



L'CHAYIM

The Newspaper of Southport and District Reform Synagogue

The Story of Purim was told by the beautiful Queen Esther and a rather regal King Ahasuerus.
25th February



We had Cowboys - no bull !



A right Charlie Chaplain with Queen Esther

Another King - Tut, tut



Sweet maids in a row



What the ..El..vis !

A big thank you to Erin and Oscar for their story of Purim, and to Shelley Yavetz for the gory details of that story that followed. Our thanks to the French lady, Anne Kletz and our Elvis, Duly Platt for the rap play. There was a Zoom® public eating of hamentaschen and plenty of booing for Ha...



“shush!” **What a lovely Purim .**



The meaning of the Scroll of Esther

Purim 5781

by Shelley Yavetz



The Purim tale occurs in “Megillat Esther” and is part of the 3rd section of the Hebrew Bible, our Tanach. This comprises the Torah, the Prophets (Nevi-im) and the Writings (K’tuvim). It is the latter that contains Esther’s Scroll. We read the Megillah and enjoy a celebratory feast immediately after the fast of Esther concludes. There is a Rabbinical injection to hear the Megillah read at least once, preferably twice, for greater understanding of its message.

In Esther we read possibly the first written statement of anti-Semitism in chapter 3 verse 8 :

‘The first written statement of anti-Semitism’

Haman then said to King Achashverosh, “There is a certain People , scattered and dispersed among the other Peoples, in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other People and who do not obey the King’s laws and it is not in Your Majesty’s interest to tolerate them .” (Doesn’t that sound familiar?)

He continues to lie about the Yehudim to intensify the king’s anger. Of course, the Jews did follow the laws of the land, as they would do in any country in which they reside. Sadly, it is this type of reasoning that has been "so-called justification "for the persecution of Jews throughout history, time and time again.

In our Purim story “Yehudim” actually means “Judeans”, the People of Judea, who were forcibly taken into exile. Esther was descended from the House of Judah while Uncle Mordechai was from the Tribe of Benjamin. The name “Yehudim” as a People, came into use much later in history. However, the implication that “this People” who are dispersed and living as a minority under foreign rule, being treated as a “treacherous 5th column”? The accusation that they were creating a conspiracy against their host state and plotting to harm or exploit the economy is repeated, even today, in Great Britain and other countries as part of a “Covid conspiracy theory,” broadcast on poisonous websites and social media. We are referred to as Hebrews, Rothschilds, Jewish scum or Zionists. The exiled Judeans of Persia are at the mercy of Haman, an influential advisor to the King and a direct descendent of the Agagites, a branch of the Amalekite People. The Shabbat preceding Purim is titled “Shabbat Z’chor” (Remembrance Shabbat) when we add to our regular Torah portion a reading from Deuteronomy chapter 25 “remember what Amalek did unto thee!” and concludes “Thou shall not forget”.

In the Pesach Haggadah, persecution of the Jews is recalled in the prayer “V’hi She-amdah” “ Not only one has risen to annihilate us, in every generation, they rise to wipe us out”. World War II gave renewed relevance to Haman’s genocidal intentions, when Hitler designed the “Final Solution to the Jews”. The Third Reich recognised that Esther’s story had the power to catalyse Jewish resistance, so they ordered German synagogues to be closed during the Purim holiday and reading the Megillah was forbidden and denounced a “pack of Jewish lies”.

The name Purim means the Feast of Lots (A pur is a lot) as Haman drew lots to decide when to exterminate the “Yehudim”.

All Jewish festivals have their different symbols, or “Simanim”. The Purim Simanim are:

A Fast

Esther fasts and pleads for the King’s mercy and averts Haman’s evil decree. Through her prayers and wise actions the decree was reversed and Haman got the opposite of what he wanted resulting in Mordechai and Esther being honoured and Haman was shamed and hanged on the gallows prepared for the Jews.

A Feast (Mishteh)

After reading the Megillah we celebrate our redemption and express thankfulness for escaping extinction. We therefore are encouraged to drink and rejoice till we drop tipsy enough to lose our ability to think straight! It’s a Mitzvah but I recommend moderation.

Sending Gifts (Mishloach Manot)

When we exchange and share little presents of Purim goodies to friends and community we are sharing the joy of redemption with all our people and emphasising their importance and relevance to each other.

Gifts for the Needy (Matanot L’evyonim)

Charity demonstrates inclusivity, caring for those less fortunate. We show that we are not only interested in ourselves. We become less selfish when we give to others. This year 5781, more than ever are struggling to put food on the table, due to Covid, illness, bereavement and unemployment. Even a modest donation makes a difference!

The Hidden Depths (Hanistar) “Understanding the Links in the Chain”

Not all that we see is authentic. Esther in Hebrew means hidden –“Nistar”. She hid her religion from the king just as generations later, Jews in Spain were forced to convert to Catholicism, yet secretly retained their Jewish customs and faith. They were termed Conversos or Marranos. The Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella ordered The Inquisition and expulsion of Jews from Spain. Today, the Spanish and Portuguese governments are actively seeking the descendants of those Jews and encouraging them to apply for citizenship and passports, restoring those families to their national heritage.

Judaism refers to levels of miracles:-

“Nes Nistar” - A hidden miracle

“Nes Galui” - A revealed miracle

Our Purim story concludes as a revealed miracle! Or as we put it in Jewish humour

"They tried to kill us all, BUT it didn't work, so - LET’S EAT!"

Wishing you all, “Chag Purim Sameach”.

Shelley



hamantaschen (pastries representing the "ears of Haman", or his hat). Let’s eat!

EDITORIAL



Selwyn and Gillian Goldthorpe,
editors of L'Chayim

We hope you enjoy the 30+ pages of this edition of your L'Chayim. For those that have not been able to join us on Zoom® at least this gives you an idea of what is happening in the community.

This month has seen us have a Zoom® Purim. Our grateful thanks to the grandchildren for taking part in telling us of the story of Purim, and for Shelley for bringing us the spirit of Purim (**pages 2-3**) as well as for taking part in the Zoom® occasion.

The future is optimistic (**see page 5**). During 'lockdown' some of us have been very busy. It is always nice to receive thanks. So, thanks to all our members that contributed to the deserving good causes (**pages 6-7**).

Talking of thanks, and how nice it is to receive thanks, PJ books were delighted to receive thanks from our young member and put her 'letter of thanks' on their Facebook site! (**page 8**). She is certainly developing into a fine young lady. A credit to her family, and to our community, as is Meira Hoskin who took part (**page 9**) in the meaning of Holocaust Memorial Day, contributing some prize winning photographs.

Our older members were also busy for Holocaust Memorial Day (**pages 11-12**). Harry Kessler, is now a TV star! His story was reported in the national press. Daughter, Liz's latest book is now available on line for purchase (**page 10**).

We have an account of the bravery of Paul Grüninger, Righteous Among the Nations (**page 17**). A review of a book that is rocking the social norms of Britain (**page 13**) as to why 'Jews Don't Count'. **Page 15** is a message from Reform Judaism and Covid in the community. The Northern communities shabbat service and mental health awareness (**page 17**). A report of 'The Torah of Trees, a study session (**pages 18-21**). A lecture on Torah and Justice (page 23-24), due to the kindness of Rabbi Margaret Jacobi for letting us publish this. **Pages 25-27** a walking tour of Córdoba with Rabbi Haim Casas. Shelley Yavetz tells us about her parents and the meaning of having a yahrzeit. (**pages 28-29**).

We would like to thank all those kind people that sent their thanks to us following the last publication of L'Chayim. It is really nice to get some feedback, any feedback, and when it is positive, even better! Sometimes it feels like we are working in a 'black hole'. We really appreciate the thoughtful people that contribute to making L'Chayim the magazine of Southport and District Reform Synagogue. We would love to publish your stories, past and present. Your news, your thoughts. We have been editors of L'Chayim for many years. We learn from experience, though offer no professionalism in this world of publishing. We remain grateful for the support of our proof readers, Fortune Chamberlain, Anne and Tony Kletz who (or should it be whom?) go a long way to make us write in proper English. Well we try!

Although lockdown has kept us in, it has also kept us busy! (GG,SG - editors)

Be happy!

Message from the
Synagogue Chairman
Doctor Selwyn Goldthorpe

Things will bounce back



This has been a difficult year. Many of us have had to evaluate what is important to us in life. Health, relationships, helping others. All of these aspirations have been more difficult both with the pandemic and with the buzz word of the year - lockdown.

During this time the Synagogue Executive and Council have been trying to support our members that are especially isolated and melancholic. I hope there is a sense of belonging, being a member of our Synagogue. It has been extremely difficult to have that human contact with members dependent on face to face interaction. Information technology is a poor substitute. Our thanks to Anne Kletz who has had an increased role as our social visitor, thoughtfully using doorsteps as a go between ! The Synagogue has been providing cards, magazines, and flowers to help keep spirits up. We have used the telephone, post, and information technology. As members of our Synagogue, we can all help each other. We all have a role to play.

