

ETZ CHAIM

The movement for
REFORM JUDAISM

The Newsletter for the Thanet & District Reform Synagogue

High Holy Days Edition

Welcome to the High Holy Days Edition of the TDRS newsletter. After a long summer we reach the busy part of the Jewish calendar.

From messages from community leaders to radio appearances and memorial trees, this issue has, as always a broad range of things from around our community and beyond.

Synagogue Council

Chairman/Treasurer
Ian Smiler

Vice Chairman
David Fox

Honorary Secretary
Simon Wolfe

Council Members
Hélène Cohen
Dr Sam Borin
Sally Roth

Community Rabbi
Rabbi Cliff Cohen

Life President
David Mirsky

President
Godfrey Fischer



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

Our 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 occasional Mincha services, Torah Breakfasts, Shabbat Suppers, etc.

NB: There is a change to the sequence of Saturday services in November.

Instead of the service on Saturday 5th November, there will be one a week later, on Saturday 12 November and will include a memorial service for the Jewish community of Klatovy.

See page 7 for details.

2016/5777

OCTOBER

5777;2016

Sun 2 Oct, 29 Elul, 7pm

Erev Rosh Hashanah service

Mon 3 Oct, 1 Tishri 5777, 10am

Rosh Hashanah service

Tue 11 Oct, 9 Tishri , 7pm

Kol Nidre service (Fast commences 5.53pm)

Wed 12 Oct, 10 Tishri, 10am

Yom Kippur service (Fast ends 6.57pm)

Sun 16 Oct, 14 Tishri, 7pm

Erev Sukkot service

Mon 17 Oct, 15 Tishri, 10am

Sukkot service

Sun 23 Oct, 21 Tishri, 7pm
Erev Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret
Torah service and celebration

Mon 24 Oct, 22 Tishri, 10am
Simchat Torah/Shemini Atzeret service

Sat 29 Oct, 29 Tishri, 3.30pm
 Mincha service

NOVEMBER

Sat 5 Nov, 4 Cheshvan
 No service

Fri 11 Nov, 10 Cheshvan,
Shabbat Supper, 6pm for 6.15pm
followed by a shorter service at 8pm

Sat 12 Nov, 11 Cheshvan, 10.30am
Shabbat Klatovy. A special service remembering
the Jews of Klatovy.

DECEMBER

Sat 3 Dec, 3 Kislev
Torah Breakfast, 9.15am
Service, 10.30am

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

Sat 31 Dec, 2 Tevet 4pm
Chanukah Party - eighth candle, preceded by
Havdallah

Havdallah Club

We have started to meet again for the new academic year and look forward to many fun packed educational activities. On behalf of Havdallah Club, we wish you all Shanah tova.

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

Once again welcome to the TDRS Newsletter. A big thank you to all those who have taken the time to contribute to the newsletter. A special mention to Elliot Fox, firstly for his appearance on Radio Kent and secondly for providing us with a copy of his thought for the day.

With the High Holy Days fast approaching the synagogue has a great deal on. So keep your eye on the calendar and also the "What's On".

Please remember that our community continues to support the work of **Porchlight** and as winter approaches, the essential work the charity does with the homeless becomes vitally important.

Tim Spurrier

A message from Rabbi Cliff Cohen

As we approach the High Holy days once again, we are called upon to account for who we are. We are required to think hard about the extent to which we practised what we preach, or had expectations of others that exceeded those of ourselves, or pretended to delude ourselves when we knew the real truth.

It is a time for honesty. Not the kind of honesty that simply requires us not to lie to people - though Judaism is rather in favour of that kind of honesty too - but the kind of honesty that is within ourselves, that involves nobody else, that is all about acknowledging truths that lie buried deeply within our own consciousness, but which are never completely hidden, just ignored.

This is a very difficult kind of honesty. It is uncomfortable, and we are not used to it. But it is therapeutic - it can, and usually does, lead us to become better people, more healthy on the inside and contributing more effectively to the health of the world around us.

How can we make it less difficult? Firstly, by remembering that this exercise is private. Only you and God will know. True, there is public confession in our liturgy, but the content of this is generic, not specific. What is specific about each one of us is not shared, not said aloud, not confessed in any usual sense of the word, just acknowledged privately as the truth.

