

ETZ CHAIM

The movement for
REFORM JUDAISM

The Newsletter for the Thanet & District Reform Synagogue

Chanukah Edition

After taking a breath following a busy High Holy Day period, Etz Chaim is back just as Chanukah starts. Our community remains a busy one with plenty of events and services on the horizon. Keep an eye on the calendar for what is coming up. This issue has a wide variety of articles that show why we are a vibrant community. As always thank you for everyone's input.

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(Photo by Gil Dekel. <http://www.poeticmind.co.uk>)

Shabbat



Join us for Shabbat. The atmosphere is relaxed with familiar prayers using traditional and modern melodies. We use both Hebrew and English and the Hebrew is also transliterated. Kiddush and refreshments follow each service.

There couldn't be a better way to connect with your Jewish heritage - no strings attached! (However, phone the synagogue beforehand in case of a change of times.)

You can contact warden@tdrs.org.uk or 01843 851164 for further information

Services and Festivals Calendar

Shabbat services are held every Friday at 7.30pm and the first and third Saturday of the month at 10.30am and are not, therefore, listed below unless there is a variation such as Torah Breakfasts, Shabbat Suppers, etc.

Our Shabbat services on the Friday evenings of 25th December and 1st January and on Saturday morning of 2nd January will be held at the usual times of 7.30pm and 10.30am, respectively

2015-6/5776

DECEMBER 2015

Sat 5 Dec, 23 Kislev
Torah Breakfast 9.15am, Service 11am Service,

Sun 6 Dec, 24 Kislev
Erev Chanukah - first candle (No Service)

Sun 13 Dec, 1 Tevet 3pm
Chanukah Party - eighth candle

JANUARY 2016

Sun 24 Jan, 14 Shevat, 3pm
Erev Tu Bish'vat
Our annual Tu Bish'vat Seder for the New Year for Trees will be held, as usual, in the synagogue

Wed 27 Jan, 17 Shevat, 11.30am
National Holocaust Memorial Day service
Albion Gardens, Ramsgate

Sat 30 Jan, 20 Shevat, 3.30pm
Mincha service

FEBRUARY 2016

Sat 6 Feb, 27 Shevat
Torah Breakfast 9.15am Service 11am

Fri 26 Feb, 17 Adar I 5776
Shabbat Supper, 6.00pm for 6.15pm followed by a shorter service at 8pm

MARCH 2016

Wed 23 Mar, 13 Adar II, 7pm
Erev Purim service and Masquerade

Thu 24 Mar, 14 Adar II, 10am
Purim service

APRIL 2016

Fri 22 Apr, 14 Nisan
Seder

Sat 23 Apr, 15 Nisan, 10am
First day Pesach Shabbat service

MAY 2016

Wed 4 May, 26 Nisan, 7pm
Erev Yom Hashoah service

Sat 7 May, 29 Nisan
Torah Breakfast, 9.15am Service, 11am

Wed 11 May, 3 Iyar, 7pm
Yom Hazikaron/ Erev Yom Ha'atzma'ut
Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day service
and celebration

JUNE 2016

Sat 11 June, 5 Sivan, 7pm
Erev Shavuot service

Sun 12 Jun, 6 Sivan, 10am
Shavuot service

JULY 2016

Fri 8 Jul, 2 Tammuz
Shabbat Supper, 6.00pm for
6.15pm followed by a shorter
service at 8pm

Sat 30 Jul, 24 Tammuz, 3.30pm
Mincha service



Havdallah Club

Havdallah Club looks forward to welcoming some new children as Chanucah approaches. We will be exploring festive themes through our usual arts and crafts, discussion and writing.

Wishing everyone Chanucah Sameach.

Hélène

Newsletter

If you have anything you would like to put into the newsletter please contact Tim Spurrier at:

Post - c/o 293a Margate Road, Ramsgate CT12 6TE
Telephone - 01843 851164

Email - newsletter@tdrs.org.uk

The editor reserves the right to edit, refuse, or postpone any material submitted for publication. The articles, letters, advertising, and content do not necessarily reflect the views of the TDRS or the Movement for Reform Judaism.

Notes from the Editor

Another busy few months for the community and this is reflected in some great pieces sent in to the newsletter. Thank to all who have taken the time and contributed.

This edition of the newsletter has a real breadth of articles and thoughts that should have something for everyone. Of course, if you have any suggestions that could improve our community newsletter please feel free to drop us a note. Contact details are on page 3.

One of the stresses of being the newsletter editor at this time of year is dealing with the myriad of spelling of Chanukah, Hanukkah etc etc. Hopefully they have all been standardised to Chanukah but as with all things Jewish there's no right answer and it gives us something to argue about.

Keep the great articles coming in because without them we don't have a newsletter.

Tim Spurrier

A message from Rabbi Cliff Cohen

December 6th, the first day of Chanukah this year, has a long connection with issues of human and religious freedom. On December 6th 1885 the 13th Amendment was passed in the US, abolishing slavery and making it illegal. In 1990, Iraq released 2000 foreign hostages on December 6th. In 1917 on December 6th, Finland became independent from Russia, and on the same date in 1921 the Irish Free State was born.