**We can all help
each other.**

Of course, one of the great benefits of religion is that it offers hope, “please God”. National polling suggests that the pandemic has not inspired a religious awakening among the general population. It has, however, led to more people re-evaluating what they consider important in life. The Synagogue, as a registered charity, exists for the benefit of its members and the wider community. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we are all interdependent on each other. We should value relationships and friendships. I hope that when the Synagogue reopens those of our members that have not felt the need to make face to face contact will do so, even if we are all wearing masks!

Most people over the age of sixty will by now have had their first vaccination against Covid. There is hope. For some, their prayers will have been answered. We can once more look forward to being together as a community. There is a need to properly mourn our losses which involves all of us as a community. There is a need to properly count our blessings. We can look forward to better times and as a communal organisation ensure that we all contribute towards each other’s welfare. As Rabbi Kay used to ask of a person,

**There is
hope.**

It is not whether life has been good to you, but were you good to life?

Dear Anne

Could you please pass on my thanks for the lovely daffodils and the plant. They really cheered me up , especially as they are spring flowers by and hopefully this will be a sign of better times to come.

Love from Faith xxx

....as well as the telephone thanks received from other Synagogue members for similar. A big thank you to Anne Kletz for all her hard work and Covid spirit in keeping the Synagogue in contact with our membership .

Southport and District Reform Synagogue.

Thank you so much for your generous donation of £380.00 to Jewish Women's Aid. Your support is so greatly appreciated. Please accept this letter as your official receipt.

Jewish Women's Aid is still the only UK charity supporting Jewish women and their children affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence. From April to September this year we supported 545 women and children, a significant increase on previous years, showing the ongoing detrimental impact of the pandemic on Jewish women experiencing domestic abuse.

- Six months into the pandemic, we have seen a continued and significant impact on women reaching out to us for help in terms of the number of women affected by domestic abuse, often exacerbated by the measures intended to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- Every month since April, we've supported higher numbers of women than the same month the previous year, and there is no doubt this is due to the pandemic.
- Our children's therapists have provided 167 children's therapy sessions, a rise of 67% from the same period in 2019. We have also supported 30% more children during this time.
- For the first time ever, Jewish Women's Aid set up an emergency welfare grant fund to provide basic items that women were struggling to pay for. We have distributed grants for food, nappies, utility bills, and replacement of a broken fridge.
- We also provided grants over half term for families eligible for free school meals.

The women and children we help could be exposed to greater harm without our support. Your gift has helped us continue to keep women and children safe throughout this time and in the future.

Please accept my thanks together with those of the JWA team. The biggest thanks however come from the many women and children who you have helped.

The Synagogue donated money to JNF** to plant one mature tree in the Negev and we have also donated money for 5 saplings to Tree Aid***, an environmental charity who plant trees to help tackle poverty in Africa.

We always like to do something similar each year and this year, even though we couldn't be together as a community, we have still made a positive difference to these two worthy causes.

**

Jewish National Fund was founded in 1901 to buy and develop land in Ottoman Palestine for Jewish settlement. The JNF is a non-profit organisation. By 2007, it owned 13% of the total land in Israel. Since its inception, the JNF says it has planted over 240 million trees in Israel.

****TREE AID is an international development organisation which focuses on unlocking the potential of trees to reduce poverty and protect the environment in Africa. It is a registered charity in the UK.*



Southport & District Reform Synagogue

Thank you for your kind donation of 770.00.

With your help we are committed to providing emergency food and support to people in crisis. The food banks distributed over 1.6 million three-day emergency food supplies last year and even before the current crisis were seeing an increase in demand.

As the Coronavirus outbreak develops, more people than ever are needing our help. The teams are working tirelessly to ensure that food banks are able to remain open and have the necessary stocks to respond to this crisis.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people. Your support means we can respond to the changing situation and continue to provide this vital lifeline.

You will appreciate that in the current climate we are having to adapt to working in different ways, with most staff working from home. Please do accept this email as an official thank you as we are unable to send postal acknowledgements at this time. If you need a written receipt please email supportercare@trusselltrust.org.

If you would like to hear more about our work and how you're helping us fight hunger in the UK, why not sign up to our e-newsletter? Or if you'd like to find out more about what we do, including our latest campaign actions, please visit our website.

Thank you for helping to create a future without food banks.

The Trussell Trust team

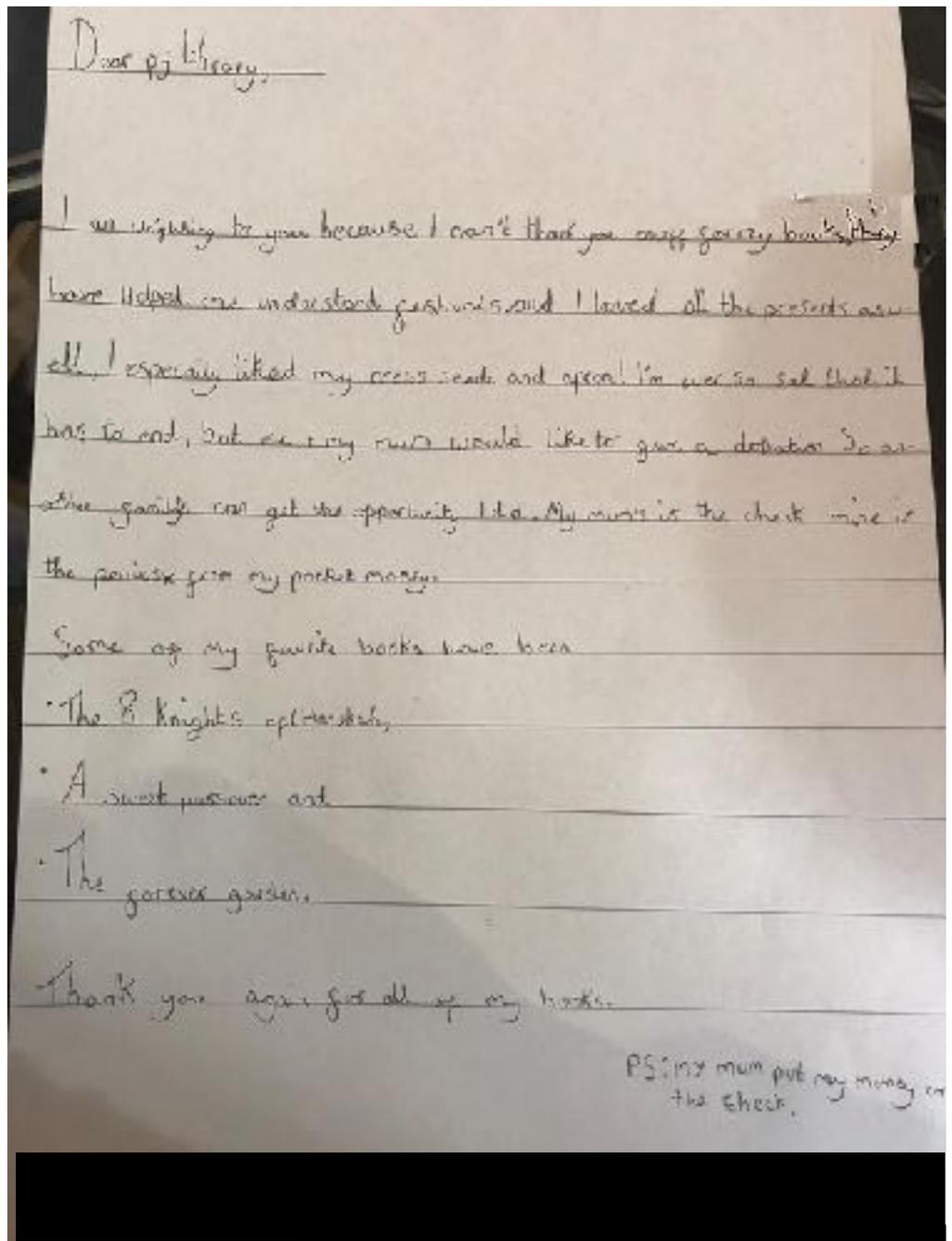


Many people read the newspaper religiously every day

Our young member when aged 8¾ years, said thank you to PJ Library, as to how their books helped her to understand the festivals and how also, she loved all the presents they sent, especially the cress seeds and apron! She says she is ever so sad it has to end but “my Mum would like to make a donation so that other families can get the same opportunity I did”.

She has enjoyed the experience, but was nine years old in February, and sad that for her, the books have come to an end. She wrote this lovely letter of appreciation to PJ Library, and I believe PJ Library has responded, wanting to put the letter on their Facebook page!

-Anne Kletz.



PJ Library

PJ Library is a charitable scheme to help young children, aged eight years or under, and their families learn about Judaism through books which are sent to the children free of charge monthly. All the families have to do is sign up to the scheme at www.pjlibrary.org.uk. The award-winning, non-denominational books celebrate Jewish culture, values and traditions through a wide range of stories and beautiful illustrations. PJ Library books are posted directly to children so they can build their own Jewish bedtime libraries.....some of the books are timeless Jewish classics, whilst others are modern interpretations. The scheme has been of particular value to families who do not live close to a Jewish community, or are involved with a smaller community like Southport where there are fewer families with whom to interact.

News

one who illuminates'

She wanted to be the light...



School had a project for Holocaust Memorial Day where they had to enter a photo of 'be the light in the darkness' and the winner would be the one the school used on Twitter.