Secondly, we should bear in mind that it is only our own lives that we should be worrying about. Tempting though it is to acknowledge everyone else's sins, that is evasion and distraction. Other people are none of our business. Our High

Holyday time should, indeed must, be totally self-indulgent, time spent thinking exclusively about our own individual selves.

Thirdly, we should be secure. While at other times it may be relevant to consider what others think of us, at this time we can rest assured that they are not thinking of us at all. They have their own agenda, as we each have ours, and their agenda excludes us, as ours excludes them. For a brief time they and we are irrelevant to each other, so make the most of it.

Fourthly, we should have no expectations. If the High Holyday experience is somehow expected to transform us into saints there would be no High Holydays next year, but we know there will be. Becoming better people is not about becoming saints, it is about becoming more reconciled with who we are and coming to a fuller understanding the unique value that we have to offer to ourselves and our world. Our delusions are a barrier that honesty can dissolve.

So let's be honest with ourselves this year, and may we emerge into 5777 refreshed, enervated and excited by the discovery of our true value.

A healthy and happy new year to all of you.

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.

This newsletter email goes out fortnightly and we won't use your email address for anything other than this.

To subscribe, go to:
<http://subscriptions.reformjudaism.org.uk/mailling-lists/> or email Martin Dix at:
martin.dix@reformjudaism.org.uk

ROBERTS
STONEMASONS LTD



**RAMSGATE & MARGATE
 CEMETERY STONEMASONS**
 Serving all of Kent

- Additional Inscriptions
- Cleaning & renovation
- Home Visits welcome
- BRAMM / RQMF
- FREE ESTIMATES AND BROCHURES

Tel: 01843 591021
 sales@robertsstonemasons.co.uk
 Showroom: 35 Rydal Avenue, Ramsgate Kent CT11 0PU
 www.robertsstonemasons.co.uk

©NM

**WE SUPPORT
 FAIRTRADE**




fairtrade.org.uk

Klatovy Memorial Tree

David Fox

Our community's link with the Czech Republic Town Klatovy is a special connection. It was home to many Jewish families in the early 20th century but the community was wiped out as part of the Nazi programme of deportations to death camps in 1942. The Torah scrolls from Klatovy and the surrounding district were rescued in the 1960s, refurbished over the next 20-30 years and re-distributed to synagogues across the UK. Thanks to the efforts of David Mirsky on our behalf, our community is now the proud custodian of one of these scrolls which you will see on a regular basis during synagogue services.



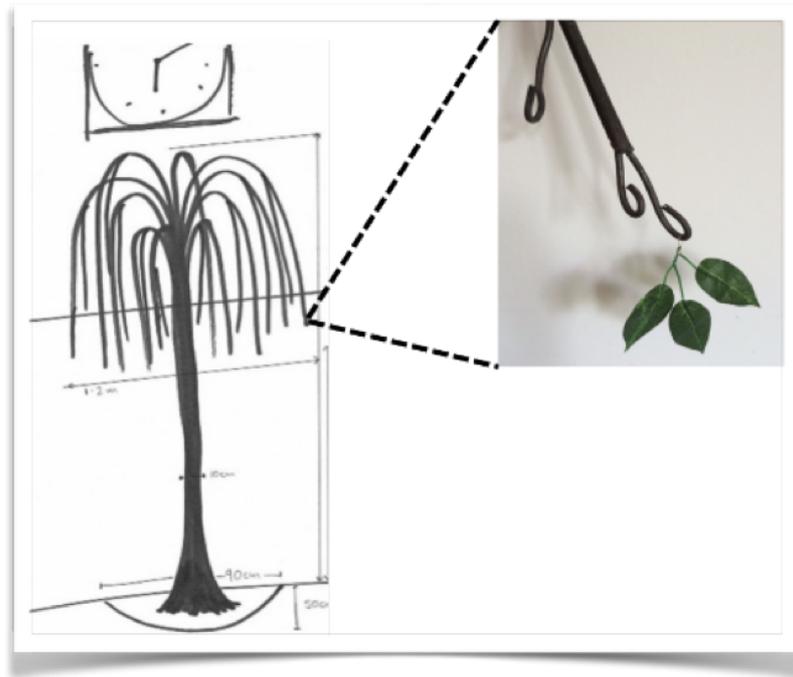
For some time now, we have been considering ways in which our connection with Klatovy and its Jewish community can be recognised with a lasting tribute.

