torah Breakfast and Shabbat Support in February.

During the quieter periods, you could always pick up a good book to read - our very own Rabbi Cliff has written a book about

the Torah - which can apparently be read in 100 minutes, and Reform Judaism's very own Rabbi Jonathan Romain has put together a book about the lives of some of the great Reform Rabbis. Details of both books, (which are a very reasonable £5.00 each!) can be found later on in the newsletter.

If that's not enough excitement then perhaps you need a holiday. Reading about Helene Cohen's first visit to Israel, and Jon Leigh's trip to Corfu may give you some ideas of places to visit, or perhaps might inspire you to write an article of your own! There's usually something of interest to the Jewish community anywhere you go, and all contributions are, as always, very welcome.

Eleanor and Graham Miller



The Editors reserve the right to edit or refuse any material accepted for publication.

The articles, letters, advertising and content in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Thanet and District Reform Synagogue or of the Movement for Reform Judaism

The deadline for the next issue is 14th February 2011.

All correspondence or articles to:

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11 Watchester Lane, Minster,
Ramsgate CT12 4DA or email
eleanormiller@hotmail.com.

Tel: 01843 822550.

First time in Israel

Helene Cohen

Nothing could have prepared me for the overwhelming emotions on first seeing Israel. This holiday was always meant to be special, as it was for our Silver Wedding, and I had looked forward to visiting Israel since I was a child; in spite of such high expectations, the reality surpassed them.

There was an immediate sense of belonging, reinforced by the huge mezuzah at Ben Gurion Airport. Having browsed the shops in Tel Aviv, we then went down to Jaffa where we enjoyed the contrast of the old market filled with invitations to buy. Tears again as I stood, for the first time, where Jonah would have boarded the boat to Tarshish – Neviim coming to life. We then explored the old city with all of its art and creativity. All this before the scheduled tour began.

Our first day proper took us to Caesarea, with its excavations. Then onto Megiddo, an amazing tel with 27 layers of history, including an incredible water supply system. Further north to Haifa to see the exquisite gardens at the Baha'i Shrine – absolutely breath-taking. Our final stop for day 1 was in Akko, visiting the ancient city and harbour.

We stayed in Tiberias, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, so took the opportunity to explore the town for ourselves in the evenings. The 2

nights spent there enabled us to experience a less touristy aspect of Israel. As it's where Moses Maimonides was buried, we spent some quiet time at his tomb, another powerful experience. We visited various Christian sites around the Sea of Galilee. At Capernaum were the remains of a second century synagogue; the layout just like many that we see today. Excavated columns with Hebrew writing and images of menorah formed part of this site. Then right up north to Baniyas, the most beautiful springs way up in the Golan Heights. We took a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee; paddled amongst the fish in the River Jordan; visited Beit Shean, newly excavated with a Roman theatre and Bath. These sites, amazing though they be, were just a prelude for what came next.

Early Wednesday evening we arrived in Jerusalem. Tears again! While the rest of those on tour relaxed in their hotels, Cliff and I took to the Old City. Transported back through the millennia, we made our way through the Shuk to the Kotel. Even thinking about it fills me with emotion. The cold stone is warm with prayers, fears, laments and hopes as it looms above. It is, quite simply, a Holy place. We returned to the Kotel, later that first evening, with friends. Still as powerful.

We spent the next 2 days in and around Jerusalem, old and new. We saw and felt the holiness of Jerusalem for the three major Abrahamic

faiths: A bar mitzvah at the Kotel (tears again!); the magnificence of mosques on the Temple Mount; the Mount of Olives; Church of All Nations. Then the silent tears through Yad Vashem, remembering the atrocities alongside the bravery, including the righteous gentiles, who endangered and sacrificed their lives. For me, the most overpowering aspect of Yad Vashem, was the simple yet heart wrenching memorial to the children: a dark space using mirrors and candles to reflect thousands of tiny lights, while name after name is recited with age and place for each child murdered.