But it was not all good news. On December 6th 1987, on the first day of Russian president Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Washington, 200,000 protesters called on the Soviets to allow Jewish emigration from Russia and for an end to Soviet oppression of Jewish dissidents and critics of the Soviet government. In a letter that was read to appease the protesters, President Reagan stated that he would "not be satisfied with less" than the "release of all refuseniks [jailed dissidents] and for complete freedom of religious and cultural expression." A demonstration set to coincide with the protests in Washington was roughly disrupted by Soviet plainclothes police in Moscow. The few dozen protesters had their signs and banners seized and destroyed and some were physically assaulted.

Despite the protests and Reagan's rhetoric, the issue of Soviet human rights abuses played almost no role at the summit. The Soviets insisted that the protesters be ignored and U.S. officials, anxious to get an arms control agreement out of the summit, essentially complied with the Russian requests. A major arms agreement was, in fact, signed during the meeting.

On December 6th 1992 Hindu extremists in India destroyed a mosque, leading to violence between Hindus and Muslims in which an estimated 2000 people lost their lives. And in Jerusalem, on December 6th 1983, a bomb planted on a bus exploded killing six Israelis and wounding 44. The

reprisals led to the deaths of 31 Palestinians and a further 12 Israelis.

Are there lessons in all this? One answer is that the Jewish commemoration of Chanucah, while extolling the Maccabees for their actions, has generally not encouraged Jews to follow their example. In Jewish teaching the battle against oppression and slavery is to be won not on the battlefield but in the classroom, and Chanucah is a source not of violence but of education. On Chanucah we commit ourselves to the teachings of our scripture, that we should love the stranger as ourselves and have one law for the home born and for the stranger among us. Our task is to communicate that message effectively, and of course that includes teaching by example. My views on that are well-known by now.

On December 6th 1774 Austria became the first nation in the world to introduce state-funded compulsory education - though Jewish communities without statehood had been centuries ahead of that. And on December 6th 1877 Thomas Edison demonstrated his new invention, the gramophone, with a recording of his own voice saying "Mary had a little lamb", thus changing for ever the technology of communication. Education and communication are the weapons that will ultimately bring the message of Chanucah to fruition. May we all commit ourselves anew to that holy task.

MRJ Movement Updates

For the latest news and events from the Movement for Reform Judaism and Reform communities across the country, sign up for the MRJ Movement Update.

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Building Bridges

Elliot Fox

On Sunday the 18th October 2015 myself and three other people from my year 11 class at Chatham and Clarendon Grammar School presented work we had done from the last 6 months titled 'Building Bridges' for the European Day of Jewish Culture. In the

group we had four different faiths, myself as a Jew, Conor Gray, a Buddhist, Josh Attwell, a Christian and George Nesbit a Jehovah's witness.

As with every other year, an advertisement was put up to publicise our presentation, but unlike other years this one was picked up by a local radio station meaning that on the morning of the day my Dad and I went to the BBC Radio Kent studio in Tunbridge Wells to advertise this event. Between 6:30 and 7:50 am we made up a panel on 'Growing up in a Multi-Faith Britain' with two vicars, and then until 8:00 am Conor Gray joined the discussion to talk solely about the event.

Four themes were discussed during the day, with a poem by Rabindranath Tagore about oneness to introduce it, with each one being represented by a picture and explained to the visitors by us.

Oneness is the perfect expansion

Of our inner reality.

Let our heart's oneness only increase

To make us feel

That we belong to a universal world family,

And this world family

Is a fulfilled Dream of G-d.

We chose this poem as we thought that it provided a poignant message that one day all division will be cast away from the earth and we will become a 'universal world family' which I think is the next step from merely building bridges between different cultures. There is an idea which says that one day a major event will unite us, something that has been replicated in films such as Independence Day. Whilst I am certainly not saying that there will be an alien invasion, there is a myriad of other ways it could happen such as antibiotic resistance or the rise of Isis, and therefore I think this poem does resonate in today's society. Throughout the day the Nazi holocaust and Isis were things that were discussed a lot which shows how human righteousness can spring out of oppression.

Our first theme was multiculturalism, symbolised by a bridge (of righteousness) held up by pillars with names of different religions on them (including atheism). Take one away, and the bridge would be weakened and may even fall into the sea of anarchy, but keep them then the bridge will be strong in its diversity. As humans we often like to scapegoat as it keeps us blameless. Examples include Russian pogroms and the Nazi

holocaust. Our message was by casting away this xenophobia we make ourselves stronger.

Next, we had a board on similarities, and this was shown by an old Hindu tale which suggests that G-d may be like an elephant. The idea is that we are blind men, and can only feel different parts of the elephant. One may feel the tail and conclude that he is a snake, and one may feel the legs and conclude it is a tree. Neither is completely wrong, but it is only by working together that we can find the true nature of G-d. This can also apply to non-religious people as the elephant could just signify good morals.