These photographs were entered into the competition, and she won! (which she was very pleased about, her Mum has told us). So, they used her photo for the night when we all lit candles for Holocaust Memorial Day.



It is lovely to see the younger generation continuing on regardless of everything that has happened.



Mazel Tov

The theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) was, 'be the light in the darkness'. HMD took place on 27th January. We were asked to light a candle at 8pm that evening....



*HMD Candle photo
by Selwyn Goldthorpe*

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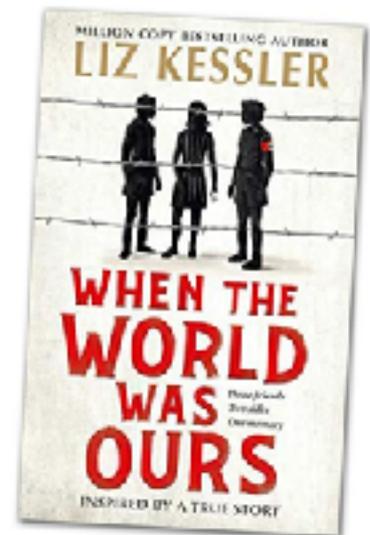
Harry Kessler was interviewed on BBC Northwest News on 31st January, about his family's miraculous escape from Nazi occupied Europe. Harry is one of the Holocaust Educational Trust's speakers, regularly in demand to speak reminding people, of this "accidental life". Harry, born in 1930, escaped from Vienna, to Czechoslovakia, and then (due to the family's befriending of Cheshire tourists in Vienna) to Cheshire.

Harry's daughter Liz, also appeared alongside her father. Liz Kessler's newly published novel, "When the World Was Ours" is inspired by a true story, this book describes the friendship between three young people, two Jewish,

one with a father rising up the Nazi Ranks.

"Three friends. Two sides. One memory. Vienna. 1936. Three young friends – Leo, Elsa and Max – spend a perfect day together, unaware that around them Europe is descending into a growing darkness, and that events soon mean that they will be cruelly ripped apart from each other. With their lives taking them across Europe – to Germany, England, Prague and Poland – will they ever find their way back to each other? Will they want to?"

Inspired by the true story of Liz's father's escape from Nazi-occupied Europe, WHEN THE WORLD WAS OURS is an extraordinary novel which shows how the bonds of love, family and friendship allow glimmers of hope to flourish, even in the most hopeless of times".



Liz Kessler reflected on how the Holocaust has shaped her life and why it's so important to remember:

"I often think how strange it is that tiny, seemingly insignificant moments can change the course of our lives forever. This is exactly what happened to my father, Harry, who grew up in Vienna, in Austria. In 1934, when he was four years old, he had just recovered from whooping cough, so his father, Frank, took him on a steamer boat ride, as a treat. He was sitting beside a beautifully-dressed woman, and as he knelt on the seat to look out the



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window, his father told him to be careful not to scuff the woman's dress. It turned out this woman was from England - she said in stunted German that he didn't need to worry, and said what a lovely little boy my father was. Frank got chatting with this woman and her husband, a dentist – they were called Gladys and William Jones – who were in Vienna for a conference. They talked so much that the couple missed their stop, so Frank offered for them to come to their house for some of his wife Annie's home-baked cake. He also offered to show them around Vienna the next day. Some weeks later, the Jones couple sent Frank a letter from their home in England, thanking them for their hospitality and for an unforgettable day. Frank, thankfully, kept that letter, and it's the very reason I'm here today.



Harry also made the Jewish news as he received his first Covid vaccination, saying he was “Absolutely delighted to have had my first anti-Covid vaccine injection delivered at a local health centre.” He praised the “excellent system with minimum queueing and everyone apparently being seen at their appointment time or within 2 or 3 minutes of it. Next day, he said,” I feel no after effects and am looking forward to completing the job at my next appointment in three weeks.”



Dr Selwyn Goldthorpe took part in a video remembrance of Holocaust Memorial Day at Police HQ Merseyside, lighting a candle and remembering :

“Today, Holocaust Memorial Day asks us to **“BE THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS”**. We remind ourselves of some of the darkness moments of humanity: those of division, prejudice, injustice, intolerance, discrimination, denial and misinformation It

is our responsibility to stand together as the light in the darkness, as a beacon of hope, for all those affected by their victimisation. We must do all in our power to ensure that this darkness, as it led to genocide, never again takes place.

Holocaust Memorial Day enables us to remember the witnesses and victims of the darkest of genocide - for a purpose....this light reminds us of the need to ensure every human being is enlightened to value diversity in society, and to tackle prejudice, discrimination and intolerance wherever we encounter them. “

<https://twitter.com/MerPolCEU/status/1354346064787222530?s=03>



Holocaust Memorial Day - Story of a Rescuer

Righteous Among the Nations

Contributed by from Susan Fox.

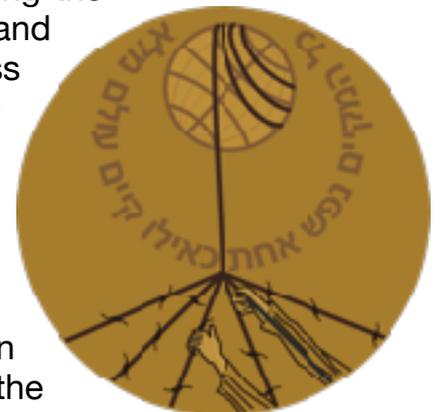


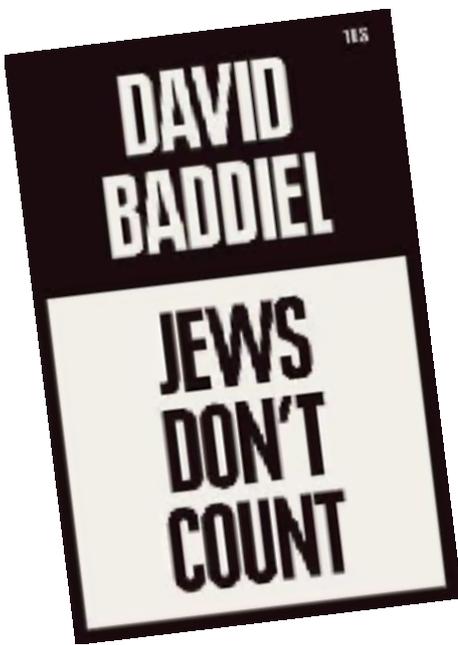
PAUL GRÜNINGER (1891-1972) was a Swiss police officer, born in the Canton of St Gallen to a Protestant father and Catholic mother. He was imbued with strong humanitarian principles, beginning his career as a school teacher before joining the Swiss Police, becoming a commander in 1925.

I first came across his brave and heroic efforts to save the lives of 3,600 Austrian Jews by backdating their visas and falsifying other documents to indicate that they had entered Switzerland at a time when legal entry by refugees, was still possible (and also afterwards) when reading a fictionalised altered version of his story in Rose Tremain's novel *The Gustav Sonata*. The novel's bibliography contained a book entitled *Switzerland Unmasked* with an interview with Paul Grüninger's daughter Ruth, describing how these altruistic acts put an end to her father's career, forcing the family to live in abject poverty.

Following the *Anschluss* in 1938 (the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany) Grüninger received an order to slow down the wave of refugees crossing from the Austria province of Vorarlberg and even send them back! Visas became compulsory from April 1938, so many Jewish refugees attempted to escape on foot or swimming. Along with a network of local people of various backgrounds - clerics, farmers, innkeepers, members of the Swiss Jewish community that included a Refugee Assistance group in St Gallen and a Socialist Youth group, he procured entry visas for the relatives of those who had already found refuge in Switzerland.

At the Conference of Cantonal Police Directors, in April 1938, Grüninger called for Switzerland to keep its borders open for humanitarian reasons. Nevertheless the Swiss Confederation decided to ban all Austrian refugees from entering the country, so Austrian Jews faced the same persecution and violence as German Jews faced. The journey crossing the Swiss border illegally was difficult and treacherous. Refugees who were captured were brought to Grüninger - he saved about 3,600 Jewish refugees by backdating their visas and falsifying other documents to indicate that they had entered Switzerland at a time when legal entry of refugees was still possible. Eventually Grüninger's actions were discovered and when he arrived for work in April 1939, the entrance to the police station was blocked. Most likely on the basis of a denunciation to the Federal Department of Justice and Police, Grüninger found himself summarily dismissed and deprived of his pension. In 1940 he was sentenced by the local district court to a hefty fine for "breach of duty and falsification of documents". He stated later that he was not ashamed of this conviction and that on the contrary he was proud to have saved the lives of hundreds of people who were fleeing persecution in their own country and whose lives were threatened. Grüninger's punishment did take a severe toll on his family.





How identity politics failed one particular identity.

Author, David Baddiel

Times Literary Supplement. ISBN 978-0-00839947-4

Hardback £9-99.

A book review by Selwyn Goldthorpe.