Having recomposed ourselves, we moved on to the Israel museum, where we met up with my cousin. We saw the magnificent model of Jerusalem as it was in the period of the Second Temple, then went to the Shrine of the Book. We ducked out of the visit to Bethlehem, choosing instead to visit Machanei Yehuda in preparation for Shabbat. Being a part of that bustle, 'Shabbat shalomming' all we met, then the gradual calm as the Sabbath begins was beautiful.

Our final day was spent visiting Qumran and Masada – both extremely emotional places for different reasons. When you stand there, in the Judean Desert, it seems incredible that the scrolls were discovered. The place is just so vast. At Masada, the 'story' of those who took their lives becomes a powerful reality.

We then had the strange but wonderfully relaxing experience of floating in the Dead Sea. After all the emotion of the week the chance to be still in such a unique place was delightful. It really was an extraordinary feeling. As this took us to our final evening, we took a walk through Mer Sherim, watching it re-awake after Shabbat. We took ourselves back to the Old City to dine before saying farewell to the Kotel. This last visit was as emotional as the first. The Wall was so crowded with people praying there as Shabbat had ended, but spaces quietly open up to allow you through to the Wall itself, then close behind you as people resume their personal prayers.



Not wanting to miss a moment, we took a taxi back to Mer Sherim the next morning before leaving for the airport. A few more souvenirs and the experience of seeing Mer Sherim open. A final look back over Jerusalem and L'hitraot!

A Corfiot Experience

Jon Leigh

The day after Yom Kippur, Anne and I flew out to Corfu. We hadn't visited the island before and were hoping for some sunshine, some good food and plenty of rest. What we found in the centre of Corfu Town was different and totally unexpected.

I realise some of you may have been to Corfu but for those who haven't we found an interesting part of the Corfiot history.

Before the war there were approximately two thousand Jews living on the island, most in Corfu Town. They supported two synagogues with full time Rabbis, a Jewish school, Kosher butchers, delicatessens and the full range of Jewish cultural institutions that emerge wherever a Jewish community evolves.

Then, in 1939 the war started and before long the Germans invaded Corfu. The Jewish community was all but decimated by the mass removal of the community to the various camps on mainland Europe. After the war, a mere eighty Jews returned, yet somehow the community has survived.

We found the Synagogue whilst walking around the old part of the town. There is a brown 'tourist' sign indicating the 'Jewish region'. As we walked past, the front door was open and inside a joyful lady sat,

with a large Magen David hanging from a gold chain around her neck. The Magen David is not a symbol you see a great deal in Corfu so it was instantly obvious that we had found one of the small number of Corfiot Jews. She told us that there were a mere thirty families left on the island. The synagogue is only used for services at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when they have a Rabbi from either Israel or occasionally America.

They are a Sephardic community with a tradition that is different from what we Ashkenazi Jews are used to. The Synagogue is laid out essentially the same as Thanet, with the Ark and the Bimah at opposite ends of the space but with one major difference, the seats are laid out back to back, so as to separate the men from the women. Reform it is not!

As we were there after Yom Kippur and in spite of the fact they are not able to hold regular services, the area of the courtyard had been transformed into a traditional Succah and unlike ours, was open to the sky and richly decorated with fresh fruit. They were not to know that a mere three days later, Corfu would experience the worst September rains in living memory. It rained almost continuously for thirty hours inflicting water damage just about everywhere.



The lady we met was fascinated that we had a Jewish community not much larger than the one she belonged to. However, the difference is that on Corfu there is a paucity of work, people of all ages are emigrating either to mainland Europe, America or Australia.

It is sad to think that a Jewish Community is struggling to survive but they do have some children who are being taught about Judaism and where there is education there is hope.

The general feeling is generally positive but with the economic struggles that are occurring in Greece generally and Corfu in particular one feels that the Jewish Community might struggle to survive another fifty years.