Our next theme was contradiction, and how it is present in the Bible, Qur'an and other holy books, and that in order to glean the true meaning you need context. The image we chose was a 100% literal Bible fighting another one, because without interpretation you will get contradiction. For the Bible we chose the quote from Exodus "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" and Matthew "forgive your neighbour 7 x 70 times." At first sight these seem to contradict each other, but actually the former was to stop people taking more than had been taken from them, and the latter was just an extension of that so actually they have the same sentiment. It is the role of the journalist to take quotes in isolation, and by doing so they can make someone say almost anything. In Islam, infrequent lone violent suras fuel fundamentalism when actually the Qur'an is a book of peace, and that is why you need to accept contradiction and add interpretation.

Our final message was partnership, which is what we thought epitomised building bridges the most. It incorporates oneness, diversity and similarities to create something special. The picture we went for was an Arsenal and Tottenham fan embracing, which shows how different people can co-operate. One has tarmac, and one has pillars, and without each other they are useless, but together they can build a bridge. This is something that can be seen throughout history, for example the alliance between the communist USSR and the capitalist USA to stop the common Nazi enemy, regardless of the latter atrocities committed by the former. A better example could be that in 1943, German forces occupied Bosnia and continued their exterminating of Jews. The non-Jewish Hardaga family sheltered the Jewish Kavilio family at great personal risk. 50 years later, the Kavilios saved the Hardagas in the Bosnian civil war which shows the value in different people helping each other regardless of culture or religion.

Furthermore, to demonstrate this we had playing an orchestra made up of musicians from Palestine and Israel which we thought really captured the spirit of building bridges in action.



Congratulations from Tom and Rivka Dodds

Tom and Rivka would like to congratulate 3 of their grandchildren. Phoebe for studying Liberal Arts at the University of Amsterdam and Rosanna for studying English, German and Italian at Cardiff University., Abigail has completed her GCSEs and got 10 A* and one distinction. Congratulations to you all.

BBC Question Time

Ian Smiler

In October I took part in the BBC television programme 'Question Time' coming from the very splendid Dover town hall. In this article I'm going to discuss my experience as a participant, not the topics that were debated.

Anyone who watches the programme will know that in the course of the evening the host David Dimbleby will announce the upcoming places set to host future recordings. Two weeks prior the town of Dover was announced, together with how to apply to be in the audience. I completed the form on the BBC website - I was asked details questions about myself, gender, age band, ethnicity and how I voted at the last election and then to submit two questions I might like to ask, to be based on current events, something short snappy and provocative to stimulate interesting debate for the viewers to watch. I gave consideration on whether I wanted to be just an audience member or to go for a highly charged question which might get me a better chance to be selected on the day. It was made clear that I would not hear from them until the week in question, with this being my 3rd or 4th attempt I crossed fingers and carried on reading the news online.

Roll forwards to Wednesday lunchtime and I received a call from the organisers, again they asked me about how I voted (they try to balance numbers from across the political spectrum), about my questions and whether I was still free to attend. I was instructed to re-send my first question by email that evening and to be at Dover town hall for 6pm on Thursday evening. At this moment I realised I had been accepted and a sense of both excitement and foreboding came across me. I also realised it was admit one only, and unfortunately Barbara could not join me.



Thursday I left work early and soon found myself with other audience members sheltering from the rain in the town hall porch. Finally we were let in, through security and into a magnificent reception room, with light refreshments and the ITV news on the tele! This was a good opportunity to network, meet other audience members all with interesting concerns and questions for discussion. Also, we were asked to write our second question onto a postcard.

As we waited David Dimbleby came out to welcome us, discuss how the evening would proceed, who was on the panel, and answer any questions. I asked if we would meet the panel after the recording had finished, and was told that it depended on the panel on the day. At this stage no-one knew who would be asking the questions, or on what topics.

Indeed, not even the panel would know until the moment of asking. Interestingly, Question Time is recorded in one take, without any editing.

Soon we took our places in the studio and 5 audience members were invited to sit in the panel seats to participate in a practice session as a sound check and warm up for the audience. I volunteered but unfortunately was not picked. However I did get to participate in the debate. After this the floor manager announced the names of the persons selected to ask the questions. This was done in random order, and the topics still were not revealed. I had mixed emotions when my name was called, my participation was guaranteed, and not just as a member of the audience. The chosen few were taken back to the first hall and were each handed a slip of paper with our own question, for me it was the first question I had emailed in two weeks prior. We were told the selected questions were the most popular topics from the audience on that day and instructed not to ask a different question!

18 minutes into the programme I was invited to ask my question, and then the panel took turns in responding, together with other audience members. As part of the debate there was an explosive argument between Simon Schama and Rod Liddle - I had certainly achieved the



organiser's aim of stimulating lively debate! After 20 minutes David Dimbleby brought the debate on my question to close, I was invited to give a brief summary then the next question was asked. After the recording had finished I had a brief opportunity to speak with David Dimbleby, but unfortunately did not get to speak with any of the panel members.

So, why did I participate, and why the chosen subject? I've been in TV audiences before, seen myself

on TV before, yet this was different. Initially it was intended to be just an evening's entertainment, taking advantage of an opportunity that presented itself. True, the programme makers wanted questions to host a lively debate however this could have achieved with my other question, about the NHS. For us as Jews, supporting refugees is personal. I was very pleased that Simon Schama mentioned the point that our ancestors came to the UK as refugees to flee pogroms and other persecutions in Eastern Europe. At the 1938 Evian Conference the Jews of Europe were let down, no-one offered them refuge from the Nazis and we know what happened. Never again for us, or for anyone else either. For the record, my question was...