In preparation for this, you may recall that our Red Socks Day last year involved the transcription of the

names of the Klatovy Jews onto over 200 green leaves.

Well, now we have just commissioned a piece of artwork that will complete the project - a memorial tree with the named leaves attached (see picture below for the rough plan).

Once completed, the tree will be installed within our synagogue building to serve as a permanent memorial to the Klatovy community. The artist who will be doing the work is Glasgow-based Lauren Fox (sister to David) who you



may remember attended a service at the synagogue three years ago and so has a good idea of what would work well within the building and the type of design that would fit within our community. It will be a 'weeping willow' with the canopy around head height to enable to names of the leaves to be easily read. The material will be steel, distressed and coloured to provide a natural look and feel. Lauren will be starting on the project shortly and plans to have it completed by the end of the year so that it is installed within the building in time for next year's Holocaust Memorial Day in January.

We are fortunate to have received a number of generous offers of donations to support the project and as a result, we are not expecting it to have any impact on the synagogue's funds. However, should you wish to make an additional contribution, we would be delighted to receive your donation - please get in touch with Ian at chairman@tdrs.org.uk to discuss or leave a message on 01843 851164.

Shabbat Klatovy - Saturday 12th November 2016

As custodians of the Czech Memorial Scroll originally owned by the Jewish Community of Klatovy, we honour their yahrzeit on the date closest to their deportation in 1942. This coincides with the Sedra Lech Lecha which, this year, falls on Saturday 12th November. For this reason we have departed from our usual calendar pattern of services. We hope you will be able to join us.

Kent Police IPAG

Ian Smiler

For most of us the only contact we have with the police is in the event of being a victim of a crime such as burglary, violence, or perhaps when driving a car. However criminal activity extends much further and the role of the police goes beyond dealing with past criminal activity.

To assist with better understanding and meeting the needs of the various communities that live within this County, Kent Police have set up a range of regional public consultation bodies with the title of "IPAG" - Independent Police Advisory Group. The mission statement is "Working in partnership to build confidence and trust for all".

These bodies have representatives from many of the communities that make up the local areas, they give opportunities for open and frank discussion on matters that concern the police, concern the communities and hopefully lead to an improved understanding on all sides so that Kent is better policed. The remit extends wide, and includes areas of criminal activity that thankfully are well outside the areas of life that most of us will ever come across, such as modern slavery, people trafficking, prostitution, domestic abuse, stop & search and hate crime in it's many forms.

I represent the East Kent Jewish Community on the Thanet IPAG and alongside me are delegates representing a wide range of communities and bodies including (not the full list) Thanet Youth Council, Lesbian & Gay Community, Muslim Community, Mental Health, Kent County Council, Cliftonville Community Centre & Youth Centre, Ageless Thanet, Gangmasters Licensing Authority as well as several police officers including our local Community Liaison Officer, PC Timothy Weaver.

There are videos available on YouTube which explain very well the IPAG - search for "Kent Police IPAG" to view these.

If you would like to join me as an IPAG delegate, or have any matter that you would like to be raised or discussed with Kent Police do feel free to contact me for a discussion.

Ian Smiler



Mazel Tov!

Our community would like to congratulate the marriages of:

Sam Borin and Ruth Morris

Sam Cohen and Alex Wakeley

We wish you all long and happy lives together.



*From
Cliff & H el ene*

*We have our usual open house for Succoth on
Sunday 23rd October
We are at home from 10.00am to midnight*

So please join us at:

*60 Margate Road, Ramsgate ,
Kent. CT11 7SG*

*rabbicliff@yahoo.com
helene_cohen@hotmail.com*

Tel: 01843 581583



As usual, all fruit and veg will be taken to The Pilgrims Hospice the following day

Jewish Care Information Leaflets



We have just received a selection of Jewish Care information leaflets, available in the synagogue or by calling or emailing Jewish Care, which you or your family might find useful:

020 8922 2222

helpline@jcare.org

Ageing and Diabetes
Diabetes - The FAQs
Understanding Arthritis
Living with Parkinson's
Understanding Strokes
Dementia - the FAQs
Living with Eye Conditions
and Sight Loss
Lasting Power of Attorney
How to pay for care in
one of our care homes
Holocaust Survivors'
Services
Community Support and
Social Work

