

ETZ CHAIM The movement for REFORM JUDAISM

The Newsletter for the Thanet & District Reform Synagogue

Chanukah Edition



“Chanukah lamp unearthed near Jerusalem, c. 1900” (Wikimedia Commons)

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

JANUARY 2018/5778

Fri 12 Jan, 25 Tevet

Shabbat Supper, 6pm for 6.15pm followed by a shorter service at 8pm

Sat 20 Jan, 4 Shevat

Torah Breakfast 9.15am Service 11am

Sat 27 Jan, 11 Shevat, 11.30am

National Holocaust Memorial Day service

Details to be advised

Tue 30 Jan, 14 Shevat 7pm

Erev Tu B'shevat

Our annual Tu B'shevat Seder for the New Year for Trees will be held in the synagogue on the eve of the festival

FEBRUARY

Wed 28 Feb, 13 Adar, 7pm

Erev Purim service and Masquerade

MARCH

Thu 1 Mar, 14 Adar, 10am

Purim service

Fri 30 Mar, 14 Nisan,

Seder

(there is no service in the synagogue this evening)

Sat 31 Mar, 15 Nisan, 10am

First day Pesach service

APRIL

Wed 11 Apr, 27 Nisan, 7pm

Erev Yom Hashoah service

Wed 18 Apr, 3 Iyar, 7pm

Yom Hazikaron/ Erev Yom Ha'atzma'ut

Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day
service and celebration

MAY

Sat 19 May, 5 Sivan, 7pm

Erev Shavuot service

Sun 20 May, 6 Sivan, 10am

Shavuot service

JUNE

Sat 2 Jun, 19 Sivan

Torah Breakfast, 9.15am Service, 11am

Sat 30, 17 Tammuz 3.30pm

Mincha service

JULY

Fri 13 Jul, 2 Av

*Shabbat Supper, 6pm for 6.15pm followed by a shorter
service at 8pm*

Sun 22 Jul, 10 Av, 3pm

Tisha b'Av service

AUGUST

Sat 18 Aug, 7 Elul, 10.30am

*Outdoor service and picnic - location to be advised
(NB: There is no service in the synagogue today)*

TDRS Chesed

Need a chat?

Require some help?

Under the weather?

Our community cares.
Let us know at
chesed@tdrs.org.uk

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

A big thank you again to all the contributors for this edition of Etz Chaim. Keep your contributions coming in, as we cannot make the magazine without you. I look forward to receiving your interesting articles.

It is the end of a busy 2017 for us. It is great to see our small, but perfectly formed, community keeping so engaged and vibrant.

Keep an eye out for the calendar and "What's On" to be sure not to miss events over the next few months.

A personal Mazeltov to Godfrey and Hazel Fischer who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with the community recently. Thank you for all the work you do for us and we all wish you many more years of happiness together.

Tim Spurrier
Editor

A message from Rabbi Cliff Cohen

Chanukah, like Purim, is technically a "minor" festival, in that it has no origin in the Torah. Between them, these two festivals proclaim the miracle of the survival of Judaism, despite physical (Purim) and spiritual (Chanukah) threats to its life.

I choose my words carefully. I am well aware that the survival of Judaism does not guarantee the survival of every Jew, and within living memory we have tragic and traumatic reminders of that. But I also remember seeing, in one of Steven Spielberg's filmed interviews, a holocaust survivor saying "You did your best Mr Hitler, but I've outlived you by 50 years". The fact remains that Judaism is alive and well, not just in Thanet, while those who tried to destroy it are gone, along with their dreams of immortality.

Chanukah is a time to celebrate the survival of Judaism as a true miracle. We lost our Temple, but we did not disappear like the Aztecs. We lost our homeland, but we did not disappear like the Idumeans. Anthropologists and sociologists



cannot adequately explain why Judaism is still here, and fundamentalist Christians are infuriated by it, but here we are, and our conclusion is that it must be God's will. God seems to have decided that the world still needs Judaism within it, as a civilising force that has changed the world more than once, as a source of culture, values, and personal growth that enhance our humanity, and as a path to God.