"How to best serve the peoples gathered at Calais so that genuine refugees are identified and given necessary refuge whilst economic migrants are sent back home".

Porchlight - One Week Without

TDRS has a strong connection with Porchlight, a charity that supports the needs of homeless people and they have asked for our help.

Over the past three years Porchlight have seen a huge increase in the number of people needing their help. For instance the number of rough sleepers has doubled in this period. Over the same period they have had funding from both local and national government cut, which has meant that the team that supports rough sleepers has been more than halved.

Even with these cuts, 91% of people who received intensive support from the service were housed. With the help of local communities they are trying to compensate the loss of funds.

They have recently secured a lottery grant, which has helped them safeguard their helpline for the next 4 years. Last year they received nearly 6,500 calls and so we can see that this is a service that is very much in demand.

(continued on page 11)

My Visit to Poland

Janine Chilley

After returning from Poland I would very much like to share all my positive experiences

The Jewish community in Krakow are slowly rebuilding after the nearly total barbaric slaughter by the Nazis.

My friend and I stayed in the Jewish quarter, which has synagogues Kupa and Progressive. An amazing Jewish community centre funded by Prince Charles and a plaque which gives thanks to him is outside on the exterior wall

My Great Grandparents, Borkosovlky, were from Kolin a small village near Warsaw. Sadly due to work commitments I was not able to extend my visit. However I visited Oscar Schindler's factory. The tour made me feel so moved it seemed so near. Back in UK all I ever did was read about it.

A walking tour of the town of Krakow proved both moving and fascinating.

Geostapo head quarters, the ghetto and the filming of Schindler's List the epic film I stood at various locations of the film.

Although I felt so much emotion, I am so pleased for my family through my tree or the ones I know of escaped to the USA.

I hope to return at the end of June where a Jewish festival takes place after the warm heart felt welcome I received at the Jewish community centre. I am looking forward to returning and helping out.

So pleased to share my journey with you.

Hunt for Hechser

Godfrey Fischer

It's a great game, finding where the kosher food is located in Sainsbury's Westwood Cross. Non-perishable stuff is easy - the clue is in the sign just above the shelves saying 'kosher'! For those in the know, semi-perishable food is also easy to find (that is, until the shelves go through the regular supermarket reorganisation ploy to encourage shoppers to take a new route) because they are all together in the chiller section in aisle 24. But Jewish visitors may wonder why there is no kosher sign to make it easy.

It's all a question of psychological give and take. This branch of Sainsbury's has stocked kosher food since it was first opened and is the only supermarket in East Kent to do so. And through thick and thin they have kept the faith - if you'll pardon the pun. However, we have to face the fact that we are a small community and, of necessity, the kosher stocks cannot be the size of those in the larger Jewish conurbations.

One way to ensure a better turnover of semi-perishable foods is to make it interesting to the more adventurous shopper. 'World Foods' is a big market these days. By careful location and without the kosher sign above, the chopped liver, viennas, wurst, houmous and more are now being purchased by a wider public. And, if this is the price of inconvenience we have to pay to keep kosher foods on the shelves, then I can cope with that.

The staff are pretty good with helping Jewish customers but I rather enjoyed a slip-up during Rosh Hashanah. Above one of the chiller cabinets was the sign *Shana Tova, a happy new year to our Jewish customers*'. The shelves contained a selection of kosher meats, poultry and Tivall veggie items. On the bottom shelf was an interesting selection of Indian foods, some marked 'halal'. How come, I thought. And a closer look showed that the name of the company supplying the said foods was '*Shana* ' *Creators of the finest South Asian frozen foods*', based in Wembley!

(continued from page 10)

Starting on 24th January (Homeless Sunday) faith groups across Kent are being asked to support a new fundraising initiative called **One Week Without**.

The initiative asks people to put themselves in the shoes of homeless people by going without a home comfort for a week. This may mean going without a bed, hot showers or cooked food. Those taking part can make donations or be sponsored.

Cliff and H el ene have put themselves forward as representatives of our community and in doing so will be going without hot meals for a week.

To show our support we would ask members of a community, their family and friends to kindly sponsor Cliff and H el ene.

As a community we have always shown our generosity with this charity and this is a great way to show support and help fund a much needed service

Please contact the synagogue for details of the sponsorship.

Ostrava

Heinz Vogel

A large audience foregathered on Saturday 31st October to welcome David Lawson from the Kingston upon Thames united synagogue who had

come to relate to us the story of Ostrava and its Jews: The Destruction and Recreation as a virtual community. How did he, born a Mancunian, become an authority on this subject?

David's story began more than 10 years ago, sometime after the synagogue received their Czech *sefer torah*. No one at the synagogue seemed to know where in Czechoslovakia it came from, what it was like, what the people were like and what happened to them?

