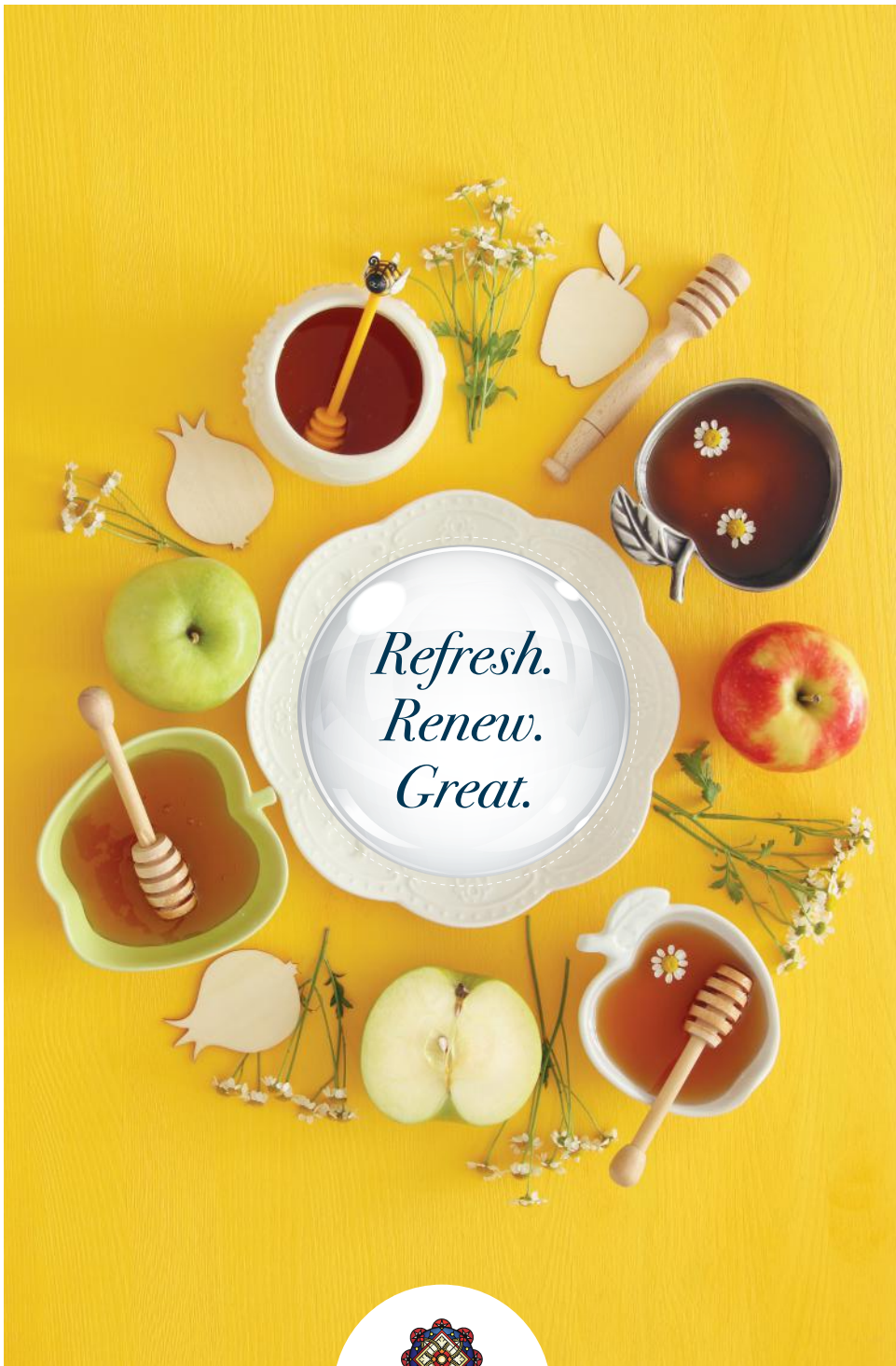




The GREAT VINE

ISSUE #3

ROSH HASHANAH 5778 / 2017-2018



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SYDNEY



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Our Synagogue stands on the traditional lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. We acknowledge and give thanks to the Elders and Traditional Custodians who have cared for this land for thousands of years. May we walk with care on this land which has provided a home for our Jewish community. We offer respect to the descendants of the First Peoples whose presence and cultures are vital to the nation we share.



Rosh Hashanah

I send my warmest wishes to the congregation of the Great Synagogue and the Australian Jewish community for *Shanah Tovah* 5778.

As you prepare for the New Year ahead, this is a time to share in the Rosh Hashanah spirit of tradition with family and friends through the dipping of challah and apple in honey whilst reflecting on the year that has passed.

From the joy of celebrating Rosh Hashanah to the solemnity of Yom Kippur, this time of prayer and looking to the future is one of the most important festivals in the Jewish calendar.

As you hear the sound of the Shofar may your prayers be answered and your name inscribed in the Book of Life.

The Jewish Australian community has a long and successful history here in NSW, and has been an important contributor to the development of our state.

The NSW Government is proud of our Jewish Australian community for their commitment to our multicultural way of life, and the promotion of interfaith dialogue and social harmony.

I wish you all a joyous Rosh Hashanah and I hope you enjoy a peaceful year of good health, happiness and contentment.

L'Shanah Tovah.

Gladys Berejiklian MP
Premier



Message from the Chief Rabbi *Rosh Hashanah 5778*

Finding Unity *in Community*

As we conclude a year which seems to have been dominated, in no small part, by disunity across the Jewish world, it is increasingly troubling to see some of the vitriol that is now routinely espoused by Jews against one another.

It takes no time at all to find comments on social media about “Chareidi extremist bullies with no grasp of the realities of the modern world” and “heretical leftists who wilfully dilute and undermine the sanctity of Torah at every opportunity.” Is this what it has come to?

יעשו כלם אגודה אחת לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם.

“And may the people form a single united bond – to perform Your will with a full heart”.

These words, from our Mussaf prayer on Rosh Hashanah, encapsulate our deep and enduring desire for Jewish unity which stretches back, through the annals of history, to the point at which we left Egypt and became a nation for the first time. But, what is the virtue of unity? Don't we have a responsibility to protect what we believe to be right, even if that means division?