Message from the Chairman

Ian Smiler

Dear All

For various reasons the past year has been a very mixed year, some wonderful inspirational moments such as the success of Team GB at the Olympic / Paralympic Games, and some difficult moments like we have seen with the way that the Brexit situation has divided people and allowed an element of nastiness come to the fore. Very unfortunately there has also been resurgence in the UK of one evil form of hate crime - anti-Semitism. This is often being mixed (ignorantly) with anti-Israel activity as if the two are the same. They are not. Whilst nationally we can certainly point one finger of blame towards the failure of the current Labour Party leadership to effectively deal with anti-Semitism within its sphere we must also consider the local picture too. Fortunately, I'm very pleased to be able to state that I am not aware of any recent activity directed towards Kent's Jews, and long may it continue.

In this newsletter you will find an article about the work of Kent Police and one way they are seeking to better police the County. Do read this and if you have access to the internet view the videos too. There is another article I would like to mention as well. For some time we have discussed creating a tree memorial in the Synagogue. This project will shortly be coming to

completion, and there is a very interesting article about the tree that will be installed in the coming months. In both of these articles opportunities are offered for members to get involved, should you wish to do so.

I close with the wonderful news that our community has enjoyed two weddings in the past few weeks, firstly to offer a hearty mazeltov to Rabbi Cliff & Helene Cohen on the marriage of their first son, Sam and secondly to Dr Sam Borin on his recent marriage in his new home of Yorkshire.

Barbara and I wish you all Shana Tova and well over the fast.

Help Building the Succah

Please join us at the Synagogue on Sunday 16th October at 10am to help with building the succah. Also, donations of fruit and foliage will be especially welcome.

MRJ News

At the recent MRJ AGM, held at Chagigah in June, the following changes to officers took place.

- Robert Weiner retired after spending 3 years as Chair.
- Geoffrey Marx was appointed as the new Chair.
- Rabbi Professor Tony Bayfield CBE retired after spending 5 years as President.
- Sir Trevor Chinn CVO was appointed as the new President.

TDRS offers their thanks to those retiring for all their work and congratulations to the new incumbents on their appointment.

Chanukah Rocks

New to the Judaica shop – something different for a delightful Chanukah gift. Each small pebble has been hand painted with a tiny chanukiah by Tracy de Gietelink, who has kindly donated them to the shop. They are approximately 35cm x 25cm and come with a black felt bag, 50cm x 70cm. If you would like to have personalised pebbles painted for your special occasion (they come in many sizes, email Tracy on: pebblerebelrocks@gmail.com)



TDRS' Yom HaShoah service May 2016



Cheque presentation to Porchlight May 2016



Porchlight - 'One Week Without' Project

We'd love the Thanet and District Reform Synagogue to put Homeless Sunday (22 January 2017) in the diary and go One Week Without to help Porchlight turn the tables on homelessness and poverty in Kent.

We all know how easy it is to take our home comforts for granted. Especially the most essential things like central heating, hot running water, food or our furniture. What would it be like if they were taken away?

Homeless people know how it feels. Will you put yourself in their shoes?

Starting on Sunday 22 January (or any other time that works for you), we'd love your congregation to get sponsored to go without their choice of home comforts for one week.

Being homeless, struggling with mental health issues and feeling isolated and excluded are no picnic. These experiences leave the people we help feeling rock bottom. To believe in themselves again, sometimes they need someone else to believe in them first. And with your help, Porchlight can carry on doing just that; enabling people to turn their lives around and helping them to recover their self belief. Steven was just 17 when he ended up sleeping on the street. You can read [his story here](#) and see how we were able to help him get his life back on track.

Here are some suggestions for your One Week Without:

Get sponsored to

- Go without hot showers
- Go without hot dinners
- Sleep on the floor without a mattress
- Go without TV, Ipad, Facebook, social media or email
- Have soup and a roll for every dinner

Or you could

- Hold a collection
- Organise a Sponsored Sleep Out
- Organise a Frugal Lunch

Whatever you decide to do, we will help make your One Week Without a success by providing presentation materials for your services (including a DVD and sermon, prayer and reading suggestions from local church leaders), fundraising materials and talks from Porchlight representatives. To register your church or faith group, simply reply to this email, register online at www.porchlight.org.uk/oneweekwithout or call 01227 813199.