Chanukah is also the only Jewish festival whose historical integrity is unchallenged, but our celebration of it, as with other festivals, is not restricted to history. The allegorical and spiritual value of Chanukah concerns our own lives. Our behaviour towards each other and the planet, the way we educate our children, our involvement in our Jewish and local communities and our personal integrity are all products of the Chanukah miracle. The world still needs them. Let us celebrate the miracle that against all odds, they are still here.

A very happy Chanukah to you all.

Rabbi Cliff Cohen

MRJ Movement Updates

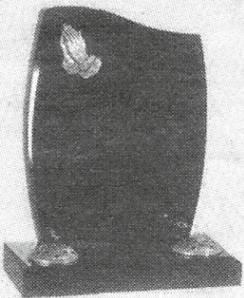
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Communities that Care

David Fox

On 20th November, I attended an enjoyable lunchtime meeting in London, hosted by the Movement for Reform Judaism (MRJ), to discuss the Communities that Care initiative. This project emerged from the 2016 Chagigah - the biennial conference organised by MRJ - and is an attempt to understand how Jewish communities across the UK are connecting with their membership and ensuring that those in need can look to their synagogue for help and support. The initial focus is on elderly members but in time, the initiative will extend to other groups (see below). The purpose of the November meeting was to provide an update on practices that have been adopted by various communities, to share good practice and to consider how we as a combined group of Reform communities can work in partnership in the future.

The meeting was very well-attended (over 30 participants from around 15 communities) some large and some small like ours. What became clear was irrespective of size, we are all trying to do similar things and have a great deal to learn from one another.

We each had an opportunity to talk for 1 minute about a success we have had in the area of community care and I talked about our 'Chesed' initiative which we launched a couple of years ago. I showed the attendees the contact card each of us has, explained how the follow-up process works and the impact it has had on helping members of our wider community. Pleasingly, this approach was referred to repeatedly throughout the meeting as a piece of outstanding practice that others are now

TDRS Chesed



- Need a chat?
- Require some help?
- Under the weather?

Our community cares

Let us know at chesed@tdrs.org.uk
or leave a message on **01843 851164**

and a member of the synagogue community will get in touch

keen to adopt. This is something all of us in the TDRS community can be proud of.

The meeting concluded with Rabbi Miriam Berger (Finchley) leading a discussion about future themes that might be discussed at the next Chagigah. These included –

- Identifying specific needs of certain groups (e.g. mental health, different needs of various age groups)
- Campaigning on behalf of our communities
- Creating a directory of groups/people/advisors in our network that have expertise/services that are of use to the community and could be shared between communities (to lighten the load on volunteers and avoid re-inventing the wheel)
- Instilling a culture shift towards greater participation by members – asking what can you do for the community as well as what do you need from the community.

The next meeting will be Monday 29th January in London. I am hoping to attend and if anyone else is keen to attend, or would just like to know more about the initiative, please let me know (in person, by email chesed@tdrs.org.uk or leave a message on the synagogue phone 01843 851164).

You may also be interested to know that as part of this MRJ *Communities that Care* initiative, there will be a conference in London in March on *Combating Loneliness* with an impressive line-up of speakers.



REFORM JUDAISM
**Communities that
Care Initiative**

Combating Loneliness and Isolation Conference

All the lonely people... where do they all come from?

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday 22 March 2018 – 10am-4.30pm

Kindly hosted by West London Synagogue

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger, West London Synagogue

Caroline Abrahams, Director, AGE UK

Dame Esther Rantzen DBE, Founder, The Silver Line

Manet & District Reform Synagogue, 295A Margate Rd, Ramsgate, CT12 6TE Tel: 01843 851164

A constituent member of the Movement for Reform Judaism - website: www.tdrs.org.uk

Seder in Chania

Simon Wolfe

As some of you will know, earlier this year, Stephanie and I were lucky enough to visit the island of Crete for the first time, staying outside one of the three main towns on the north coast of the island, Chania. This holiday was the gift of my mother, to celebrate my 60th birthday which has now taken place. The only downside was that the week we were away coincided with Seder Night and Passover, but we thought we would just have to miss Seder night -and hope to be forgiven!