There is no question that we do, but what is also certain is that throughout history, disunity has been nothing short of an existential threat to the Jewish people.

The Talmud describes the tense state of conflict in Jerusalem during the years 67-70 CE, throughout which, the Romans laid siege around the walls of our capital city. In Jerusalem, there were storehouses which had provisions to last for 21 years. Yet tragically, when civil war broke out within the city, the storehouses were burned and destroyed. The Romans, who would otherwise have likely lost patience and moved on to fight more pressing battles, were now able to breach the walls and conquer a weakened people.

Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits pointed out that ‘Sim Shalom’, our prayer for peace in the Amidah, includes the words ‘Bless us our Father, all of us as one, in the light of Your countenance’. Why, in the context of prayers for peace with our enemies, must we aspire to peace amongst ourselves? Lord Jakobovits explained that if we cannot overcome our differences within, we will never prevail over our enemies without.

The first Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land, Rabbi Kook, would point out that in an orchestra, there are many different instruments which make their own unique sound. Together, under the baton of the conductor, they create beautiful harmony.

May 5778 herald a year in which each one of us can look to parts of our community within which we might ordinarily find very little common ground; those whose instruments possibly make an entirely different sound to ours, but with whom we can offer beautiful harmony to the world.

Valerie and I extend to you all our very best wishes for a happy, fulfilling and peaceful New Year.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
September 2017 • Tishrei 5778





A New Phase – *but First, Consolidation*

*The Honourable Justice Stephen Rothman AM
President of The Great Synagogue*

It has been almost 3 years that I have been the President of The Great Synagogue and it has been an honour and a privilege. In the time that the current Executive and Board have been in place, much has changed and improved.

Our new Chief Minister, Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton, together with his wife Hinda, have been at The Great for two years (almost exactly) and, with the support of the Board, they have brought new ideas, yet maintained the best of the traditions for which The Great has stood.

The Board and the ministerial team have sought to achieve the implementation or continuation of an intelligent, open and inclusive sense of community within the congregation and rejuvenate the sense of activity at The Great. More must be done.

Before we embark upon some significant changes to the Castlereagh Street building and the activities that emanate from and occur within The Great, we must consolidate our financial position and give ourselves a strong base from which to move forward.

The Executive and the Board have discussed at some length the fundraising situation and the position of our investments. When the current Executive took office, The Great had financial issues. Further, the same perception prevailed amongst the community. While no formal survey has been performed, it is the feeling of the Executive that the foregoing perception is no longer extant.

We are in a far better position as at the end of the last financial year than we were in 2014. This has been achieved, largely, by a change in culture, which has seen and which requires strict budgeting and the paring back of expenditures in all available areas. That is impossible in some areas. Further, every area has a limit to which the expenditures can be taken, without affecting adversely the operation of the Synagogue. We have reached that point. Indeed, in some areas we may have passed that point.



There are a number of areas in which we have pared back expenditure to a point where, if we remain at that level, it will adversely affect the operation of the synagogue and the services that are offered. For example, with the departure of Rev Hilton, the pastoral care and ceremonial functions of Rev Hilton and the improved pastoral care we have implemented, are met by Rabbi Elton and Cantor Weinberger alone. There is a limit on the extent to which we can impose upon Rabbi Elton and Cantor Weinberger such an additional workload, without seeing them burn out. We are in need of an Assistant Rabbi.

Thus far, because each of them has such a strong professional commitment and work ethic, Rabbi Elton and Cantor Weinberger have more than managed.

We are currently looking for an Assistant Rabbi (or person who can fill that position) and we have engaged some additional assistance in the meantime.

This is not to underestimate the significant and important improvements in the services that have been and are being offered.

In the religious services area, Rabbi has introduced a Rashi Shiur on Shabbat mornings before the commencement of the service. We

have introduced, or reintroduced, weekday Shacharit services, which, almost invariably, now have a Minyan (although sometimes only just). We have reintroduced weekday lunch-time Mincha services and those services also have maintained a Minyan.

The level of pastoral care has improved. The Board has established a Pastoral Care Committee which comprises volunteers who in the future will contact members of the community, particularly the older members, to ensure that they are well and to enquire as to whether any assistance can be given. In the case of more urgent issues, the Rabbi and Cantor Weinberger visit congregants in hospital and those who are unwell at home. Obviously, they can do that only when they are made aware of issues, although Rabbi Elton and Cantor Weinberger visit hospitals and there are regular talks at the Montefiore Home, which draw a good crowd.

The Rabbi has been busy providing to the community, at large, but directed also at members of The Great, talks on modern ethics, religious philosophy and Mishnah and Gemorrah. He has engaged in classes at Moriah College and at the Emanuel School and The Great now offers bar mitzvah classes at Reddam, and Bellevue Hill Public on behalf of the Board of Jewish Education.

In the social/communal areas, we now have a monthly communal lunch, which is intended to be informal and allow congregants that attend to have more time to meet and greet each other and discuss issues of common concern.

The children's services have been improved. We now have a monthly Tots' Shabbat, conducted by Hinda, which is a great success and which both the tots (aged 1 to 4 years) and their parents or grandparents seem to enjoy. The Children's Service, run by Rabbi Richter, continues to gain support and approval by all who experience it.

The services on Shabbat and Yom Tov can



still improve. We have, without doubt, one of the most erudite Rabbis in Australia and we have a Chazzan, who is incomparable. Nevertheless, we need to take measures to improve the inclusiveness of the service and the participation of all of the congregants. Some of those steps will require greater funds. Those funds can be expended once we form a proper and sustainable base for the future.

The choir is, as pointed out by Cantor Weinberger in his article, impressive, particularly on new items. I thank them for their work. Nevertheless, the Choir can be inconsistent and the quality unpredictable. Sometimes that is because of problems with an inability to attend by all choristers and, again, to improve the quality and consistency of the choir will require additional expenditure.

In my formal report, I thank Rabbi Elton and Cantor Weinberger, together with Rabbi Richter, Prof Steve Schach and Toby Hammerman for the work they do in ensuring the services run smoothly. Obviously each is in a different category. Rabbi and Cantor Weinberger are a pleasure to work with. As are the others mentioned. I would also like to thank all of those volunteers, including John Lenn and Steve Schach, who, from time to time, daven early Shacharit and all of those who attend Shacharit and Mincha during the week. Our regular Mincha on Shabbat is now a real success.