Tom Lehrer Tribute

Tom and Rivka Dodds

We wish to write our thanks for a delightful afternoon on Sunday 17th October when David Ceen brought his Tom Lehrer CDs for us to listen to, a very varied selection, some amusing, some thought-provoking, but each enjoyable.

We hope that sometime in the not too distant future David will be persuaded to share his other selections of Show Business personalities with us.

Our thanks also to Barbara for providing refreshments. A pleasant afternoon was had by all.



Kallat Torah - Bride of Torah

From Syb Stubbs:

Lorna and I were given the privilege of taking part in this ceremony. Unfortunately Lorna was not well enough to attend, but I think she was there in spirit as they say.

It was really extra special for me as I stood on the Bima where my father and relatives took part in services in Derby years ago. Derby Shul was Orthodox, so ladies were never allowed, but I felt on this occasion they would not disapprove. The event felt like coming home after too long away. God Bless and thanks again.

Chag Sameach!

Bring out the Chanukiot, get your candles and cards from the TDRS Judaica Shop, and be ready to light a multitude of candles in the Synagogue, because it's our annual Chanukah Party!

Join us, on Sunday 5th December at 3pm, and let your favourite chanukiah take pride of place at your table.

There is no charge for members and immediate family, but a donation box will be available should you wish to help defray costs.

For guests, a modest charge of £3.00 for adults and £1.00 for children will be made.

We need to know how many are coming along, so please call the Synagogue number or email godfrey_fischer@btinternet.com no later than Tuesday 30th November.



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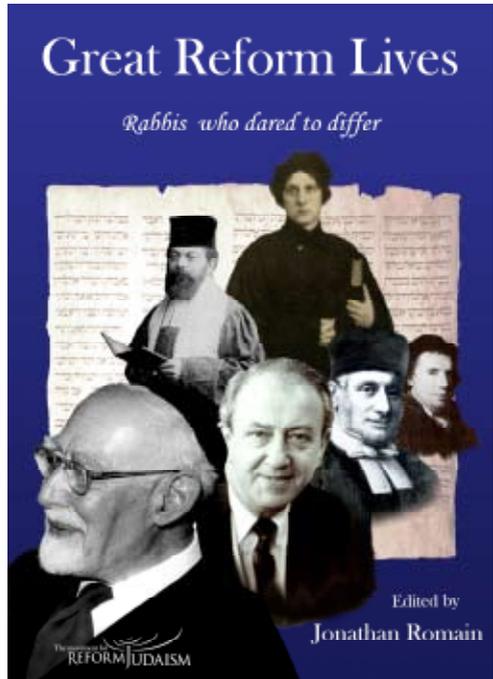
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NEW BOOK !

*Great Reform Lives :
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special offer for members of Thanet

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Why did it start that year and why in Germany? What were the battles it had to face? How did it change over time? What was the special contribution of British Reform? What do recent trends tell us of its future?

Great Reform Lives traces the lives of the key figures from the very beginnings till today - including the first ever female rabbi, Regina Jonas, who was murdered in Auschwitz – culminating with recent rabbinic luminaries such as Hugo Gryn.

The book is reduced from £9.99 to £5.00 for members of Reform synagogues. Send the form below to Sylvia Morris, The Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London, N3 2SY