David Baddiel takes us through various case studies in making his point, namely that Jews are forgotten about when it comes to equality politics and racism. He makes the point that this omission is a form of anti-semitism.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, black and ethnic minorities all matter. The BBC (The British 'Auntie') is happy to campaign the rights of minorities, however Jews are seen as being outside of racist insults, after all we have a special word, anti-semitism for racially insulting Jews.

Should I not use that word- Jew ? Baddiel points out the long standing overtones contrasting the use of Jew and Jewish. A 'Jew Banker' has an entirely different overtone to a 'Jewish Banker'. Of course, the idea that Jewish people are disproportionately associated with wealth is in itself anti-semitic and perhaps has its root in the antisemitism found in the 'Merchant of Venice' and 'Oliver Twist', but who cares? We still are encouraged to read this literature as our great British heritage. Would the same be said if black people were so depicted?

Is anti-semitism racism? Is being Jewish having a religion or being part of a race? Those that downgrade anti-semitism say that being a Jew is belonging to a religious group and therefore this is nothing like racism. However, being born a Jew, never going to the synagogue, would still in most minds, make you Jewish. Those going to the gas chambers in Nazi occupied Europe were not asked how many times they had attended the synagogue! Even those with blond hair and blue eyes were murdered.

Is anti-semitism racism?

It is interesting how anti-semitism is the ground of the far right as well as the far left. The far right seeing Jews as non-Aryan, and part of 'blacks' racially, and the far left sees Jews as 'white capitalist.' Of course being mostly homogenous with local populations makes Jews the **invisible enemy within** - hence the Nazi idea that each Jew should wear a yellow star to make their identity clear to all. Exactly where Jews fit into UK society is still open to debate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, being hailed as the first BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) Chancellor by the UK press, while the Jewish Nigel Lawson (of the Thatcher era) is ignored. Likewise the BBC publishes its highest paid broadcasters, 'Auntie' saying none of which are from BAME backgrounds, totally ignoring top broadcasters such as Claudia Winkleman and Vanessa Feltz. Are Jews an ethnic minority? In the UK Jews number about the same as the Sikh community. When we hear from the media about Covid affecting the BAME community adversely, do you hear from the media that this includes Jewish people? Jews don't count. Jewish males are twice at risk of dying from Covid-19 than Christian men (ref.Office National Statistics).

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When we talk about employment, university places, ethnic diversity and equality, when last did you hear of Jewish people, an ethnic minority group, being given any priority in a selection process? Jews are portrayed by the performing arts and by the BBC as having certain physical characteristics and mannerisms (in the same way as Nazi propaganda). If a Jew is shown on TV more often than not we are shown the ultra-orthodox. On the other hand, when last was Jesus Christ depicted as Jewish?



The report by the Human Rights Commission on anti-semitism within the British Labour Party is mentioned. Had such comments within the Labour Party been directed at the British black population, the Muslim population, or trans population, what an uproar the press would have made. Jeremy Corbyn is still defended by those within the Labour Party as having been the victim of a right wing coup. This is ironic, as Corbyn was the person who said of certain British Jews, that the "Zionists" who had "berated" the Palestinian speaker at a meeting, "they don't want to study history and secondly having lived in this country for a very long time, probably all their lives, they don't understand English irony either." He was still seen to be a fit person to lead the Labour Party. Jews don't count.

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David Lionel Baddiel (born 28 May 1964) is an English comedian, novelist and television presenter. He is known for his work alongside Rob Newman in The Mary Whitehouse Experience and partnership with Frank Skinner. Baddiel is also a screenwriter and a published novelist, having written the children's novels The Parent Agency, The Person Controller, AniMalcolm, Birthday Boy, Head Kid and The Taylor TurboChaser. His Mother, Sarah, was German-born, and was a five-month-old refugee child when she was brought to the United Kingdom in 1939 by her parents after escaping from Nazi Germany, where her father, Ernst Fabian, a victim of the Kristallnacht pogrom, had been stripped of his assets. Soon after their arrival, Fabian was interned as an enemy alien on the Isle of Man for a year. He had mental health issues, sometimes requiring hospitalisation, for the rest of his life. Baddiel is a patron of Humanists UK and the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM).



Have your say the editors welcome letters and articles, though not of a political nature, and reserve the right to edit. Please send to the Office or gillygold@yahoo.com

A Special Covid-19 Message January 2021



Everyone at Reform Judaism hugely values the incredible efforts which have been made by the leadership of all our synagogues in maintaining community over the past year. Despite the need for physical distancing, a huge amount of work from clergy, staff and lay leadership has enabled our communities to be as close as ever. Collectively, we have provided a spiritual refuge which our members have needed and valued.

The current number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths is incredibly high and the risk to our members is now similar to last March with the new variant potentially even more serious. **We therefore strongly urge all of our communities to remain closed for in-person activities at the current time** ([click here](#) to read the full guidelines). Pikuach Nefesh - the obligation to preserve life - has been the central value of our decision-making at all stages. Whilst our synagogues are legally permitted to open, this does not mean we must or should do so. By continuing to limit our contacts, we protect both members and professional staff in our synagogues whilst supporting the national effort to limit the transmission of COVID-19. It would be particularly devastating for the virus to be allowed to spread in our communities now when the prospect of the vaccines delivering widespread immunity is so close.

Together, we have achieved so much in facing down a challenge we have not seen in any of our lifetimes. Two vaccines are now approved for use so there is a light at the end of the tunnel. We encourage all our members who are invited to be vaccinated to do so. The transition to virtual spaces; the care and support structures we have managed to put in place; and the spirit of togetherness which transcends distance - there is so much we should all be proud of. Reform Judaism will continue to offer you and your community all of the support we can as we seek to navigate what we all hope will be the beginning of the end of the pandemic and a new beginning for us all.

[Click Here](#) to read the full guidelines.

Rabbi Celia Surget
Chair, Assembly of Rabbis and Cantors
&
Robert Wiltshire
Chair, Reform Judaism

COVID AND BEING JEWISH



Jewish males had a mortality rate of 187.9 deaths per 100,000, which was roughly twice the risk of Christian males (92.6 deaths per 100,000).

For Jewish females, the rate was 94.3 deaths per 100,000, compared with 54.6 deaths per 100,000 for Christian females.

The recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) report looked at the breakdown of deaths according to religion revealed the overall death rate from coronavirus in England and Wales was higher among people who identify as Muslims, Jews, Hindus or Sikh than Christians, or those with no stated religion.

Responding to the findings, ONS head of life events Nick Stripe said: “For the most part the elevated risk of certain religious groups is explained by geographical, socio-economic and demographic factors and increased risks associated with ethnicity. “However, after adjusting for the above, Jewish males are at twice the risk of Christian males, and Jewish women are also at higher risk. Additional data and analyses are required to understand this excess risk.”

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly changed many people's daily or weekly worshipping routines, affecting their ability to pray, enjoy group discussion or take part in singing or chanting. The problem lies with the fact that while social distancing is effective in normal social interactions, singing can produce a substantially larger number of respiratory droplets and aerosols than speaking, as it is louder and sustained for longer durations, the SARS-CoV-2 virus spreading accordingly as shown by choir-related outbreaks of COVID-19 in Berlin, Amsterdam, and Washington State had high attack rates of 75.6%, 78.5%, and 86.9%, respectively.



“Until now, I never understood why you got so excited when anyone walked by the house.”

Current guidance states singing should be “limited to the performers, and worship should not include congregational singing”. It continues: “People should avoid singing, shouting and raising voices. This is because of the potential for increased risk of transmission from aerosol and droplets.” This guidance will continue to have to be observed until the attack rate around Merseyside is significantly reduced. As a bonus we are favoured by a Synagogue which is generally quite spacious for the size of the congregation. Modelling suggests that limiting the occupancy of a venue to 20% of its maximum capacity reduces new infections by more than 80%.

Mental Health Awareness Shabbat

from Fortune Chamberlain

Mental Health Awareness Shabbat was launched by the Jewish charity Jami in 2017 and falls on Shabbat "Bo", the Torah portion that discusses the plague of darkness, which has resonance with mental illness.

Excitingly, the shabbat morning of 23 January 2021 saw a Reform Judaism first as 15 communities collaborated on the first-ever cross-Northern synagogue service to mark Mental Health Awareness Shabbat. In a time when so many people's mental health has been negatively affected, this brings an opportunity to bring joy and strength from praying together as one large community.

It was a lovely meaningful collaborative Zoom service with contributions from 15 Northern communities and attended by over 250 participants - so well done to Sarita Robinson for co-ordinating and to all those who took part.

Some highlights were the happy singing of "Sim Shalom" from Blackpool Reform, the Torah portion being chanted so beautifully by Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen and a very thoughtful sermon by Rabbi Fabian. I felt honoured to be asked to lead the Amidah.



The poster features a decorative border at the top with various colorful icons representing Jewish symbols like the Star of David, menorah, and musical notes. The main title 'Northern Chagigah' is in large teal font, with the subtitle 'Something to look forward to!' below it. To the right is a stylized graphic of two figures in yellow and green. The event details 'Save the Date', '5-7 Nov 2021', and 'The Hawkhills, Easingwood' are prominently displayed. Contact information for Sarita Robinson is provided, along with the Reform Judaism logo and a registration link.

Northern Chagigah

Something to look forward to!