I also want to thank Rabbi Elton and Hinda together with Cantor Weinberger and Gila for their hospitality and the conduct of services in their homes on Friday nights and Saturday evenings. While I am mentioning Cantor Weinberger and Gila, I once more wish them a hearty Mazal tov on the birth of their second child.

Volunteers

The Great could not survive without the work of the volunteers who help us manage each week. We have a handyman volunteer, who is not Jewish, but who donates his time to fix the small items that require it throughout the synagogue. He does a marvellous job and it is a true act of charity that warrants acclamation. Members of the congregation and community also volunteer for a range of duties. They assist the administrative staff, from time to time, conduct tours and perform a range of other functions.

In particular, the Women's Auxiliary works tirelessly to ensure that each week and every Yom Tov (except Yom Kippur!), we are provided a Kiddush and have the time and capacity to greet our fellow congregants.

Most of all, I thank all those that attend

synagogue regularly, whether on Shabbat or weekdays, or both.

Of course, I thank the Board, particularly the two Vice Presidents, Max Freedman and Caroline Lewis, and the Treasurer, Ken Gresham, who have dedicated significant time and effort to the future of The Great. In doing so, the Executive, in particular, engages each week and spends time that could be spent with family or otherwise enjoying themselves.

Thank you to all those that volunteer and we would welcome any member who would like to volunteer their time to the work of The Great, whether on one or more committees, or on the Board or otherwise. It's a real joy. As indicated above, the Executive and Board is generally enjoyable and satisfying. One is a member of a small group that makes for greater friendship, more enjoyment and the satisfaction of being part of a bigger picture; achieving worthwhile outcomes for oneself and the broader congregation and community.

140th Anniversary

This AGM will be the 140th Annual General Meeting of The Great Synagogue. More important than the 140 years of history is the expectation (and the work necessary to ensure) that the Synagogue will be operating for the next 140 years and beyond.

In order to secure the operation of the Synagogue in perpetuity and to lay the groundwork for the rejuvenation and rebuilding that will make our premises a centre of activity for Jewish Sydney; we need to address the financial security into the future.

For that reason, the Board has determined that the 140th year of The Great Synagogue will be a fundraising and celebration year in which there will be a series of community, young adult and children's events, culminating in a Gala Dinner.

The Board has established a Foundation into which members of the Synagogue, non-members and members of the general Sydney community can donate money, and the principal of which cannot be utilised for day-to-day running or recurrent expenditure. The interest from that money will assist in addressing any future operating deficit.

In the long term, we are hopeful that the operating deficit will cease and we will have an operating surplus. However, that will depend upon the success of the steps taken to make The Great even more successful than it currently is, busier, with more members, more events and more activities.

The Board asks all members to give their support to the fundraising efforts, so that we can all move forward with far greater confidence.

The Future

Ultimately, the Board would like to see all of the maintenance issues in the Sanctuary resolved and the implementation of alterations that will make attendance at Services more enjoyable and more inclusive. These include a range of possibilities and certainly include the possibility of air-conditioning the Sanctuary, better lighting and other measures.

There is also an urgent need to make the Sanctuary and Castlereagh Street premises more accessible. The lift, which will soon need replacing in any event, is poorly placed to service all of the floors in the building. A redevelopment of the Castlereagh Street premises which will include the renovation of the Israel Green Auditorium, a properly accessible auditorium by all who wish to attend functions and a truly accessible range of facilities that will allow the Synagogue and its Castlereagh Street premises to be utilised far more broadly and far more often than is currently the position. This may require (we hope) additional floors in Castlereagh Street, the enlargement of the Israel Green Auditorium, a new kitchen, new offices, facilities for the young and the elderly and all those in between.

Any plan for any such development will be matters for the congregation and will be put to the congregation well before any determination to implement them. As the coming year will be a fundraising year to ensure a secure future for the implementation of that which the congregation desires, none of these additions can occur before the High Holidays in 2018 and will be for future meetings of the Board and of the members.

In the meantime, the congregation should realise that The Great has an even brighter future than it has a past and the coming year, which we expect to be successful, will ensure that such a future is realised.

Lastly, and most importantly, I would like to thank all of the staff, Linny Gompes, the General Manager, Judith Indyk, Rebecca Seidman, Ilana Moddel and Ezra Wexler for their work during the year on our behalf and wish them much success into the future.

I thank all of you for the confidence that you have shown in me and the Board and, I look forward to working with Rabbi Elton, Cantor Weinberger, the Board and Executive and all of you to ensure a bright future in perpetuity. ❁



From the *Rabbi*

Chief Minister Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton



Rabbi Elton and Hinda at the shule Channukah party at their home

Hinda and I want to wish the entire congregation, your families and all your loved ones a very happy, healthy and successful new year.

Rosh Hashanah is a time for looking back and setting goals for the future, for communities just as much as individuals. As you will see from this issue of *The Great Vine*, it has been a busy and successful year for *The Great Synagogue*.

We have welcomed lots of new members. Every week I have the pleasure of signing a new member's form and sending a note of welcome. This includes returning members, people who are entirely new to the congregation, and some from longstanding *Great Synagogue* families who are taking out their own membership for the first time. Even though every year sees members pass or move away, we have seen a net growth, which is a cause for celebration, which we held in the form of a *New Members' Lunch* a few months ago. It has been a particular pleasure that some of our new members have become weekly attendees. That has been part of the increased attendance at services. Whether it is Friday night, Shabbat morning, festival evenings and days, we have seen a marked upturn in numbers.

On some occasions attendance has taken me by surprise; the turnout on the first days of Pesach and Shavuot were very impressive and a real delight. Special Shabbatot, such as Grandparents Shabbat, ANZAC Shabbat and Order of Australia Shabbat have seen remarkable numbers. As always the smooth running depends greatly on our Gabbai Steve Schach and Assistant Gabbai Toby Hammerman, and I am very grateful to them both. Even on weekday mornings, which are a challenge for every shule in Sydney, we now achieve a minyan on most days, with a dedicated group of attendees. I am looking forward to more growth, in members and attendance, next year and in years to come.