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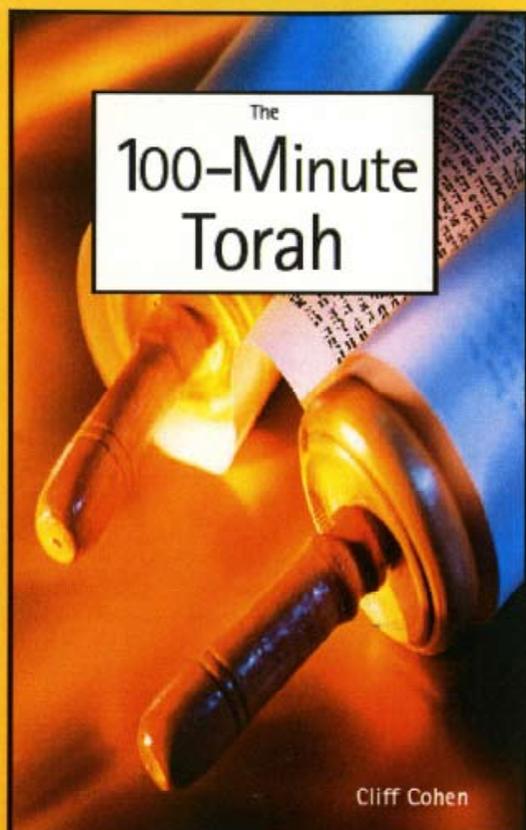
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Look what Rabbi Cliff has done now!



In Judaism, revelation is a process, constant and ongoing, which leads to our literature being vast. Consequently Cliff Cohen's ingenious abridging and summarising of Jewish teaching is much to be welcomed.

The 100-Minute Torah opens up Jewish scriptures to non-Jews and Jews alike. It acknowledges the historical content of the Hebrew Bible without mistaking it for a history book and without being condescending.

Yet this little book can be read in less time than it takes to watch a feature film or take the train from London to Birmingham.

Rabbi Julia Neuberger

Author - Cliff Cohen

Illustrators - Ruth Silverstone
and Thomas Hicks

Size - 110 x 174mm

Format - Paperback

Pages - 112

Illustrations - 11

Text Format - Black and White

Retail Price - £5.00

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Ask the Rabbi: Jewish Godparents?

Written by Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Romain Monday, 25 October 2010

Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Romain responds to the question: I am pregnant and I want to appoint godparents for the child. Is this something that is done or can be done in Judaism ?

Godparents tend to be associated with church baptisms and so the term is often assumed to be Christian. Yet it has long been traditional for there to be kvatter at a circumcision. He is the person who goes to fetch the baby from the mother (assuming she is in a different room to that in which the circumcision takes place) and brings the child into the room and then hands him to the sandek (the person who holds the baby during the ceremony).

The usual translation of kvatter is godparent. On the one hand, this shows that it is part of Jewish life; on the other hand, being a Yiddish term, it means it comes from the Middle Ages rather than being a biblical or rabbinic institution. It is possible that the term kvatter may even have been imitated or borrowed from the Christian tradition of godparents during the Middle Ages when Jews lived alongside Christian neighbours (ghettos did not arise till 1516, although there were voluntary Jewish quarters before then). But whatever their origins, a kvatter or godparent has been part of Jewish life for some centuries.

As well as choosing whom to ask to be the godparents, you also need to be clear with them what role you are expecting them to fulfil. Is it a purely honorific title and a way of showing them how much you value them, or are there expectations attached ? The kvatter was expected to provide a tallit and tefillin for the boy's barmitzvah. Some godparents are asked to be guardians if anything untoward was to happen to the child's parents. Others are expected to take an interest in the child's religious direction or hobbies. Once their role is settled, you should invite them to the brit milah and or synagogue blessing for your child and get them involved with him or her right from the beginning.



And on that very subject:

Mazel Tov to Cedric and Lily Rebeck, who became Grandparents to Oliver on 30th September.

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The target is ambitious. WJR wants to send 10,000 winter hats, warm scarves and gloves to those in need across the former Soviet Union before the temperatures plummet to lows of -20 degrees.



Thanks to national kind donations so far, they are now on their way to the target. But they need much, much more. Please rummage through your wardrobes and drawers to find any new or nearly new hats, scarves and gloves. Bag up your items and take them to the

Thanet & District Reform Synagogue or send a donation to the synagogue and we'll buy the hats, scarves or gloves for you.

Tip - The Pound Shop, 99p Store and similar have hats, gloves and scarves!