Save the Date

5-7 Nov 2021
The Hawkhills, Easingwood

Questions? Get in touch
sarita@rjuk.org or
020 8349 5716

Register your interest or book at
reformjudaism.org.uk/events/northernchagigah2021

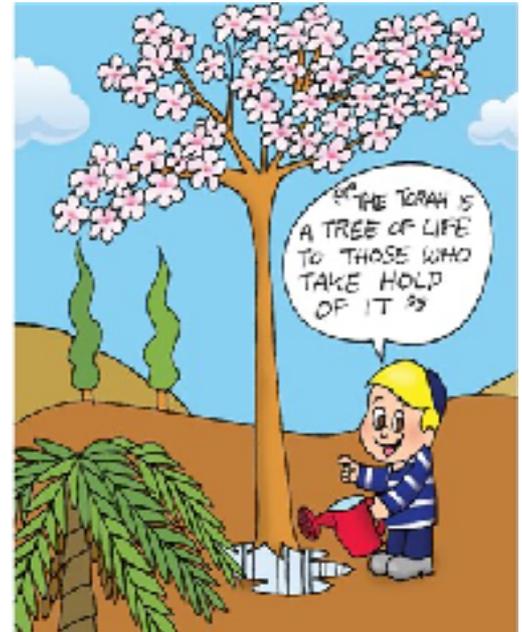


After the shabbat morning of 23 January 2021 (see the preceding page), this was followed by a study session in the afternoon a report of this session from Selwyn Goldthorpe.....

The Torah of Trees, a study session led by Sara Moon for the Northern Reform Synagogues

The Northern Synagogue shabbat Zoom® service had 250 people joined together as one congregation. What a fantastic response to the Mental Health Shabbat and **Tu B'Shevat**.

The afternoon study session, 'The Torah of Trees' was led by Sara Moon, who lives in North Yorkshire, on a small farm specialising in vegan and organic produce. Twenty six people joined this study session about Torah and trees for a session that did grow in strength (if you appreciate the double meaning) as it went on.



We were asked to take a step back from our everyday thoughts and think about how spending time in nature is helpful to our mental health. The use of eco therapy (a type of formal treatment which involves doing activities outside in nature) has shown it can help with mild to moderate depression. This might be due to combining regular physical activity and social contact with being outside in nature.

We were told that being outside in natural light can also be helpful if you experience seasonal affective disorder, a type of depression that affects people during particular seasons or times of the year when the light is poor.

While people may believe nature helps mood, the medical scientist in me says surely there are studies to show whether it is nature, or the social contact that helps mood? Certainly, I know that it is not natural light that is helpful, as seasonal affective disorder (which is more common in areas north of the Artic Circle, with the long, black winters) can be treated by an artificial light box (sold by The John Lewis shops etc.).

So, now that the science was out of the way, we were on safer ground discussing Torah. Rabbi Hezekiah and Rabbi Kohen said in the name of Rav:

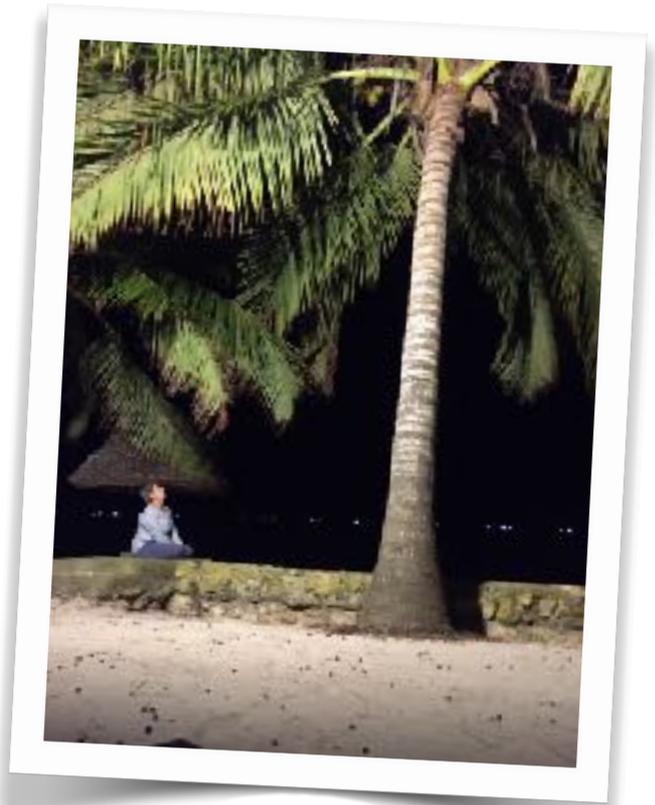
'It is forbidden to live in a city in which there is no physician, no bath, and no court that is able to administer punishment' . Rabbi Yose ben Rabbi Bun said,
'Also, it is forbidden to live in a town in which there is no greenery '
(Jerusalem Talmud, Kiddushin 4:12).

This all goes to show that living in a concrete jungle has been thought for many years, to be bad for one. If only the town planners had studied Torah in the 1960s!

We were asked to consider why 'Deborah, Rebecca's nurse, died, and was buried under the oak below Best El; so it was named Alon-Bachut (The Oak of Weeping). [Genesis 35:8]

We are told in Judges 4:4-5 that Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess that led Israel and that she used to sit under a palm tree (like holding court) to make her decisions. Why a palm tree? We all had different ideas. I was told it was a date palm (I do not have the original Hebrew nor the skill in the language to argue this point) when I suggested that world-wide about 150 people are killed by falling coconuts and this contrasts with about 5 deaths per year from shark attacks. How dangerous to sit under a palm? I expect if you are holding Court, then more than a penny can drop for your thoughts.

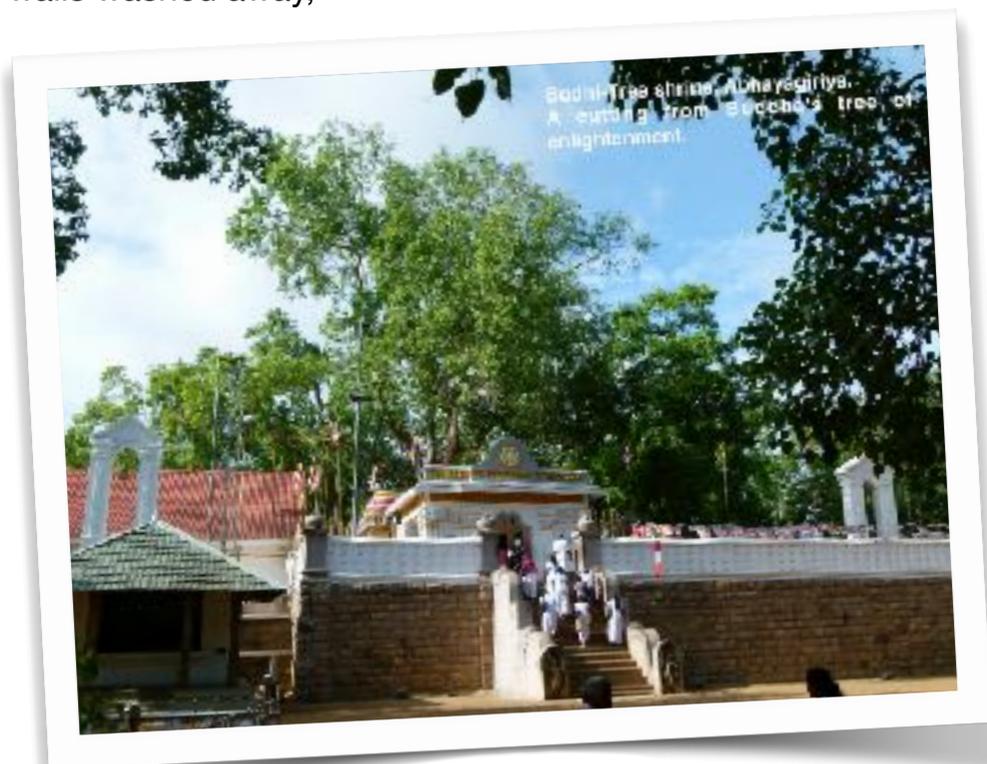
We were asked to share our own stories of significant trees. It does raise the question of our travels. We are only too aware so as not to sit under palm trees (see photograph) . We have seen the affects of global warming, coral bleaching (We used to SCUBA dive), sandbagging to stop your island being washed away (The Maldives), glaciers melting, muddy rivers from the land erosion associated with 'slash and burn', and the clearing of the rain forest to make room for cattle. This is only a fraction of the destruction to our planet we have witnessed. Here on our coast line we see hyper-dynamic weather - floods, sea-walls washed away,



Gillian Goldthorpe, practicing palm tree 'first-aid,' sat away from the coconuts and looking up in thought! (Mafia Island, Tanzania)

and at present land erosion about to take down our coastal path. We have a new radar mast, at Crosby, to monitor coastal erosion.