One key to growing our congregation and participation in our activities is to



make their appeal as broad as possible. That means that Shabbat morning is about prayer, honouring an anniversary and hearing the Torah reading and sermon, but it is about more than that too. We have beautiful music, courtesy of our outstanding Cantor and Choir, who have continued to expand their numbers and repertoire. We are truly fortunate to have the best young Cantor in Sydney, and a Choir growing younger and more enthusiastic. Their set piece occasions, not just the High Holidays, but the first day of Pesach and their special evening choral services, have been wonderful opportunities to enjoy a fine tradition.

We have brought interesting speakers, causes and charities to Shabbat morning, most notably when Dr Lesley Andrews spoke to a sell-out lunch to raise money for Ovarian Cancer research. Shule must also be a place of warm community. That was the impetus behind the monthly series of Shabbat lunches we began this year – which again attracted a surprising number of people – to spend a little more relaxed and social time together after the service. Our breadth is reflected in our weekly educational offerings. This year I have taught Rashi's commentary on the Chumash, the Siddur and Talmud, but also history, music and philosophy. We have heard presentations on men's mental health, on Balinese cuisine and IBM's role in the Holocaust, and the Falk Lecture delivered by Rabbi Apple.

Hinda and I have been delighted to welcome many members to our home, whether for a Shabbat meal, or for our open houses on Chanukah and Shavuot, and of course Oneg Shabbat during the summer. Hinda and I often have engaged couples and the families of bar and bat mitzvah kids at our home for Shabbat. Young adults and children are our community's future, and we continue to invest in catering to their needs and interests. Rabbi Richter's excellent Children's Service continues and is very popular. This year Hinda started a monthly Tot Shabbat of 1-4 year olds and their grown-ups, which has attracted up



to a dozen little ones singing, dancing, praying and enjoying Kiddush. It is a joy to see.

Our Community Educator Michael Sassoon is running very well-received Jewish Enrichment Programs at Reddam House and at Bellevue Hill and Rose Bay Public Schools for girls and boys approaching bar and bat mitzvah. I am looking forward to an even closer relationship with BJE in the future. The Young Adults have formed a committee

It has been a busy and successful year for The Great Synagogue

which has organised meetings in pubs and bars for Purim and Lag b'Omer, a Rom-Com film night for Tu b'Av and a very successful series of lunches for young lawyers and law students with senior Judges.

The Great Synagogue will always remain the Mother Congregation of Australian Jewry, and I believe we host significant public occasions with unrivalled dignity and beauty. The Law Service is always outstanding, but this year was our turn to host the annual service for the Order of Australia Association, and the feedback we heard from the Association indicated that they have not enjoyed a better service, from

any religion or denomination.

This year we wished a fond farewell to Rev David and Stephanie Hilton. Rev Hilton served the congregation with love, skill and dedication for almost a decade, and Stephanie also gave so much of her time and herself. You can read my full tribute later in the magazine; we will miss them, and I will certainly miss David's Shacharit these High Holidays. We were lucky to welcome for six months a Visiting Rabbi, Rabbi Noah Leavitt, who threw himself into work for the Synagogue, and he became a friend to the congregation and its members. I have mentioned Cantor Weinberger's skills as a chazzan, but I want to thank him for his hard-working, committed and cheerful work as a colleague on the clergy, contributing to every aspect of the Shule, from pastoral visits to the sound system and everything in between!

I want to express some sincere thanks: To the Women's Auxiliary for their excellent kiddushim, Succah decoration and other activities; to Linny and the administrative staff for the tremendous hard work; to the President, Executive and Board for their unflagging support; to our tour guides and other volunteers; to all those who attend services and keep the atmosphere busy and happy; to everyone who has contributed an article, greeting or advertisement to this magazine. Above all, I want to thank Hinda, to whom I owe more than I can say.

The Haftarah for the first day of Rosh Hashanah tells the story of Hannah who could not conceive and went to the Tabernacle to pray. She prayed with such inwardness, sincerity and devotion that her prayers were answered, and soon after she gave birth to Samuel, one of the greatest of the prophets. When we pray these High Holidays we may not necessarily receive an answer as desired as the one God gave Hannah, but I can guarantee that God will be listening. He will hear our voices and extend His love and compassion to us. May we all be written and sealed for a good and sweet year! ❀



Cantor's Corner

Cantor Joshua Weinberger



It's hard to believe that we are that time of year again. I feel as though this past year has gone so fast and I think that is because there has been so much activity at The Great in the last 12 months.

The choir has taken major strides forward, adding new repertoire to complement different festivals and occasions. In particular, we built on the success of last year's Sefirat HaOmer service and added additional pieces. The choir also learned new music for the first evening of Shavuot. The choir handled the difficult repertoire with beauty and proficiency. I would like to

I have been fortunate enough to represent the Synagogue by singing at many major communal events this year.

thank our choirmaster Robert Teicher for being so open and willing to take on this extra work and for helping the choir to achieve such a high standard. I would

also like to thank all our choristers for their commitment and dedication over the last year. I am looking forward to singing the High Holiday services together with them.

Personally this year has thrown me many new and exciting opportunities and milestones. Gila and I welcomed our second daughter, Lital, into the Weinberger clan and Adira is loving having a little sister to play with. Professionally, I have been fortunate enough to represent the Synagogue by singing at many major communal events this year. These included Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron and Holocaust



remembrance held at St Mary's Crypt by the Council of Christians and Jews.

Another highlight for me this year has been going into Reddam House primary school every Friday afternoon to teach the Jewish children something about the parasha, festivals and special occasions happening throughout the year. I also set up a mock Friday night Shabbat meal where the children say the blessings for lighting candles, Kiddush, washing hands and Hamotzei. This is possibly the only experience of Shabbat some of these children will have and it's a pleasure to watch them eagerly partake in leading the

berachot and having their grape juice and challah. I would like to thank Rabbi Kastel for arranging this and Jewish Studies teacher Karin Mirvis for assisting. I look forward to the partnership continuing.