Thus a classic archival project was born. Initial reference to numerous books and www websites soon provided the basic facts that Ostrava is some 250 miles due east of Prague, The Ostrava region developed from a small market town in 1750 (population ca 3000) to an economic powerhouse (225,000) by 1930. This growth was triggered by the discovery of coal in the area which led to the classical industrial revolution of the 18th century, with immigration from the wider surrounding agricultural area in that part of the Empire feeding this. Significantly, by mid-19th century, the Rothschilds came to own the main coal mines, iron and steel works.

Thus the Jewish population increased from circa 10 Jews in 1750 to more than 10,000 by the 1930s. Initially the Jews being involved in brewing, distilling and inn-keeping business. An early brewer/distiller (and immigrant) was Šimon Frankl, who was very *frum* and set up a *shtiebl* in the brewery.

With their initial searches on the internet they found some survivors and interviewed them, which is where I come in. Their search for 'Ostrava' brought David to the memoirs on my website, little realising that I was living in Weybridge, just eight miles from the synagogue and had been, born in Moravská Ostrava, arriving in England in June 1939 with my parents as a refugee having escaped after the Nazi invasion. Furthermore, I was old enough to remember the town and life there and still had a knowledge of the Czech language.

The circle of Ostrava survivors grew and many were soon interviewed in various parts of this country. Gradually, through these contacts word grew about the Kingston Ostrava group and new members were also recruited from abroad, particularly Israel and the USA. By such word of mouth Pepek of an Ostravak in Vienna, introduced David to his brother Michal and sister-in-law Libuše, who was, and still is a very keen genealogist, keen on Jewish history and claims to

have the largest data base of the Jews of Ostrava. Thus, she has been able to produce detailed information and/or family trees for the survivors and their relatives.

David then proceeded to relate to us the stories of these survivors, and how some of these had been re-united through the Ostrava group. One example of such a survivor was Bertie Goldberg who escaped to England with two brothers and left all his family behind to be murdered. He married and had children and his new family now numbers 112. He will shortly be celebrating his 96th birthday.

This project has grown to where it now is an archive in its own right, so it has now been delegated to the Jewish Museum in Prague (JMP) where it is conserved together with all the artefacts, documents and photographs amassed. All this is now in their database and can be accessed via JMP website.

So the Ostrava network grew, electronically, and it now contains 280 names of Ostravaks worldwide as well as over 100 names of non-Ostravaks who are interested in the Project.

David made the point that Kingston Synagogue has thus created a community in virtual reality. Not only that, however, they have also created a community in real life - arranged annual meetings of Ostravaks where survivors come to talk about the old times and the younger generations come to hear what it was like in the old country. Then, of course, there has been a regular Newsletter since 2006 (the latest issue of which is number 41), full of news of Ostravaks and associated events. Now, with some 10 years of 'retirement' behind him, he is engaged in an archivist's activity - writing a book on the History of Ostrava and its Jewish Community!

David's presentation, with numerous old photographs from the survivors' personal records was much appreciated by all present who will have gone home with much food for thought.



(Map from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>)

Rosh Hashanah in Rhodes

Jon Leigh

Because of the dates of Rosh Hashanah this year and other commitments, Anne and I were only able to go away for the second two weeks of September, which as you will know included Rosh Hashanah. This would be the first time

that I had 'missed' attending an Erev Rosh Hashanah service for as long as I can remember. I then researched whether there was a synagogue on the island of Rhodes, for previously when visiting other Greek islands, I had found old, sometimes unused, synagogues. I then found out that the Kahal Kadosh Shalom synagogue was the oldest in Greece and although they did not have regular services, they did have services for the High Holy Days.

I then contacted, Carmen Cohen, the person who administers the synagogue, and asked if it were possible to attend any of the services and if so, how could I arrange to attend. Her reply was that they would be delighted to see us and we would be most welcome.

At this point perhaps I should give you a little background about the Kahal Kadosh Shalom Synagogue. It is the oldest synagogue in Greece having been built in or about 1577 and follows Orthodox Sephardic traditions. The history of Jews in Greece is multifaceted but the majority of Jews are descended from those who fled the Spanish inquisition and found sanctuary in Greece. The population in Rhodes prospered and in the old town there was a thriving Jewish Quarter, a Jewish population of about 4000 and six synagogues.

Prior to the last war, many Jews had already left Rhodes because of the anti-Jewish legislation passed by the Italians, who at the time controlled Rhodes. Then in 1944, the Germans occupied the island. They deported the majority of the remaining Jewish population to Aushwitz where all but about 150 were killed. Some Jews remained on the island during the occupation and the Sefer Torah were saved due to the help of the leading Muslim leader. For more information about the Synagogue visit www.RhodesJewishMuseum.org, which has much more information, including a virtual tour.



(Inside the Synagogue in Rhodes)

Returning to the Erev Rosh Hashanah service, there was a little concern that the chazzan, who was flying in from Israel, would not arrive in time and also that there would be insufficient men to form a minyan, for as this is an orthodox synagogue, there must be ten men for a service to take place. However, as 7.00pm approached a number of people appeared, many from the USA but also some Australians, French, South Africans and some Brits. As the time

for the service arrived and so had the chazzan. I had thought that the service may be difficult to follow, expecting a prayer book in Hebrew and Greek. I was surprised for the Machzor was in Hebrew and English, as the synagogue has a strong connection with The Congregation Ezra Bessaroth Sephardic community in Seattle, America and it is their Machzor, The Machzor for Rosh Hashana, according to the Rhodes Tradition, that is used. They also use the Ezra Bessaroth Yom Kippur Machzor.