Stephanie and I had read about there being a mediaeval synagogue in Chania which was apparently in ruins (as you might expect following the Nazi occupation of Crete). What we did not expect to find when we visited on the Saturday before Pesach was that the synagogue had not only been restored to use but that a seder service and seder meal were to take place, with some spaces still free!

The old part of the maritime town of Chania, the part nearest the sea and adjoining the old Venetian fort, is a delight, being largely pedestrianised with narrow streets and courtyards and overhanging mediaeval buildings - typical of the Mediterranean. The Synagogue built in the 15th Century is in one corner of the old town in a small courtyard, open to visitors. The building is quite small and plainly furnished but has been carefully restored so nothing looks new.

Although we were a little worried about whether the seder service would be in Hebrew and Greek only and that the synagogue members would all be Greek-speaking only, it was plainly an opportunity not to be missed and so we duly signed up for the following Monday evening and wondered quite what to expect.

Monday evening came and we attended the synagogue in good time to find the building almost full and with a very voluble English-speaking local lady who we learned was the synagogue President, in charge of the proceedings. Even more of a surprise and relief for us was to find out that the service and seder were being taken by Rabbi Dr Nicholas de Lange, over from England, whom I knew quite well during my time at Cambridge a long while ago, when he was the Reform chaplain there. Admittedly he was nothing like I remembered him (and he probably thought the same about me, although too polite to say!) but it was quite amazing to find

that not only could we celebrate seder in Crete but could do so in the proper fashion with an English Reform Rabbi.

The synagogue siddur was basically Sephardi orthodox as one would expect, but the service was informal and not too lengthy (I think even Stephanie would have to agree!) and was also partly in English. After the synagogue service, we walked up the road to a large hall belonging to an hotel where a suitable meal was laid on for everyone, with Rabbi de Lange presiding. Everyone was very friendly. We were seated next to a retired businessman and an American couple with two children. The only disappointment was that the children continued playing on their computers throughout and completely ignored the service that was going on.

It was truly wonderful to feel that we were carrying on the tradition of the Jews who had inhabited Crete probably since Roman times, until the last of them had been loaded onto a German boat bound for Auschwitz (which was promptly torpedoed by the Royal Navy who, of course, had no idea who was on board.) The present community has only been re-established since the 1980s but certainly seemed to be flourishing - and our seder in Chania will be one to remember for a long time.



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Messages

CONDOLENCES

We send our condolences and prayers to Ian and Barbara Smiler, Ian's parents and brothers following the sad loss of their beloved brother and son, Andrew. Zichronam livrachah. May his memory be for a blessing.

MAZELTOV!

To Reva Dyett on receiving a first class honours degree - Adult Nursing BSE (hons) 1st Class.

To Godfrey and Hazel Fischer on their 25th Wedding Anniversary and sharing it with the community.

SOS - SOS - SOS - SOS - SOS **SAFEGUARDING OUR SEFER**

Last Chanukah I wrote in this newsletter about the need to raise nearly £7000 for essential repairs to our Klatovy sefer, and we are on the way towards that target. You can see the progress on the Scrollometer in the Kiddush room. The target, however, is still a long way off, and this Chanukah I want to invite you to add to our fund-raising effort in a different way, by sharing an idea for which we thank Katie Blythe.

Many of you enjoy making what has come to be known as traditional Jewish food. You may well have inherited recipes from parents or grandparents, or developed your own. Either way, the recipes are unlikely to appear anywhere where others can access them. But if they were collected into The Great TDRS Jewish Cookbook, they would be there for everyone.

Why not take a few moments to send your recipes to our newsletter editor? If you can include a nice photo, even better. Tim and I will produce the book, and the proceeds will go to our **SOS** fund. Who knows, we may even be able to launch The Great TDRS Jewish Cookbook at a TDRS Jewish food fair, to raise even more towards the target.