Over the last year I have also had the privilege of making weekly visits to the St Vincent's Hospitals to visit the Jewish patients. It has been an amazing experience to bring some comfort to those who are ill and to hear from so many how The Great Synagogue has been a part of their lives at one time or another. The Synagogue has had a profound influence on the Jewish

community of Sydney and we strive to continue that tradition.

Throughout the year, I have been working closely with Rabbi Elton. I can see the effort that he and Hinda dedicate to the Synagogue and its members, and I think we all feel the warmth they bring.

I am excited for the coming year and can tell you that we already have some exciting events planned. I look forward to seeing you and singing with you in shule over the High Holidays and wish you and your families a happy and sweet new year. Shana Tova! 🌸



Jews - An *Endangered Species?*

Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple AO RFD, Rabbi Emeritus

On festivals, our services have two Sifrei Torah. Counting Sifrei Torah is no problem: counting people is. Every Torah is the same: every human being is different. God is unique: so is each of His children. But that's not the only reason we don't count people. Human numbers constantly fluctuate. Even before census day has ended, its statistics are out of date: people are born, people die. Nothing stands still, certainly not Jews. We lost millions in the Holocaust; there has been a constant drain ever since.

How many Jews there are ranges between a low of 13 and a high of 15 million, both below the pre-1939 18 million. I vote for the higher figures because I know how often Jews come out of the woodwork. How many Jews do we *need*? What is the critical mass without which there can be no Jewish survival? There are large concentrations of Jews with minimal involvement - and small groups with an intense level of commitment. Who decides who is a Jew? I wish it were Jewish law. In Israel, it sometimes is an Interior Ministry clerk like the one who barked at me when I told her that for years I had issued certificates of Jewishness and if I am not Jewish, all the others are in question too.

But whatever the yardsticks, the perception is that our numbers are reducing. Shall we say *Kaddish* for ourselves? The rule is, *hagosses harei hu*



kechai lechol devarav: a dying person is deemed to be alive in every respect. We write nobody off whilst their heartbeat and brain are still at work. But is the Jewish people a *gosses*? Are we like what used to be said of American Jewry, 'a fabulous invalid' - often ailing but still very much alive?

Our numbers need to be looked at with the long view. Often our greatest creativity was in the 'low' periods. In 1500 BCE, there were 600,000 Jews (this may have been males only) but by 1000 BCE, two million. By 500 BCE, we were down to 300,000, though this is hard to believe. Five hundred years later, the figure was 4.5 million; by 500 CE, it was only 1.5 million, though this was a golden age. In Rashi's 11th century, there were only a million Jews and yet it was an era of great achievement. By the 19th

century, the number was 10.6 million, part of a spurt in world population, and by 1939, up to 18 million.

Instead of a static criterion (where we are), let's use a dynamic one (where we are going). Let's imagine two escalators, one going up, one going down. On the 'up' escalator are the Orthodox, whose large families add to our numbers; returnees from the periphery; those with a solid Jewish identity whatever their level of observance. On the 'down' escalator are those who have little to do with the community; people who only come out in a crisis. Stalemate? Time will tell. Not that we believe in letting things sort themselves out. With the right policies, the future can be moulded. What can we do? Have more children. Make more converts. Don't lose intermarried couples. Love all the Jews we have. Strengthen Judaism everywhere.

Arnold Toynbee said: "In 100 years' time there will be no Jews anywhere. There will be, with good fortune, the State of Israel, with its own distinctive but non-Jewish contribution to make; and there will be citizens of other countries with Jewish blood in their veins, but without Jewish thoughts and feelings in their heads ..." Toynbee's prophecy is, *Baruch HaShem*, far from fulfilled. What will keep it at bay? Our own determination, and God's promise that we will live. God will play His part: we have to play ours. ❀



Births



Isac Nathan Lazar



Charlie Joe Bernberg



Alice Abbott



Aaron Stone



Sam Jacob Levitt



Births



Baby naming of Natalie Goodman with Lois and Henry Goodman, Paul Goodman, Rabbi Elton and Rabbi Cohen.



Baby naming of Ava Poppy Leibman.



Baby naming of Pidyon Haben Micha Walter.



Baby naming of Leo Spike Meyerson.



Brit Milah of Rafael Symonds.



Baby naming of Ria Hernandez.



Bat & Bar *Mitzvahs*



Joel Krimatat



Zachary Kraus



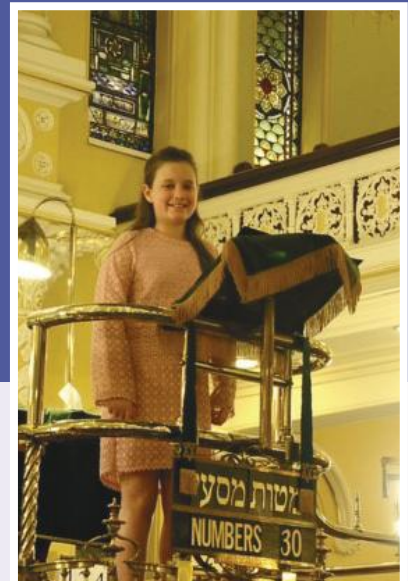
Zachary Kraus



Reuben Glasser with parents Daina and Jody



Reuben Glasser



Tamryn Schubert



Weddings

The Great Synagogue has always been a favourite spot for weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, britot and baby namings. This year we even managed a pidyon haben, the redemption of a boy who is the first born of his mother, and does not come from a family of Cohanim or Leviim, and not born through caesarean section. Here is a selection of photos for you to enjoy. We've even thrown in a less recent photo, from Sara and Ken Gresham, of their wedding in The Great in 1966! We want many more simchas – and photos – in the future! ❁