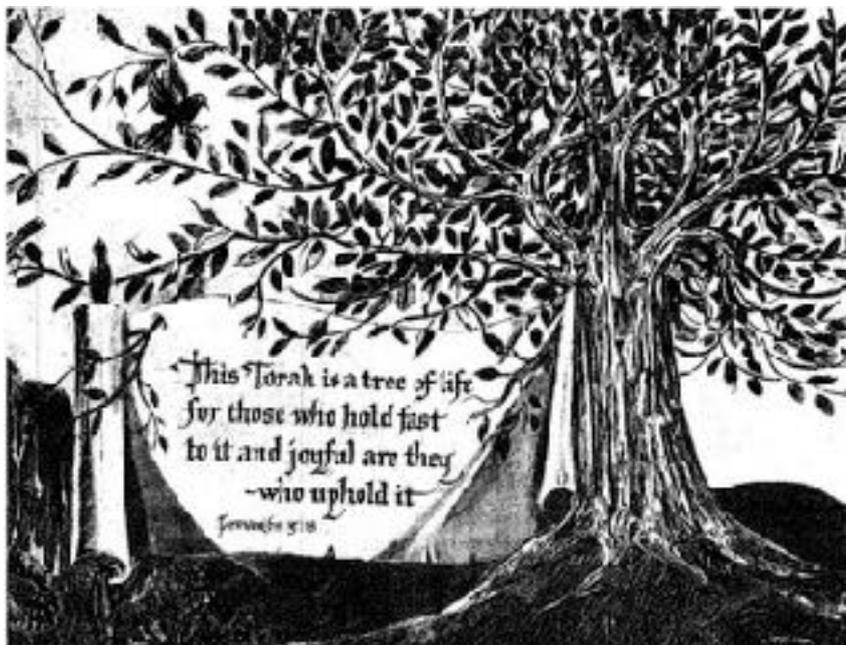
We have been fortunate enough to see what is perhaps the most famous of trees in the world, namely, The Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, a sacred fig tree in the Mahamewna Gardens,



Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. It is said to be the southern branch from the historical Sri Maha Bodhi at Buddha Gaya in India under which Buddha attained Enlightenment. It was planted in 288 BCE, and is the oldest living human-planted tree in the world with a known planting date. A temple surrounds the tree (see photo. preceding page)

There were those amongst us that wanted to discuss the fashion for Woodland Burials, incidentally these are allowed for payment by the JJBS scheme, should you want to remain a thorn in the side of your loved ones.

I did suggest that when Deborah sat under a tree, in her wisdom, that perhaps she was following in the footsteps of an earlier text - that of Genesis and 'The Tree of Knowledge'. The bible has, from the beginning, associated trees with understanding. We even talk about eg. social constructs, being grounded in reality. The roots of a tree ground us in our reality whilst the top of trees point towards the heavens and our lack of understanding and search for meaning.



The first reference to the tree of life in Jewish texts comes from the biblical story of the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:9 relates that God filled the garden with beautiful and tasty trees, and in the middle planted two in particular — the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the latter of which he forbade Adam and Eve to eat.

The tree of life as a metaphor for the Torah comes from the Book of Proverbs, which uses the term three times, the most famous of which is the saying in Proverbs 3:18: Etz chaim hee

l'machazikim bah ("She is a tree of life to those who grasp her"). This line, referring to the Torah, is commonly sung in Ashkenazi congregations as the Torah is returned to the ark after public readings:

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה. ותמכיה מאשר
 דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל נתיבותיה שלום
 השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה. חדש ימינו נקדם

Translated:

'It is a tree of life for those who hold fast to it, and those who uphold it are happy. Its ways are pleasant, and all of its paths peaceful. Return us to you, God, so that we shall return, renew our days as of old.'

Trees purify the air, capturing carbon, provide shelter from the environment, help stop soil erosion and have many more benefits to the environment. You only have to see the mist coming off a forest as the morning sun rises to realise that trees are fundamental to the cycle of water and life.

Kohelet Rabbah 7:13 , from the 6-8th century, reminds us of this importance:

‘When the Blessed Holy One created the first human, He took him and led him round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: “ look at My works, how beautiful and praiseworthy they are! And all that I have created , it was for you that I created it. Pay attention that you do not corrupt and destroy My world:if you corrupt it, there is not one to repair it after you “.



A Tu B' Shevat message as important today, as it was many thousands of years ago.

[To learn more about Judaism and the environment see <https://www.growtorah.org/curriculum>]

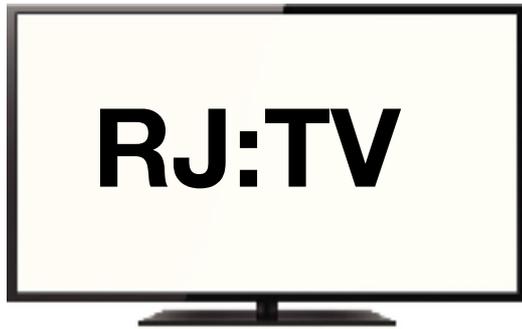
Reform Judaism's Bereavement Support – many of you have highlighted the challenges around grieving and bereavement support whilst ‘social distancing’. Reform Judaism will be starting a Bereavement Support Group online, for people who have been bereaved in the last few weeks, and have been unable to attend the funeral or cremation, or to have a shiva as they would have wished – please pass this on to people in your community who have had this experience. This will be a supportive space to share thoughts and experiences with others who have had similar experiences.

The group will be facilitated by experienced bereavement counsellors. This will run from 6th May for an initial period of 4 weeks, every Wednesday from 12.00 – 1.00 on Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/97769196348> or you can phone in 01314601196, meeting ID: 977 6919 6348. Please speak with Sharon at RJ (sdaniels@rjuk.org) if you wish to join as that is useful to our organisation of sessions.

Talking about Dying: a gentle, loving space to talk about any concerns surrounding death. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2.00 – 3.00 -access RJ:TV

See: <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/rjtv-online-community-from-reform-judaism/>

FEELING ALONE? LACKING YOUR SYNAGOGUE?



www.zoom.us/j/407196863

www.reformjudaism.org.uk/

RJ:TV is Reform Judaism's interactive broadcasting platform for these challenging times. Each day they will provide a range of interactive programming that you are invited to join – from daily prayer services and adult learning sessions to fun for all ages and casual catch-ups. We can still come together virtually to share in learning and meaningful interaction. Click here : <https://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/rjtv-online-community-from-reform-judaism/>

**Unable to relax?
Feeling stressed?
Feeling low?**

Talk Liverpool
**working together to
look after your mental
wellbeing.**

0151 228 2300 talkliverpool.nhs.uk

I believe you have to have a Liverpool GP though I am sure you can be signposted to an similar service if you are outside their catchment area.

Best to phone and have a chat or have a confidential chat with me for further help.

Dr Selwyn Goldthorpe

**'A trouble shared is
a trouble halved'**

Help yourself to feel better

To help you to tackle your problems, we can offer effective talking therapies to:

- Understand why you feel as you do
- Look at the links between your feelings, thoughts, symptoms and behaviour
- Find out what you would like to change
- Discover new ways of coping now and in the future.

How can I find out more?

You can self refer by completing the online referral form available on their website:

talkliverpool.nhs.uk or call on 0151 228 2300.

The Inaugural Rabbi Harry Martin Jacobi Memorial Lecture

“Religion & Justice from Leviticus to Lily”, by Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi PhD, JP.

The Torah is as meaningful today as ever - the call for justice is clear.

Why Leviticus ?

Leviticus chapter 19 commands us to be “Holy”, to treat all people with equality and fairness, the standard being to treat people as you would like to be treated. We have a special duty to the vulnerable, not only to treat them fairly, even more so to love them, including ‘the stranger’, as ‘we were once strangers’.

Leviticus also commanded the need for a period when there should be a social re-balance, a ‘Jubilee Year’. Leviticus commands us to extend justice to animals, and our use of the land.

Although Judaism commands us as to the principles of justice, it is the later teachings (the Mishnah, from the second century, the Gemara (elaboration of the Torah), the Palestinian Talmud, from the fourth century, the Babylonian Talmud, from the sixth century, and the Sugya (extended arguments) that illustrates some of the practical difficulties we experience at carrying out these commands.

Justice in the Talmud:

Compensation should be fair and proportionate encompassing the whole of the problem including side issues eg. time off work and the responsibilities of individuals. Taxation should be according to means and benefit they get. A balance!

The Talmud examines justice from all aspects through stories and contrast with different modes of behaviour.

Lily Montagu

Was born 22 December 1873, daughter of a viscount (see Appendix) She began to question orthodox judaism as a teenager, going on to be a founder of Liberal Judaism and World Union of Progressive Synagogues. A passionate advocate for justice. She died 2 January 1963. A friend and supporter of Rabbi Harry Jacobi (see Appendix)

Lily Montagu worked for the deliverance of the human personality from the crushing needs of poverty, and discrimination. She worked in practical ways to help those most deprived. She was a supporter of women’s rights, a factory inspector and justice of the peace, she worked to improve social conditions for all.

What has been shown:

The Torah shows us the imperative for justice

The Talmud gives us details of justice

Lily Montagu illustrates how to uphold and do justice

Judaism is a dream, but also a firm conviction that the dream may come true.

In Theodor Herzl words, **“ If you will it, it is no dream.”**

A view shared by Rabbi Harry Jacobi.