The service started and again I realised that although Sephardic music and the lingua franca, Ladino, is totally different from the Ashkenazi background that I am familiar with, the service followed the same pattern as in our synagogue. Although there is no choir, the service is led by the chazzan and the congregants follow as well as they can.

One of the little touches that I liked was that the chazzan asked all the women present to assist in the lighting of the candles. In the synagogue the men were sitting on one side and the women on the other. They had previously sat upstairs but following the refurbishment of the synagogue, the upstairs space is now used as a communal area and where we went for Kiddush, but more of this later. All the women were asked to approach the front left side of the synagogue and the Festival Candles were lit. Not just two as we might have but almost one for every woman present.

In its form, the services was very similar to ours in Thanet, the same prayers, in almost the same order but with the orthodox custom of inserting the Chatsi Kaddish at the end of each 'section' of the service. Personally, I like this, for whilst we traditionally associate the Kaddish with mourners and death, it is a prayer of rejoicing and the inclusion of the Chatsi Kaddish to mark the end of a particular section of the service re-enforces our celebration of God's greatness.

Following the end of the service, we all moved to the area outside the synagogue, where sweet cakes were distributed and then we were all invited to celebrate kiddush. This was in the upstairs area and here not only were there traditions typical of the Sephardic tradition but also some particular to Rhodes. The blessing over wine was as we know it, as was the blessing over bread but then, even the chazzan was taken by surprise for it is the Rhodians' Rosh Hashanah tradition that instead of sprinkling salt over the bread, honey was drizzled over it for the Rhodians feel that there should be only sweetness on Rosh Hashanah. Then as



(Six sided memorial in Jewish Martyrs Square, Rhodes)

part of kiddush, in a ceremony called Yahi Ratzon, (May it be God's will) there are a series of blessings over and then eating:

Apple and Honey, Dates, Leeks, Squash, Black-Eyed Beans, Beetroot, Pomegranate seeds and the meat from a cow cheek and fish head.

Following the Kiddush, there was also a meal prepared for anyone who might wish to remain and eat with them. Unfortunately, we could not stay and enjoy this part of the celebration, for that what is was, and neither were we able to attend for either the service the following morning or the second evening and morning services, too, for as they follow the tradition followed by orthodox Jews the world over, two days are observed for Rosh Hashanah.

Around the corner from the Synagogue is Memorial Square, in the centre of which is a black, six-sided memorial commemorating the Jews of Rhodes who were deported and subsequently killed by the Nazis. This ties in with the memorial within the synagogue museum which lists all those individuals who perished. The museum also contains many artefacts and other interesting items from the Jewish Rhodian past.

If you go to Rhodes, then you must visit this synagogue and museum. You may not be fortunate enough to participate in a service and thus complete another link in the chain of Jewish history but you will enable the story of Greek Jews to continue and maintain the links that all Jews, from every background or tradition have in common.



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THE LATE MR. JONAS LEVY, J.P.

Sent to us by Benedict Kelly and originally printed in the Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald, 21st July 1894, the

obituary for Jonas Levy, who is buried in Ramsgate Jewish Cemetery, is notable for its length.