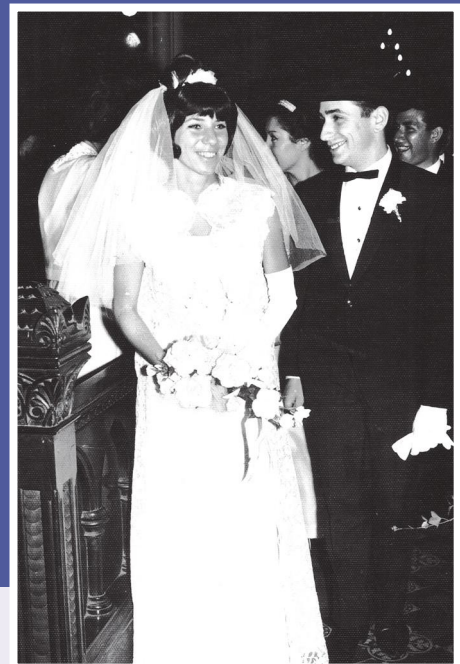
Sara and Ken Gresham in 1966



Kim Lewis and Adam Pisk



Charlotte and Robbie Weiss



Sara and Ken Gresham in 1966



Weddings



Dikla Barad and Harry Palmer



Eli Levi and Ezra Wexler



Lawrence Nathan and Jenna Bloom



Michelle Jacobs and Dean Davis



Weddings



Penelope Kia and Richard Winston



Elliot and Janice Goodman



Nick and Natalie Gainsley



Lana Bank and Nick Volpe

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A Growing Congregation

The last two years have been a time of substantial membership growth for The Great Synagogue. We saw the start of a trend, fuelled through a membership drive, that has made a significant impact on the number of members and the age profile of the congregation.

We have new people of all ages and backgrounds joining as members and as seat holders. They include people never before associated with the congregation, and former members returning to the Shule. We are seeing a broad variety of new people on Friday nights and Shabbat mornings, and on Yom Tov mornings and evenings. The morning minyan has attracted new faces, although more are always welcome! All new members receive a welcome pack, with an inscribed Siddur and other gifts, cheerfully delivered by Sharon Schach, who with husband Steve, were themselves warmly welcomed to our community not so long ago and already contribute so much.

Once we reached over seventy new members since we started the drive, it was time to celebrate! We invited all our new members to a celebratory lunch and the rest of the congregation to join them, to show our welcome. The Israel Green Auditorium was comfortably filled for a delicious meal, and we heard from three of our new members, Maggie Sten, Joseph Constable and Roger Selby, reflecting the range of people who have become part of the congregation in recent months. ❀



Sharon Schach with a new member's gift pack.

NEW MEMBERS SHABBAT
4 March 2017

Help welcome the 60+ new members who have become part of our community in the last year, by joining us for Shabbat lunch.

4 March \$45 adults 12.30pm
\$25 kids
Under 10yrs free

Bookings - 9267 2477 - by 28.2.17

Service: 8.45am
Kiddush on level 4: 11.30am
Lunch to follow in Israel Green Auditorium

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Rabbi Elton greeting Linda and Michael Jaku, new members number 99 and 100 since Rabbi joined the Synagogue.



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Young Lawyers speaker series with The Hon Dr Annabelle Bennett.

Young *Leadership*

Rabbi Noah Leavitt

Over the past year I was privileged to serve as Scholar-in-Residence and Visiting Rabbi at The Great Synagogue. In this role, I witnessed the renaissance that is occurring at The Great Synagogue under the leadership of Rabbi Elton and Cantor Weinberger. They uniquely combine a dedication for The Great Synagogue's

historic traditions with deep personal warmth and a heimish sensibility. I was fortunate to meet and teach many members of the shule, but worked especially closely with young adults.

This year was filled with renewal and excitement for the young adult community at The Great Synagogue. Under the leadership of Craig Shulman and Sophie Kwiet the Young Leadership

Committee developed a number of new programs for young adults. These events brought many new faces into The Great Synagogue and cemented its status as the centre of Jewish life for young adults in the city.

One of the highlights of this past year's programs was our very successful Lunchtime Legal Lecture Series for Young Lawyers and Law Students. Once a

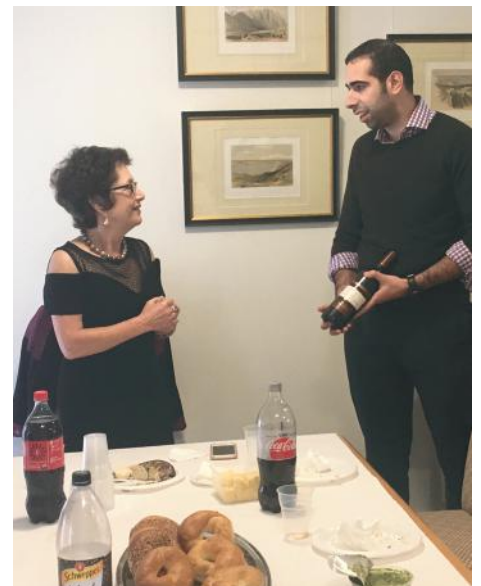
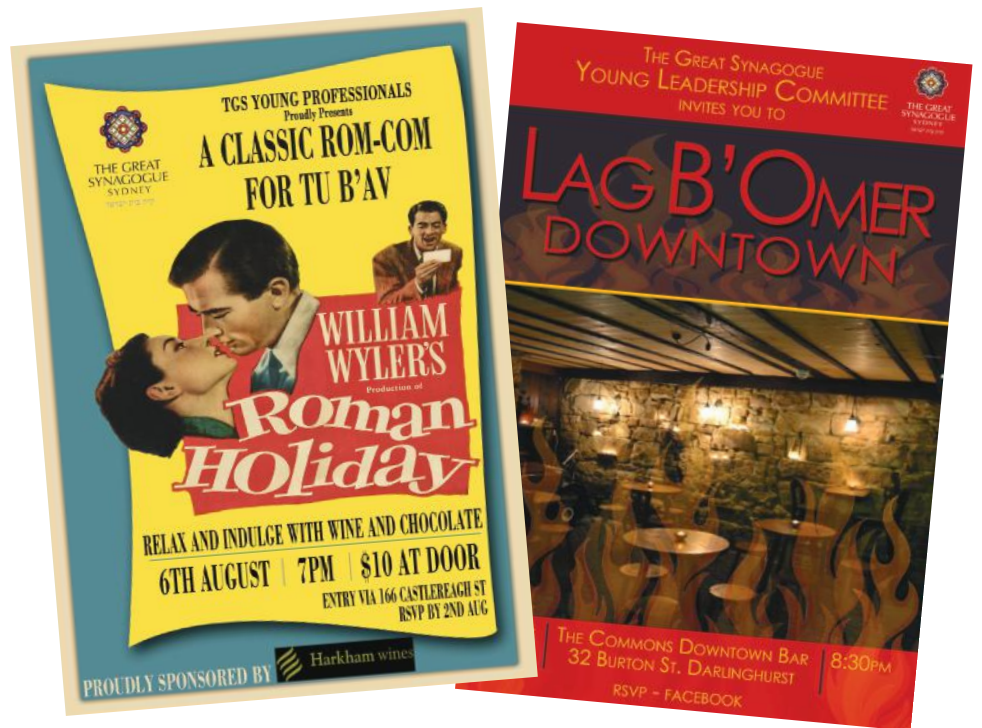
The series met with great acclaim and attendance steadily grew from session to session.