Personally I think this is a great idea from Katie, and if we get enough participation it should bring a lot of pleasure to us all, and raise funds at the same time. Please, PLEASE get involved and start sending those recipes and photos to our editor. My mouth is already watering!

Cliff Cohen

Mitzvah and Honour

We were contacted by the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen (AJEX) who asked if we would represent them at the stone-setting and ashes internment of Major David Sharp, BEM Mil. (Korean War) in November at the Military Cemetery, Shorncliffe Garrison, near Folkestone.

Major David Sharp died in November 2016 aged 88. As he had no family anyone knew of, his funeral was arranged by the local British Legion branch where he lived in Ashford. Later a family in Birmingham was found and it was arranged that the ashes be interred last November. Over a hundred people attended his funeral but this was to be a small affair with a couple members of the family and a few friends from the local British Legion attending. Having learnt that Major Sharp was Jewish, his friends were determined that his ashes be interred under a stone with a Magen David engraved.



Major Sharp was an extremely brave and modest man who was the last Commonwealth prisoner to be released by the Chinese at the end of the Korean War. He was serving as a volunteer with the US Army on intelligence operations deep inside North Korea from the end of 1950 until the end of March 1951. David was due to be returned to his Battalion, when the Battle of Imjin River occurred and he was wounded and captured whilst trying to break a Chinese road-block. He was left injured at the side of a road, with several others, without any treatment or assistance for five days. Eventually, recognising that the wounded

(Continued on page 12)

Synagogue Council

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Vice Chairman

David Fox

Honorary Secretary

Simon Wolfe

Council Members

Roberta Byrne,
Hélène Cohen,
Sally Roth,

Community Rabbi

Rabbi Cliff Cohen

Life President

David Mirsky

President

Godfrey Fischer

Synagogue Contacts

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chairman@tdrs.org.uk

Rabbi

rabbi@tdrs.org.uk

Senior Warden

warden@tdrs.org.uk

Newsletter

newsletter@tdrs.org.uk

men were no threat, some Chinese soldiers gave them food and two days later the wounded soldiers were put into the back of a pony wagon and taken to the POW collection point. If you put his name in your search engine you will find many articles and obituaries about this rather special and private ex-soldier.



It was a great honour, therefore, to respond to the AJEX request to represent the Jewish Community. Godfrey and Hazel Fischer attended and recited El Malei Rachamim before and Kaddish after a minute's silence and placed a Commonwealth War Graves Star of David wooden peg at the memorial.

A message from the Chairman

Dear All

Welcome to this Chanukah edition of our newsletter. As we know, Chanukah is a winter festival, and winter brings other things too, cold weather, and sometimes snow and ice, all of which can make getting about difficult. Therefore, I ask that you take a moment to look around at members and friends and make sure they are comfortable. If any members do find themselves to be in need of assistance, please do contact our CHESSED helpline by telephone 01843 851164 or by email chesed@tdrs.org.uk

Enjoy reading this newsletter, and I look forward to meeting many of you at our forthcoming Chanukah party.

Kol Nidre Appeal 2017

I am very pleased to announce this years' Kol Nidre appeal raised £830, £427.50 for Leket Israel and £402.50 for Home Start. A big thank you to everyone who donated in support of this appeal

Safeguarding Our Sefer - SOS Appeal

I am very pleased to state that we have made a good start in collecting funds towards the repairs of our Klatovy Sefer. As we draw to the end of the first year of the appeal I want to thank everyone who has donated and urge you to continue with your monthly donations into 2018, it is very much needed. Next time you are in the synagogue do look at the Scrollometer on the wall in the Harold Ruback Room.

Personal Message

I want to thank everyone for your kind words and thoughts after the tragic death of my brother. It is very much appreciated.

Ian

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



Warm Their Stomachs, Warm Their Hearts

This winter, feed Israel's vulnerable elderly
with hot rescued meals

Leket Israel operating the country's foremost food programme, rescues and sources fresh produce and prepared meals from over 1,000 food suppliers and redistributes free of charge to 195 nonprofit organisations (NPOs) that serve 175,000 needy people from all sectors of society.



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