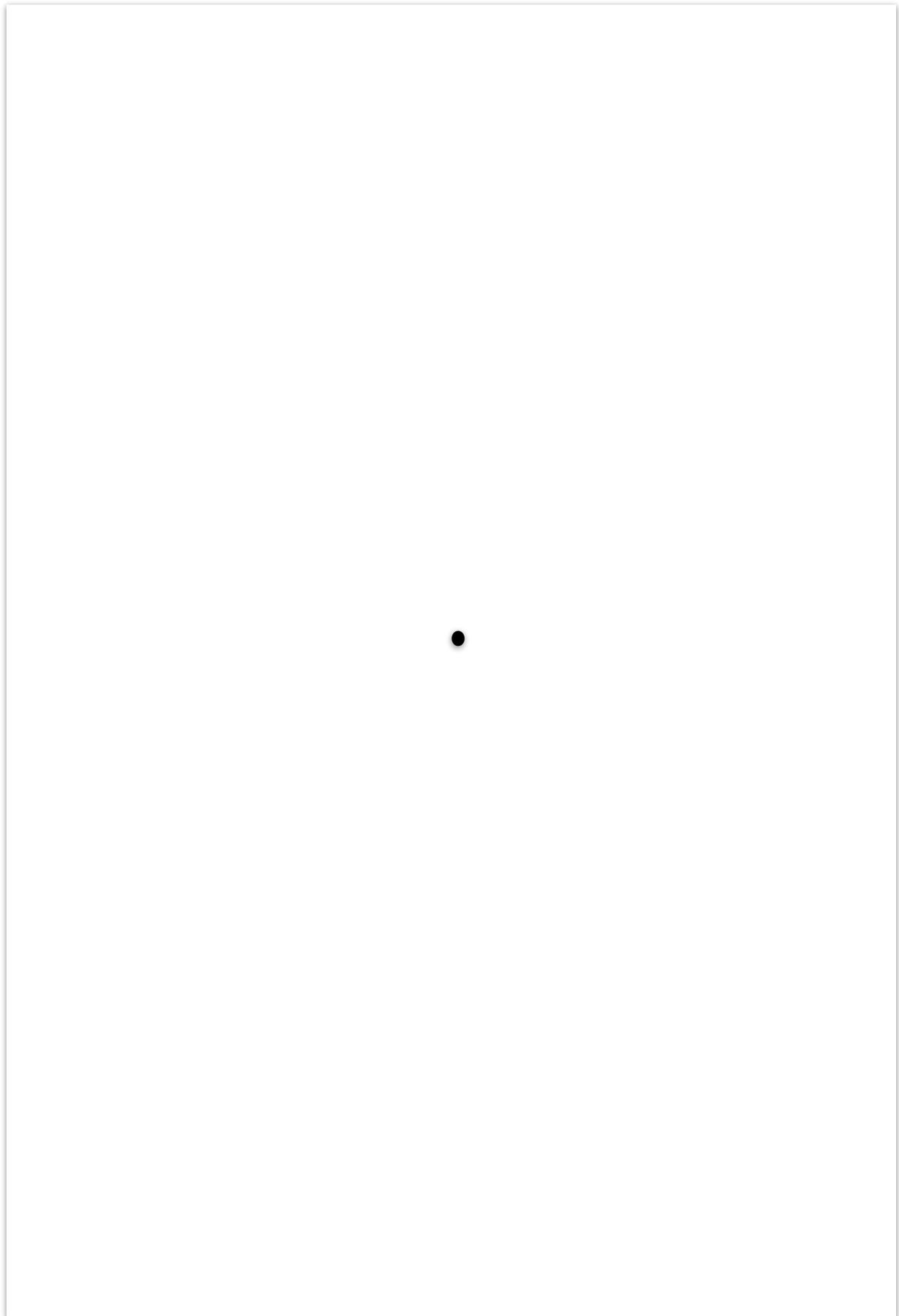
This venerable gentleman, whose death at the age of eighty-three we recorded last Thursday, was a justice of the peace for Kent and for the Cinque Ports. For many years he was a most regular attendant on the bench at the East Kent Quarter Sessions. He was the owner of Kingsgate Castle, near Broadstairs, where he passed away, the cause of death being senile decay. As a magistrate Mr. Levy always displayed marked ability in his treatment of cases coming before him, his early training as a barrister making his services in this connection of great value. The deceased was connected with several important undertakings, including the Crystal Palace Company, of which he was chairman, while he was also chairman of the Great Western and deputy-chairman of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Companies. Mr. Levy was greatly esteemed by a large circle of friends and acquaintances and was a generous supporter of all movements for the public good. Politically Mr. Levy was a Liberal, but when Mr. Gladstone came out as a Home Ruler he joined the ranks of the Liberal Unionists.

Kingsgate Castle, which it is stated the late Mr. Levy acquired at an almost nominal price, is a turreted building erected on the summit of a bold cliff, the district constituting the most eastern part of England. Kingsgate derives its name from a passage cut, through the cliffs to the seashore. The portal was formerly known as Bartholomew's Gate, and derived its present name through King Charles the Second having landed there in 1683.

In the course of an appreciative article in the City Press, "An Old Savage" writes :- By the death of Mr. Jonas Levy has passed away a man who will be missed by a very large circle of friends and acquaintances, as he was one of the few remaining links with the past. Mr. Levy was born on February 5th, 1812, and was educated for the Bar, but he never practised, as he inherited a fortune from his father—who made his money by contracting for the turnpikes around London. The practice was to lease them for a fixed sum, and the tolls were collected by the lessee; and it must have been a very profitable under-taking, for the late Mr. Levy's father amassed a considerable fortune, he being the contractor for nearly all the London turnpikes. Mr. Levy, sen. invested a large part of his fortune in the London and Brighton Railway Company, and at his death he left a number of the original shares to Mr. Jonas Levy. As is well known, Mr. Levy was nominated one of the committee of investigation appointed to inquire into the position of the Brighton Railway, and shortly after this he became a member of the Board, subsequently being elected a vice-chairman, a position he continued to hold up to the time of his death. From a very early stage in its history Mr. Levy took a great interest in the fortunes of the Crystal Palace, and held a similar position on the Board as on the Brighton Railway, and it may confidently be said that as deputy-chair-men of both these companies Mr. Levy has rendered great public services. It may be interesting to know that Mr. Levy signed cheques in connection with the Crystal Palace Company down to as late as a fortnight before his decease. As a contributor to Lloyds Weekly Newspaper for nearly 49 years, Mr. Levy may claim to have had some small experience of journalistic work. He