month, young lawyers and law students would gather at The Great Synagogue for lunch and to hear from a leader in the legal profession. Our outstanding speakers included Great Synagogue Members Justice Annabelle Bennett, Justice Stephen Rothman, Judge Leonard Levy, and Justice Peter Rose; as well as Justice David Hammerschlag. Speakers shared both their perspectives on law and how their Jewish identity influenced their legal careers. The series met with great acclaim and attendance steadily grew from session to session. In the coming year, we look forward to running similar programs for those who work in property, technology, and finance.

The young adult community also gathered regularly to celebrate holidays together. On Purim, after attending the evening megillah reading at The Great Synagogue, young adults gathered for a Purim Party at a nearby pub. Before Passover, I hosted an educational program entitled Four Beers and Four Questions. We had a lively discussion about the Haggadah, followed by a

general question and answer session. All while enjoying a wonderful variety of beers, before a week without chametz. The final feature of our holiday celebrations for young adults, occurred on Lag b'Omer. That evening, over thirty young adults gathered to celebrate Lag b'Omer at The Commons Downtown Bar with an evening of drinks and live music.

The past year witnessed tremendous growth for the young adult community at The Great Synagogue and we look forward to continuing to expand both the range and number of programs for young adults in the new year. If you would like to join the Young Leadership Committee please contact Craig Shulman or Cantor Weinberger, we would welcome your involvement. ❁



Craig Shulman presenting The Hon Dr Annabelle Bennett with a thank you gift.

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Remembering *Naomi Lewis*

By David Lewis

The Great Synagogue recently said farewell to a beloved member of over six decades, Naomi Lewis. Here, her son David Lewis remembers his mother, with contributions from other members of the family. In the next *Great Vine* we will present an article on her family and its long-standing connection with our Synagogue.

Naomi Lewis was born on the 10th of July 1930 in Sydney, the only child of Maurice (Morrie) and Golda Selig, living in Coogee. She attended Sydney Girls' High School from 1943-47 and then enrolled in a Science degree at Sydney University following in the footsteps of her first cousins, the Basser boys. She was very active in the Jewish community and The Great Synagogue. The Hebrew Standard of the mid 1940s and 50s contains many advertisements of events and functions held at her home in Melody Street, Coogee.

Although she was an only child her friends Meryl Dinte (nee Glass), Lea Portrate (nee Green) and Shirley Solomon (nee Tofler) were like sisters and her first cousins Philip and Julian Basser were her 'brothers'.

Sadly her Science degree was cut short as father Morrie was not a fan of girls at university and prevailed upon Naomi to abandon this career, as "it was no job for a beautiful girl".

Naomi found an early career at the publishers Angus & Robertson from



1949-1956 editing and correcting manuscripts and books.

Sometime in 1953 Harold met Naomi, probably through the Basses boys. Naomi was to become his enduring love, a wonderful union that lasted over 61 years. If only we all could emulate that.

They married on Lag b'Omer 1954. Harold was still studying at Sydney University and driving cabs at night.

My sister Michelle wrote: "The first night they met they were at a dance and Naomi was wearing a dress with a low cut back. Harold ran a finger down her back and she remembered thinking "He's too fresh to be serious boyfriend material" but Harold pursued her. For forty years they lived in Dover Heights, just one house away from Shirley, one of Naomi's sisters by choice."

Naomi was a very talented and prolific artist. She studied under John Ogburn and later with John Olsen and specialised in abstract landscape later using gouache and pastels, yet she loved the tradition of oil painting. She was hung in the Archibald in 1964 with a portrait of John Ogburn and the Wynne exhibition also in 1964. She won the Bicentennial Exhibition in 1988 judged by Edmund Capon, then Director of the Art Gallery of NSW, and had several individual art shows.

Naomi was commissioned to produce artworks for many hotels, Qantas lounges and other corporate entities. Her works are still in situ at The Hyatt Hotel in Canberra today!

Naomi was highly creative and took risks with her design choices. I remember well the William Morris provocative black and white wallpaper she chose for our Dover Heights home in the 1970s. It was so intricate that hanging had to be carefully planned to ensure that the pattern matched at each join! She took risks with design and was prepared to fail so she could grow.

Mum loved antique silver, eclectic furniture and collected pieces from all over the world. She loved to cook and entertain and our home was the hub for her friends and ours as everyone knew

Everyone had a great time and the family dynamics were an event in itself. This was fun, spirited and it was our family. Naomi was the glue in maintaining these relationships.

that this was a place of entertainment, love and safety.

She was absolutely dedicated to the family and invited everyone to Seder night every year; the mix of 90 year olds with teenagers worked so well in our home. Everyone had a great time and the family dynamics were an event in itself. This was fun, spirited and it was our family. Naomi was the glue in maintaining these relationships.

Michelle remembered: "Naomi pioneered the very first breakfast program in the 1970s at Bondi Beach Public school. She contacted major

companies and asked them to donate food and other products for her breakfast program where every child was given a healthy, sustaining breakfast of eggs, sandwiches, fruit and either juice or milk. She was down at the school most mornings and built a team of volunteers who helped turn the program into more than just feeding hungry children. The children were taught how to shop and cook, how to make good food choices and if necessary how to fend for themselves in the kitchen."

In the late 1970s Naomi also recognised that many newly arrived Jewish South Africans required assistance as their integration into Sydney Jewish life was hard. She worked through B'nai B'rith to provide practical life skills assistance to these families and introduce them to the local community.

Mum was an amazing mother to Michelle and me. She was dedicated to our education and our well-being at all times and provided real world assistance. I remember her editing my law assignments at UNSW with exactly the type of advice I needed and helped me to build my writing skills.