Are baby hedgehogs an endangered species?

This is nothing to do with the problems of *shechitah* or another one of the 'Is it kosher?' items.

If you find a lost baby hedgehog anywhere please place it somewhere safe and call Dr Sandra Betts on 01843 844532. She will collect it and see that it's given a life-saving lungworm injection and fed through the winter. The babies get disorientated and will not survive without your *mitzvah*.

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- ✧ If you haven't yet booked now is the time to have a look at the latest news on the Limmud website.

There will be plenty of musical treats – singer and composer of many new liturgical melodies since the 1970s, Debbie Friedman and conductor and composer, Stephen Glass. Amongst the many Jewish scholars are Shlomo Riskin, the internationally renowned educator and modern Orthodox rabbi, author and promoter of women's rights in the Jewish world. Politics are represented (amongst others) by Yehuda Mirsky, senior editor of Jewish Ideas Daily.com and a fellow at the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute in Jerusalem and David Newman, editor of the International Journal of Geopolitics

This is but a small example of what's on offer. For more information – www.limmud.org



Fair Do's - We're Fairtrade!

Following our decision to become a Fairtrade place of worship under the auspices of the Thanet Fairtrade Initiative, we will be presented with the Fairtrade Pledge to show their appreciation for our support of the Thanet campaign.

For the past five years we have been represented at the annual Thanet World Food Day at the Winter Gardens, Margate, and wherever possible, we have purchased Fair Trade supplies for the synagogue kitchen.

The presentation by Tammy Stewart-Jones, founder of the Thanet Fairtrade Initiative, will take place during Fairtrade Fortnight in March and all are welcome. Once the day is confirmed everyone will be sent an invitation.

Find out more on www.thanetfairtradeinitiative.org.uk.

Rabbi Dr. Tony Bayfield to Step Down in January 2011

*From the Reform Judaism Website,
Friday, 29 October 2010*

Following 15 years as Head of the Reform Movement, Rabbi Tony Bayfield has decided to step down at the beginning of January 2011. This is prior to his planned retirement at the end June because, in his words, "The handover has gone smoothly and I'm ready and excited to get on with the next phase of my life."

The intention is for Rabbi Bayfield to continue his relationship with the Reform Movement as its President, in a voluntary capacity, with Sir Sigmund Sternberg becoming its Life President.

As President, Rabbi Bayfield will continue to represent the Reform Movement at appropriate community-wide events, such as the Cenotaph, Holocaust Memorial Day and the lighting of the Chanukah candles at 10 Downing Street. He will also continue his position as co-President of the Council for Christians and Jews, using that as a platform to pursue the Reform Movement's commitment to interfaith work. To this end, Rabbi Bayfield is also co-editing a book which will serve as a blueprint for the relationship between the three Abrahamic faiths. He will remain a key spokesperson

for the Reform Movement on interfaith issues and play a leading role on the theology of interfaith relations.

Rabbi Bayfield plans to increase his writing and publishing after he steps down as Head of Movement. Initial writing projects include articulating a personal theology of Reform Judaism; a radical Reform Jewish perspective on the theological relationship between Judaism, Christianity and Islam; and an anthology of sermons over the last ten years that are relevant to the theology and philosophy of Reform Judaism. Following the publication of these books, the Movement will help to distribute and promote them, and invite the leadership of our communities to consider their impact on future policy and strategy.

Rabbi Bayfield's contribution to bringing the Reform Judaism into the mainstream of British Jewry cannot be overstated. In the words of Movement Chairman, Stephen Moss, "The Reform Movement in the UK has made tremendous strides thanks to the vision, commitment and leadership of Rabbi Bayfield. We are so pleased that he will continue to make a significant contribution to shaping Reform Judaism as our President. We look forward to creating an appropriate opportunity in early 2011 for the community to celebrate Rabbi Bayfield's achievements."



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