Appendices

1. **Rabbi Harry Martin Jacobi** (19 October 1925 – 24 April 2019), MBE, was a rabbi in the United Kingdom, where he came in 1939, via The Netherlands, as a refugee from Nazi Germany.[1] He has been described as "a formative figure in the founding and growth of Liberal Judaism in the UK and Europe.



He was raised in Berlin. Just after his bar mitzvah his synagogue was destroyed on Kristallnacht. He and his brother were told to flee by his Mother, In February 1939 he travelled to The Netherlands and then on the SS Bodegraven from Amsterdam, in May 1940 to Liverpool where the boat was made to wait three days (being full of 'Kindertransport') before being allowed to dock. His grandparents, parents, aunt, uncle and one cousin all perished at the hand of the Nazi regime.

He worked as a motor mechanic in Manchester and, after service in post-war Europe with the Jewish Brigade, returned to Amsterdam in 1949 to work for his uncle. In July 1949, Harry visited London as a Dutch youth delegate to the sixth international conference of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Rabbi Leo Baeck ended his presidential address by saying: "God waits for us." Harry credited these words with changing his life. With the help and encouragement of Leo Baeck and Liberal Judaism founder Lily Montagu (see below) , he changed his mind about going to Israel and instead studied for the British rabbinate at Leo Baeck College in London and was ordained in 1961. His school education had ended at the age of 14 as he was part of the Kindertransport.

He had a life long concern for justice and treating people fairly. He was chairman of the Liberal Beth Din for many years. He was supported in his ordination and life long friendship by Lily Montagu.

Before Rabbi Harry Jacobi died, he requested that after his death there should be a memorial lecture in remembrance of his work, and that the first lecture should be given by his daughter, Rabbi Margaret Jacobi (from the Birmingham Progressive Synagogue).

2. **The Hon. Lilian Helen "Lily" Montagu**, CBE (22 December 1873 – 22 January 1963)[1] was the first woman to play a major role in Progressive Judaism.

Her father was the founder of the merchant bank that bore his name, was a self-made millionaire by 1871. He was a Liberal politician who sat in the House of Commons from 1885 to 1900 as the MP for Whitechapel, a poor district of the East End of London. In 1907, Montagu was raised to the peerage as Baron Swaythling.

In 1893 Lily founded the West Central Jewish Girls Club (which subsequently merged into the Jewish Girls' Brigade). She was active in social improvement, particularly in respect to unemployment, sweat shops and bad housing.

Lily lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Jewish Religious Union in London. The Union set up the first synagogue in Liberal Judaism in the UK and helped found the World Union for Progressive Judaism, for many years being its secretary.

Also, Lily Montagu was a founding member, with her sister, of the Jewish League for Woman Suffrage.

.....
The last days of SS Bodegraven see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/78/a3836478.shtml>

With grateful thanks to Rabbi Margaret Jacobi - her father was right to ask her to give the first memorial lecture! (Selwyn Goldthorpe)



Virtual Tour of Córdoba, Spain, with Rabbi Haim Casas Sunday 31st Jan.



Wouldn't lockdown life be better if you could leave your house and have a stroll through the sunlit streets of Jewish Cordoba, in Southern Spain? The JR Events team at the Manchester Reform Synagogue kindly arranged for a virtual walking tour of Córdoba.

Rabbi Haim, whom you will remember as a student rabbi leading our High Holy Day services, is now living in Andalucía where he is growing a small community of progressive Jews. To support his mission he gives virtual walking tours.

We were taken through Cordoba in real time, as Rabbi explained its Jewish history (see later), talking about Maimonides (who lived there), showing us the architecture and taking us into the old synagogue. We were delighted, as although Rabbi Haim followed in our footsteps (we were in Córdoba in 2018), as it were, the old synagogue was closed for repairs when we were there.

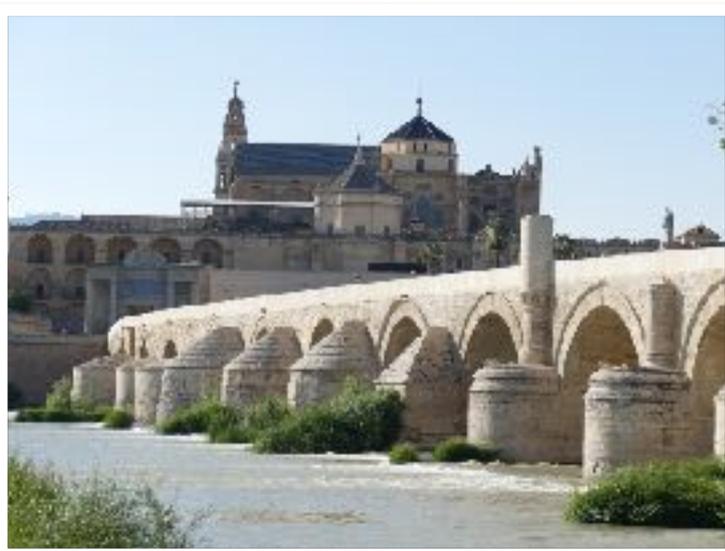


Rabbi Haim Casas took us down the main Jewish Street ending in the square, where nearby is the statue of Meimonides. Rabbi telling us how, here in his home town, he can sit and look as his surroundings which are exactly as there were in the time of Meimonides and the great rabbis associated with the middle-ages capital of culture, such as Córdoba with its huge library and a population of 600000 (compare this to London's population at that time of 15000).



The synagogue, built in 1315, is small, Rabbi explaining that this was the norm in the Christian Town, though the synagogue's small size points to it having possibly been the private synagogue of a wealthy man. It is also possible that Córdoba's complex of buildings was a yeshivah, kollel, or study hall. The decoration is Moorish. After the expulsion of the Jews in 1492, the synagogue was seized by the authorities and converted into a hospital for people suffering from rabies. In 1588, the building was acquired by the shoemakers guild, who used it as a community center and small chapel, changing the patron saint of the building to Santos Crispin-Crispian, the patron saint of shoemakers! It was declared a National Monument in 1885.

The Women's section upstairs (see upper photo) would have had lattice screens in the stone archways. It was Meimonides who gave directions as to the layout of synagogues, with the ark on the east wall. Those instructions have continued to the present day.



My photograph above shows the Roman Bridge (100AD), over the Guadalquivir River, as Haim explained, this was the main way into the city. In the background is the The Mezquita-Catedral, The Great Mosque, now a Cathedral, though still retaining its Moorish architecture from 750AD is just one of the tourist attractions of the city.



Above photo of Synagogue writing:
Translated from Hebrew: "Provisional sanctuary and abode for the Testimony completed by Yitzhak Moheb son of Mr. Ephraim Wadawa, in the year 5075 (ie. 1315 C.E.) So return, oh God hasten to return to Jerusalem"



The Great Mosque took more than 200 years to complete and more than 1,000 pillars of granite, onyx, marble and jasper support its arches.



Jewish History of Córdoba

Cordoba plays a pivotal role in the history of Jewish life in the middle ages. In the tenth century it became the seat of Jewish learning, scholarship and culture, gradually eclipsing the Babylonian academies of Sura and Pumbeditha. Its preeminence was undoubtedly the result of the grand achievements of one man, **Hasdai Ibn Shaprut** (915-970). A doctor, diplomat and scholar, Hasdai served the courts of Caliph Abd al-Rahman III and his successor Hakam II. His meteoric rise to power and influence brought acclaim to the Jewish community.

Hasdai's family wealth made it possible for him to surround himself with Jewish poets, philosophers and scholars. Under his tutelage, the great grammarian, Menahem ben Sharuk (910-970) completed the first dictionary of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic, and launched a systematic investigation into Hebrew grammar. As secretary to the great diplomat, it was Menahem who penned Hasdai's famous letter to the King of the Chazars. Vying for Hasdai's favor was Dunash ben Labrat. He was a merciless critic of Menahem, and the two maintained an intense rivalry throughout the balance of their lives. Ben Labrat's contribution to Hebrew poetry was the introduction of meter.

Hasdai established an academy for Talmud study in Cordoba and purchased copies of the Talmud from the Babylonian communities. Under the guidance of Moshe ben Chanoch, the Cordoba academy flourished, becoming the Andalusian Sura.

In 1013, the Berbers lay siege to Cordoba and the city entered into a process of gradual decline, marked by occasional periods of glory. In later years, another famous native of Cordoba, Moses Maimonides, would flee the city, forced out by the ferocity of Almohade persecutions. In 1236 Cordoba was reconquered by the Christians and the community was labeled a "scandal against Christianity." Ferdinand and Isabella used Cordoba as their headquarters when they waged war against the remaining Moors in Granada, and the tribunal of the Inquisition established in the castle of Cordoba was especially cruel. Many Conversos were martyred during the 1480's. In 1483, Jews were exiled from Andalusia.

Gillian and Selwyn Goldthorpe extend their grateful thanks to Rabbi Haim Casas for this walking tour and to all those involved in making this Sunday afternoon so special for the 90+ households on the tour.

Between 2 Yahrzeits

26th Shevat to 26th Adar

by

Shelley Yavetz



Gertie and Barnett Shieldhouse
Parents of Shelley Yavert

Within Judaism, we are taught to appreciate, honour, and embrace the circle of life, from cradle to grave.