High Holy Days Message from Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner

"Show respect to the aged; honour the presence of an elder; fear your God. I am God" (*Leviticus 19:32*)

מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלהיך אני יהוה

This coming year, 5777, in a partnership of synagogues, lay leaders, clergy and the team at Reform Judaism, we are shifting our focus to all ages and life stages. The jewel in our crown is in many ways, our emphasis on youth. We have the largest youth movement in the Jewish community - RSY-Netzer, with 1,000 young people taking part in activities this summer. This is brilliant but now is the time to redress an imbalance and to focus on all ages.

Many in our communities are worried about how we can respond to the social and physical needs of our older members, respecting, nourishing and responding to each other properly. We have a population that has a growing number of people living independently and on the whole, we are living longer. A quarter of our members are over the age of 70.

Many of our older members have time and energy and would love to be more involved in our communities. Those are the members we see - especially if they volunteer and are active in synagogue life - but the often unseen need for many members of our communities is a response to their isolation and loneliness.

They are our founding generation. Isolation and loneliness are the very opposite of what our synagogues are about and so our communities have identified this as a vital and pressing concern. Adult social care concerns affect so many of us - older people; their children and grandchildren; carers and the cared for.

One of the initiatives launched at our biennial - *Chagigah* (celebration) in July, was dedicated to adult social care. One practical and potentially immensely impactful idea emerged. It pinpoints the feeling, and reality for many, of being cut off from the world, being unable to come to synagogue, go shopping, connect with the world outside and socialise with others due to physical or emotional restrictions.

The project we are launching in 5777 addresses our core values of honouring our elderly or those who are physically restricted at any age by fundraising in partnership with our synagogues for two wheelchair accessible minibuses to cover all of our UK communities. They will provide essential access to those who are most vulnerable, enabling them to maintain their Jewish way of living and alleviate their sense of isolation.

These minibuses are a fabulous and practical means to fulfil the *mitzvah* of respecting the aged.

The 12th Century French commentator, Rashi teaches that there should not be such thing as defining a person by their age - merely as "an older person". Instead, we should refer to those who have acquired wisdom. He adds that the honourable way to treat older people (and I would say everyone of every age) is that we don't usurp their place in society, nor their ideas, or speak instead of them. We should not interrupt when it might take longer to express themselves or be patronising about what other people think or need.

Rashi continues his explanation of the Torah verse above stating that often people do not really see each other. It is our role, our *mitzvah*, our duty, to make anyone who may be invisible to be visible. Those involved in our adult social care initiative highlighted our many members who are physically restricted and cannot come to synagogue which exacerbates feelings of loneliness and isolation. Rashi compares this to a person consciously closing their eyes to others, shutting people out of their heart. He draws a fascinating parallel to our relationship with God. Disrespecting those who we might prefer not to see, or are just not conscious of, is equal to disrespecting God.

I believe that the meaning of why we live and should live is to partner God in the repair of the world. This is not an abstract theological claim - it is practical. This can be measured, whether by a phone call, a visit or even by enabling our members to come to synagogue with two national Reform Movement minibuses!

Shanah tovah u'metukah. שנה טובה ומתוקה
 ומתוקה
 May we all have a good and sweet New Year.



Message from the President of the Board of Deputies

In 5776, the Board of Deputies' profile has been raised to a new high. We are setting and leading the national agenda on the matters which count for Jews in this country.

When allegations of antisemitism emerged in Labour we confronted the problem head-on, raising concerns robustly in a face-to-face meeting with party leader Jeremy Corbyn. We were quoted throughout the national media on our response to Ken Livingstone's outrageous anti-Semitic remarks about Hitler and Zionism and when I gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on antisemitism. We made a detailed submission to the Chakrabarti Inquiry into antisemitism in the Labour Party and responded to what we saw as the shortcomings in Ms Charkrabarti's report.



This has been the most tumultuous year in British political life in living memory, with a decision by referendum to leave the European Union and a new government. Throughout it all the Board of Deputies has been heard as the clear and calm voice of British Jews, addressing the issues with clarity and firmness of purpose. The Board has had a long and warm relationship with Prime Minister Theresa May. After the Paris attacks, she addressed the Board of Deputies and held up the sign "Je Suis Juif". I met with her as Home Secretary - raising issues ranging from anti-Semitic demonstrations to the Syrian refugee crisis - and she lit the Chanukiah at the Board's most recent Parliamentary Reception.