commenced writing for Lloyd's at the opening of Old Sadler's Wells in 1845, and for seven years from that date he wrote all the dramatic criticisms in the paper. Since then down to March last he has regularly contributed the legal "Answers to Correspondents," which are a weekly feature of Lloyds, and the reason Mr. Levy gave up the task was not because of his inability to write, but because the articles involved the searching of so many books that he felt himself unequal any longer to the labour of getting up from his desk to search for the books needed. Mr. Levy had a very special connexion with the City. He was associated with the Literary and Bohemian Clubs was one of the original members of the Savage and; the Whitefriars, and his last public appearance was at one of these gatherings—at the Shakespeare dinner of the Urban Club, which was held at Andertons's Hotel, Fleet Street, on April 23rd last, with Mr. Hail Caine in the chair. He had also attended no fewer than fifty-nine "Baddeley" cake celebrations, which are held annually on the stage at Drury Lane Theatre. He was a great playgoer and counted among his friends many of the leading members of the dramatic profession. He had chambers in Gray's Inn, his walls being lined with rare old valuable books, both legal and theatrical, and a house in Tavistock Square, while his country residence will be within the recollection of every Londoner who has visited Thanet – the picturesque and commanding position of Kingsgate Castle on the very verge of the cliff between Margate and Broadstairs being pointed out to all visitors. It was thither he went a short time ago in the hope of nursing himself through what has unfortunately turned out to be his fatal illness. Mr. Levy was not effected with any distinct ailment, his death being the result of a break up of the constitution, traceable simply to advancing years—age alone being the factor that shattered his splendid constitution. Seeing that he lived to the advanced age of over eighty-two, it is worth recording that he was an inveterate smoker, and although a very temperate man his sole drink in the form of alcohol was brandy and water—he always was tabooing wines and other spirits. It is hardly necessary to state that Mr. Levy was never married. These who knew him best knew that he was one of the kindest hearted and truest of men, and it would be impossible to record the numberless acts of kindness he performed without any ostentation whatever. One little incident worth recording occurred at the Crystal Palace some time ago in the presence of the writer. One of the waitresses accidentally broke a bottle of wine, and Mr. Levy asked whether she would have to pay for the loss, and if so how much. Upon receiving a reply in the affirmative, and that the accident would mulct the unfortunate attendant in a fine of 15s., Mr. Levy, with characteristic generosity, handed the waitress a cheque for £1 1s., much to her surprise and gratification. Indeed, Mr. Levy was always ready to respond to the call of charity, from whatever quarter it might come. In club life he leaves a great gap that will take a very long time to fill, if, indeed, it is ever filled at all.





Black Dots and Candles

Tim Spurrier

Often the media brings us sad headlines but sometimes the news is heartbreaking. It was one of those weeks when on 21st November the community had its

scheduled Shabbat morning service. Just the week before had been the Paris attacks where so many had lost their lives and the news remained full of not only the loss but also the anxiety about further attacks.

With Cliff away conducting a service in the Glasgow Reform Synagogue, H el ene conducted the Torah reading. She spoke about her recollection of a speech given by Lord Rabbi Sacks where he conducted an experiment. He held up a sheet of white paper with a small black dot on it. So now you know why there is (opposite) a white sheet with a black dot on it. He now asks, "what do you see?". Perhaps like the rest of his audience you see a black dot. He points out that this is less than one percent of the page and this, he says, is the news. The bad things that happen are newsworthy because they are not usual. The news distorts our view of the world because it focuses on the black dot and not on the vast majority of good news that happens every day. H el ene finishes, as he does, by saying that sometimes we need to give thought to the white sheet and not the black dots. In his book *Celebrating Life*, Jonathan Sacks concludes this point by saying, "what makes us human is that we are capable of seeing existence whole, the landscape of beauty that forms the backdrop against which we notice the ugly, the cruel and the unjust".

We also heard from Kay during the service with her reading from *The Book of Jewish Values* by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin. The reading concerned Rabbi Israel Salanter, a 19th Century Rabbi from Lithuania, who one night was walking through the street and noticed a cobbler working by the flame of a candle. The Rabbi asks him why he is still working when the candle is about to go out. The cobbler replies that "as long as the cable is burning it is still possible to mend". Rabbi Pushkin points out the important message in this, "as long as the candle is burning, we can mend our relationships, the world and ourselves".

With these two thoughts Kay and H el ene showed the importance of how we view despairing news. It is understandable that on occasion we see the black dot and the darkness. Sometimes it just takes a little more effort and thought to see the the white sheet and the candle. So often it is a matter of perception. With Chanucah coming up it is time for us all to concentrate on the good and light in our lives. As Anne Frank once wrote "Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness".

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This year, CST will once again be working in **close cooperation with Police, synagogues, security volunteers and security rotas** at hundreds of synagogues over the chagim, but you may also see more commercial security guards working at synagogues than has previously been the case.

These additional guards are now largely paid for by government and are organised by CST and synagogues, as part of our joint security response to the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris and Copenhagen earlier this year. We regret that the additional security is necessary, but we sincerely hope that it provides a **practical and reassuring response to the current situation.**

Thank you once again for cooperating with our security teams at this busy time, and thank you for playing your part in our joint security efforts. **Shana Tovah and well over the fast to all of our community, and to all of our volunteers and their families, to whom we all owe a special thanks.**

Yours, CST.



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