We are guided by our Jewish Calendar and our traditional customs which pave our way through the year, from celebration

of births, bar and bat mitzvahs, and the joyful festivals, to more solemn days of mourning and contemplation such as Yom Kippur and Tisha b'Av. As we remember and re-enact our joyful festivals we do not turn away from our family Yahrzeit dates, which are the days when we experience a sense of profound loss of our late loved ones. Yahrzeits are days of sadness and reflection, but also a happy family memories when we nostalgically recall wonderful times together.

'Yahrzeits are days of sadness and reflection, but also happy family memories'

A Yahrzeit is so much more than the anniversary of a death, it is also an opportunity to bring our relatives into our hearts and our lives today. The subject of memorialising in Judaism is central to its focus on dignity, positivity and perseverance over adversity. Whilst it is true that our departed ones are no longer here physically, Judaism teaches us the value of continuing to pay respect to the "essence" and thus their spirit is with us on our own life journey. This is called "Hant'zacha" meaning eternalising.

My Parents Yahrzeits share a common date, only a month apart. My mother on the 26th of Shevat and my father on the 26th of Adar. They were 15 years apart in age and very different personalities. My mother, more quiet retiring and less confident, who enjoyed getting up very late in the morning and my father, very outgoing, who was up at the crack of dawn and loved nothing more than to converse with one and all, discuss the meaning of life and philosophy at approximately 7 am each day!

They were the first generation, born to port immigrants who landed on British shores (often unintentionally) from the late 19th to the early 20th century, all hoping to escape persecution and poverty. What we take for granted here today, freedom of Jewish worship, the ability to make a living and prosper economically, hopes for educating our children were only a dream for them.

Barnie was Born on a freezing January in 1904, not long after his father Wolfe Schildhaus and mother Yenteh came off the boat in Liverpool from Premzyl in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They found lodgings in Brownlow Hill and later moved to Paddington Street. There was a large concentration of Jews in both areas, all very poor. Bobbah Yenteh and Zayde Ze'ev (Wolfe) immediately wanted to invest in their children's secular and Jewish education. So Shmuel, D'vorah, Ya'akov Beryl (Barnie), Tzvi and Natan (born much later) we are gradually enrolled in the Liverpool Hebrew grade school. My grandparents two eldest children died in Premzyl

continued next page

(Under circumstances never talked about). Wolfe worked tirelessly and went from being a peddler, to a market stall owner, eventually opening and expanding his business to two shops in Paddington. When Bernie was twelve the Schildhaus's (now Shieldhouse) joined a new Shul, "Fountains Road" in Walton. Dad would go on to become honorary secretary and treasurer (I still have his silver cigarette case with a dedication to him, from the Shul in appreciation of a job well done). He was an ardent Zionist and served on the junior Zionist Association's Committee, eventually becoming President at age 19! At 20, Dad joined "Shivat Tzion" (Return to Zion) and dedicated his Sundays to over 200 boys and girls aged 14 to 18 years who attended activities. In his mid 20's, he joined the Liverpool Zionist Society, again taking an active role as honorary secretary and treasurer. In the autumn of 1937 they were asked to help sell poppies for Armistice Day. Dad, now a dashing 33-year-old, was paired up with a good-looking 18-year-old blonde also selling poppies on behalf of the young Maccabeans. Bernie plucked up the courage and ask her out on a date, fell in love and married my mum Gertie Friend on September 4th 1938, at Princes Road Synagogue.

Gertie's (originally Gutfryndt) mother, Rocheleh, a dressmaker and father, Sh'leymah, a tailor, lived above their shop in Wavertree. Rocheleh was from Kiev in the Ukraine and Sh'leymah from a small "shtetl" outside Krakow, Poland. Gertie was always dressed elegantly and certainly caught Dad's eye!

The Shieldhouses had been "davening" at Russel Street Shul, then at Fountains Road, where the brothers used to "duchen" (recite the priestly blessing) being Cohenim. Finally, both the Shieldhouse and Friend families moved to the new, stylish "art deco" Greenbank Drive Synagogue. It was there that my father refused to "duchen"; protesting that although a Cohen, he didn't believe he "had the right to bless the congregation" (N.B. in the progressive movements we do not differentiate between Cohen Levi or Israel.)

Sadly, World War II broke out in 1939, barely a year after they were married. Having been bombed out of their home at Willowdale Road Walton, they escape the horrors of Liverpool devastation to Southport. Here, they lived for a year, initially in a room on Bath Street, and later in a flat on Kings Street. From the onset of war, Dad had been an air raid and fire warden. In 1941, he went abroad to serve on active duty until he was demobbed in 1945. Mum, now back in Liverpool, living with her parents in Borrowdale Road, had to struggle to maintain Dad's business at 66 County Road Walton, and nurse her elder brother Harry, a soldier who sadly died of TB. Her mother, Rocheleh died prematurely only a few months later. Mum fought valiantly to look after her father, the house, and the Walton shop. Those were hard times for all!

In 1980, after retiring and selling his business, Mum and Dad decided to return to Southport, a flat at 5 Park Crescent, opposite Hesketh Park. My children, Tali and Maor, and I, enjoyed the benefits of English grandparents, the seaside, and parks of Southport (a lot calmer than our lives in Jerusalem!) when we visited them.

My parents instilled in me the values of our Jewish tradition - a sense of belonging, and a deep belief in maintaining personal integrity in an ever-changing world. They taught me to choose life and to believe in our ability to summon up the courage to face obstacles with optimism and even with Jewish humour! Mum and Dad will always light up a place in my and my children's hearts.

May their memory be for a blessing

"Yihiyeh Zichram Baruch"



yahrzeits (יָאָרְצֵיט)

during this issue of L'Chayim

March



Barnett Shieldhouse, Father of Shelley Yavetz
Rebecca Meek, Mother of Valerie Mercer
Lily Hirshman, Mother of Jon Hirshman
Tony Stoller, Father of David Stoller
Marie Zachariah, Mother of Marcel Zachariah
Morris Desser, Father of Julian Desser
Miriam Desser, Mother of Julian Desser
David Victor, Father of Louise Davies
Rose Windham, Mother of Paul Windham

April

Yahrzeit candles are available for purchase from the Synagogue.

Memorial plaques are still available for the **Tree of Life** in the Synagogue.

Please discuss your needs with the Synagogue's Administrator.

Stephen Pavion, Husband of Lynne Pavion
Albert Cohen, Father of Sue Greenberg
Antonia Viel, Mother of Duly Platt
Joseph Lutchner, Husband of Gertrude Lutchner

The Stone Consecration for **Rodney Jackson** took place on 12 February at Duke Street Cemetery. The service was taken by Rabbi Zalud, under Covid safety regulations.



WE STAND ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

Without the foresight of those that have gone before us we would not have a Synagogue. We owe it to these wonderful people to keep the Synagogue alive for the next generation.

Please consider making a **LEGACY** in your will to the Synagogue (a registered Charity).
S&DRS can supply you with details of a number of local solicitors who are willing to offer advice.



MAY THEIR MEMORY BE A BLESSING



IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!

MAZELTOV AND ALL OUR BEST WISHES

March

Fortune Chamberlain
Faith Choueke
Anne Desser
Estelle Mannheim
David Stoller

April

Penny Bernstein
Neil Davis
Gertrude Knight
Matt Suher
Trudie Turnbull
Bobby Windham
Hannah Windham



Student Rabbi Gabriel Webber

“Manuella and I are delighted to announce, a month early at 9:08 this morning, 29th December, a healthy baby boy, Omri, weighing 2.9kg was born at the Royal Free Hospital.”

Mazel Tov



The Southport Rest Home

Choice of long or short stays,
permanent residency

Situated at 81 Albert Road, Southport PR9 9LN



- **24 hour support**
- **Senior citizens**
- **Jewish ethos**
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“Good”

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office@sjah.freeseve.co.uk

The Home is a registered charity Number 1123524 and a Registered Company Number 06368309



The following kind people have been elected to serve on the Council of Southport & District Reform Synagogue

Chairman	Dr Selwyn Goldthorpe
Vice Chair	Gillian Goldthorpe
Honorary Secretary	Fortune Chamberlain
Honorary Treasurer	Tony Kletz
Wardens	Joan Brooke, Susan Fox, Gillian Goldthorpe

Other members of the Synagogue's Council :

Marcel Zachariah	Faith Choueke
Neil Chamberlain	Harry Kessler
Anne Kletz	Matt Suher

Trustees : Phil Levine and Marcel Zachariah

'Let us come together in God's name and prepare to do God's will'

from Prayer for Committee Meetings, p 366 Siddur, Forms of Prayer 2008



Phil Levine is also a Trustee of the Synagogue

Southport Reform & District Synagogue is a **registered charity, number 227576**.
The Synagogue is run predominantly by volunteers, giving hundreds of hours of their time in a year,,
for the Reform Jewish Community and others.

Please be advised that our complaints procedure is available from the Synagogue office.

As a synagogue member should you not wish to receive the membership copy of L'Chayim and wish to unsubscribe, please e-mail the Synagogue office or send a message via the web site to the Synagogue