Early in my tenure as President, I was pleased to have a number of meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. On each occasions I assure him of the Board of Deputies' and the community's steadfast support. Whether it is speaking at demonstrations, making the case in the media, challenging BDS or supporting grassroots advocacy organisations and Christian allies around the country through the excellent work of Steven Jaffe, we have kept that promise and will continue to find new ways to do so.

We continue to be staunch defenders of Jewish schools and Jewish education in both the mainstream and Charedi sectors. When the Hebrew GCSE and A-Level came under threat again this year, we successfully campaigned to protect it.

And we have continued to educate others about Judaism, challenging prejudice and ignorance through our sector-leading new textbook on Judaism for non-Jewish schools, written by leading educationalist Clive Lawton.

Meanwhile, we have redoubled efforts at interfaith relations with Christians, Muslims, Hindus and others, including through the Government-funded Muslim-Jewish Women's Network Nisa-Nashim and an interfaith project where girls from Jewish, Muslim and Catholic schools came together at Twitter's UK HQ to study computer coding.

We have continued to interact through all levels of government, from desk officer to secretaries of state. This year, we produced the first-ever Jewish manifestos for the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish elections, and are planning seminars for local councillors across the country. Our Employer's Guide to Judaism, launched by then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Iain Duncan Smith, is available online and provides clear and comprehensive information, and we continue to support individual Jewish employees and students to get time off for religious festivals.

We have provided vital services for the community without asking for any more money for 10 years. As our costs have risen over this time, this year the Community Contribution will be slightly increased from £25 to £30 per annum. By working efficiently and keeping costs to a minimum we are happy that we have been able to keep the Community Contribution down to a very affordable figure. I hope you will agree that we are providing excellent value in return for a very modest sum.

In 5777, we will continue to represent your interests as only a democratically elected body can. May this New Year bring you, your families and all of Am Yisrael health, strength and peace.



Jonathan Arkush
President



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR SECURITY WORK



This Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur you will see volunteers helping provide security for the community to pray and be together. Our security will then continue over Succot and Simchat Torah.

The volunteers providing security may well include your family and friends. We ask you to thank them for their work, to co-operate with their efforts, and to take this as an opportunity for getting involved with CST and your local synagogue security team.

The purpose of our security work is to enable our many communities across the UK to lead the Jewish lives of their choice. We wish that it was not necessary, but recent events in Britain and across Europe show that the problem is real and may occur at any location.

This is why CST works so closely with synagogues and congregations to provide security. In recent years, the Government has also provided important

support, and we enjoy excellent relationships with Police at all levels.

CST can only be as strong as the communities we serve and are a part of. So, we give a sincere and warm thank you to all who help in these efforts over the Festivals, and we thank our entire community for its support at this time.

Wishing everybody a *Shana Tovah* and *well over the Fast, Community Security Trust*.

- To help support our work, or to join CST, please see our website www.cst.org.uk
- Keep informed of the facts concerning security and antisemitism by following CST on **Twitter** or **Facebook** or via the **News section** of our website



In an emergency contact the Police on **999**, then contact CST,
London: **0800 032 3263** Manchester: **0800 980 0668**

In a non-emergency, please call the Police on **101**, then contact CST,
London: **020 8457 9999** Manchester: **0161 792 6666**

www.cst.org.uk [@CST_UK](https://twitter.com/CST_UK) [Community Security Trust](https://www.facebook.com/CommunitySecurityTrust)

Community Security Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales (1042391) and Scotland (SC043612)



Benedict Kelly

House Painter & Decorator

East Cliff, Ramsgate.

0792 684 64 92

ben181@hotmail.com

Thought for the Day - BBC Radio Kent

Elliot Fox

Many of us know that David and his son Elliot have been regular contributors to Radio Kent's Sunday morning programme. In January 2016, Elliot Fox was asked to give his thought for the day on BBC Radio Kent. Originally he was asked to provide a 5 minute piece but was then asked to reduce it to 3 minutes. Here is the transcript of the 3 minute version (ed).



Something extraordinary and profound happened this week. .

Something that transcended the generations and united people with seemingly irreconcilable differences, notably

- David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn,
- The Vatican and the Archbishop of Canterbury

David Bowie was a man who refused to be categorised, jumping from the Laughing Gnome to Ziggy Stardust to name just two of his many juxtaposed phases. In the aftermath of his tragic passing, news bulletins and social media were inundated with messages of love for him and his work from people from all walks of life. Few have failed to have been touched at some point by his music or by his artistry.

A man who avoided classification and was universally appreciated.

This got me thinking, could this be applied to faith and religion?

As humans we like to form and be a part of groups as it gives us a sense of belonging.

But is it right to conform to a set of rigidly defined classifications or is it more helpful to view our beliefs as fluctuating among the many wavelengths of a light spectrum? Instead of saying 'I am always red' you could say 'I'm a reddy-pink' which might better encompass the subtleties of our beliefs.

Our beliefs become a fluid entity that liberates us from our labels, and means that our views can change as we change.

In addition, it lessens the mystery of 'the other'.

As groups, we define ourselves not just by what and who we are but also, by who we are not.

There is an old Jewish joke which says that when Jews plan a town they build two synagogues; one we go to, the other we do not.

It is human nature to generalise and form negative views of outsiders because of our limited knowledge about them. In a purely evolutionary way this makes sense; by distancing yourself from those you see as weak, you are more likely to produce healthy offspring. However, there are major downsides too.

One consequence of religious extremism is for peace-loving religions to be viewed at best with scepticism and at worst with hatred. Violent acts carried out in the name of the religion by marginal, minority groups dominate the news. The attacks this week in Turkey, Jakarta and Burkina Faso are yet more reminders of how real and present this issue is.

These events colour our perception of 'the other' and unfortunately, at the moment fear of 'the other' is present for all to see. Going back to the spectrum metaphor, it is like looking at the world through a green filter; yes you can still see, but you miss the beauty of a red sunset or the majesty of a blue ocean

It takes knowledge and understanding to overcome this.

If you view other religions as just another place on the spectrum rather than as something completely different, then there are no barriers regardless of whether you are Christian, Muslim, Jewish, atheist, or any other religion.

The outsider then ceases to be 'the other' and the need for groups to conform to a collective animosity starts to disappear.

Inclusivity will promote tolerance, and can therefore only be a positive thing. To return to where we started then, on this sad week, the world has lost a hero, an oddity, a rebel, but more than anything someone who refused to be categorised and constantly changed. Let us follow Bowie's example and dare to reinvent ourselves, for that way we will be able to experience the world in all its colour.

New Years Greetings

Barbara & Ian Smiler

Mara Prengler

Marc, Hilary, Joshua, and Hannah St Clare

Barbara Markham

Jon & Anne Leigh, Jen, Jimmy, Kira, Summer & Lincoln

The Fischers and the Foxes - Hazel, Godfrey, Rachel, Gordon, Jonathan and Jordana

Diana and Anthony together with Marcus, Esther, Hannah and Edward da Costa

Sally & Michael, Daniel & Heidi, Leah, Leigh, Martha & Elsa, Natasha, Scott, George & Harry

Tom & Rivka Dodds

Carole & Vernon Samray



Scott Woolford
Painter & Decorator
(City & Guilds qualified)
Professional service for all
jobs large and small.
Competitive prices.
Free quotes

Phone: 07863 555947
scottwoolford@live.co.uk

Therapies in Motion
Aches and pains or
just a little pampering



Body Massage
Sports Massage
Indian Head Massage
Therapeutic Massage
Reflexology
Waxing

Sally Roth
Tel: 07834 208991
Email: sallybass1@hotmail.com



Advertising

Do have something to advertise? Why not place an advert in this newsletter? The rates are very competitive and you can be sure the community will see it!

Full Page Advert - £50.00 per annum

Half Page Advert - £30.00 per annum

Quarter Page Advert - £20.00 per annum

Prices are for four editions a year, colour or B&W. Please contact the editor for more details or to place an advert.



Care in your own home...

Caring passionately about your health and welfare

Our services include

- **Help getting up or going to bed**
- **Preparing meals**
- **Shopping**
- **Washing and ironing**
- **Personal hygiene and bathing**
- **Cleaning the home**
- **Mobility issues**



a realistic alternative to residential care

Call on: 01843 570 638
www.bluebirdcare.co.uk

Bluebird Care (Canterbury & Thanet)
161 King Street, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 8PN
Tel: 01843 570 638 Fax: 08452 992 395
Email: canterbury@bluebirdcare.co.uk

“good old fashioned service”