We grew up in a happy, fun and irreverent household. I recall that mum

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Naomi & Harold 1973.



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Mum had immense kindness, dedication and selflessness. She always put others before herself – and she was utterly dedicated to providing a secure and happy life for the whole family.



used the soft threat of a “wooden spoon” as sort of a discipline implement - in truth it was simply a joke. Then at a cubs bazaar at age 9 I found a beautifully white and blue painted “wooden-spoon” so I bought it for mum knowing full well the significance of this purchase. Mum thought it was hilarious and it was a source of great amusement from then on.

Naomi & Harold had a huge circle of friends both in Australia and from their international wanderings. There were so many dinner parties, gatherings and they loved to have fun and did not take themselves too seriously. This great photo from 1973 says much about their approach to life – just as it should be!

Charlotte & Juliet, Naomi's grandchildren, were a source of enormous joy. Naomi gave of herself to the next generation as well. Every Tuesday was “Nana's Day” during each of Charlotte & Juliet's first four years and as a result they forged an unbreakable bond with mum.

Charlotte writes: “From baking cookies and letting us lick the bowl, to playing card games around the table, our Nana was always finding ways to keep my sister and me entertained. She has left a huge hole in our hearts and lives, and I can only take solace in the fact that she was able to attend our wedding just last year. She



welcomed my husband Robbie into her home with open arms, and was eager to have us each Friday night for Shabbat.”

Juliet writes: “Losing someone is never easy, but the memories make them immortal. My memories have a deep pink glow to them, filled with love and laughter. Meeting up to paint, have tea and talk about life. Her advice was always on point even whilst giggling at my jokes. We played cards and went to movies she hated, baked cookies and fell asleep together on the couch. She always made it clear that we were her world and it was definitely reciprocated. She was an amazing grandmother who cared more than anyone. Constantly spoiling us and enjoying every minute of it. She was kind, positive with a sense of humour a grandmother shouldn't have. I loved being in her company and I am

so grateful that my childhood was filled with her face.”

Mum had immense kindness, dedication and selflessness. This was her to a tee – she always put others before herself – particularly her kids and she was utterly dedicated to providing a secure and happy life for the whole family. Ensuring all the family was together as much as possible was critical to her and she lived that maxim by constantly hosting parties and events.

Naomi had a great ability to laugh at herself too. I recall the great mirth that greeted Naomi's weekly “new dessert creation” at Shabbat that would so often be utterly hilarious. That's just the point: Mum was prepared to dream and dare with her culinary creations and most importantly prepared to fail so she could achieve!

Her art was bold and creative – abstract figures in abstract landscape. For a traditionalist mother, her work was clearly innovative, edgy and highly respected.

Naomi would want us to celebrate her life and not mourn it. Caroline and I along with Michelle and Fraser miss her terribly. We treasure her memory and look forward to retelling her life story to all our future generations! 🌸

The Wedding Dance *from Hamlet*

Professor Steve Schach

Yes, you're quite right. There's no wedding dance in *Hamlet*—at least, not in Shakespeare's version of the play. But in the Yiddish theatre of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in New York, there had to be a wedding in every play, and the klezmer band played a wedding dance, even in a tragedy like *Hamlet*. The billboards in the Yiddish Theatre District on Second Avenue made it plain: The Yiddish version of *Hamlet* was *fartaytsht un farbesert* [translated and improved], and that meant that it included the prerequisite wedding dance.

The New York Yiddish theatre proved beyond all possible doubt that William Shakespeare's versions of his plays leave a lot to be desired. For example, consider *King Lear*. In 1892, Jacob Gordin wrote *Der Yudisher Kenig Lir* [The Jewish King Lear]; the first illustration shows the title page of the 1907 edition, published in Warsaw.

The play opens at a Purim feast given by David Moishele, a wealthy Russian Jewish merchant in mid-19th century Vilna. Moishele is surrounded by members of his family, friends, and servants, making him a king in his court, at least in the Jewish sense.

Moishele sets off from Vilna to spend his last days in the Holy Land, leaving his fortune in the wrong hands. He spurns his youngest daughter, who has denied his authority by becoming a student in St. Petersburg and stating that she wants to contribute to society the way a



Title page of the 1907 Warsaw edition of *Der Yudisher Kenig Lir* ("The Jewish King Lear"), a drama in 4 acts by Jacob Gordin (1853-1909).



A scene from the 1935 stage production of the play *The Jewish King Lear*.

The New York Yiddish theatre proved beyond all possible doubt that William Shakespeare's versions of his plays leave a lot to be desired.

man would. But this is Yiddish theatre, so there's a (somewhat) happy finale. Just about everything is set right, and Moishele forgives his daughters and is reconciled with them.

In 1935, at the height of the Depression, the Works Progress Administration of the United States government paid the salaries of actors, writers, and directors. One of the stage plays bankrolled by the WPA was — yes, you've guessed it — *Der Yudisher Kenig Lir*, directed by Harry Thomashefsky, son of the famous Yiddish actor Boris Thomashefsky. The second illustration shows a scene from the play.

The play was filmed, and is available on DVD from www.rarefilmsandmore.com under the title *The Yiddish King Lear*. So, you can see for yourself that Gordin's version of *King Lear* is indeed *fartaytsht un farbesert!* 🌸



Rabbi Noah Leavitt – *Visiting Rabbi*

The congregation had the pleasure of six months with Rabbi Noah Leavitt as Visiting Rabbi and Scholar in Residence. During his time with us, Rabbi Leavitt taught classes, gave sermons on Shabbat and Yom Tov mornings, spoke on Friday night and organised well-attended events for young professionals. He made a name for himself around Sydney with guest appearances at South Head Synagogue, Mizrachi, and beyond in Canberra and

Rabbi Leavitt taught classes, gave sermons on Shabbat and Yom Tov mornings, spoke on Friday night and organised well-attended events.

Melbourne. Rabbi Noah's particular brand of Jewish knowledge combined with psychological training, interest in sports and popular culture made his presentations always thought-provoking and refreshing. He also threw himself into the Sydney way of life, swimming, surfing, following Rugby and AFL and meeting the local wildlife. 🌸

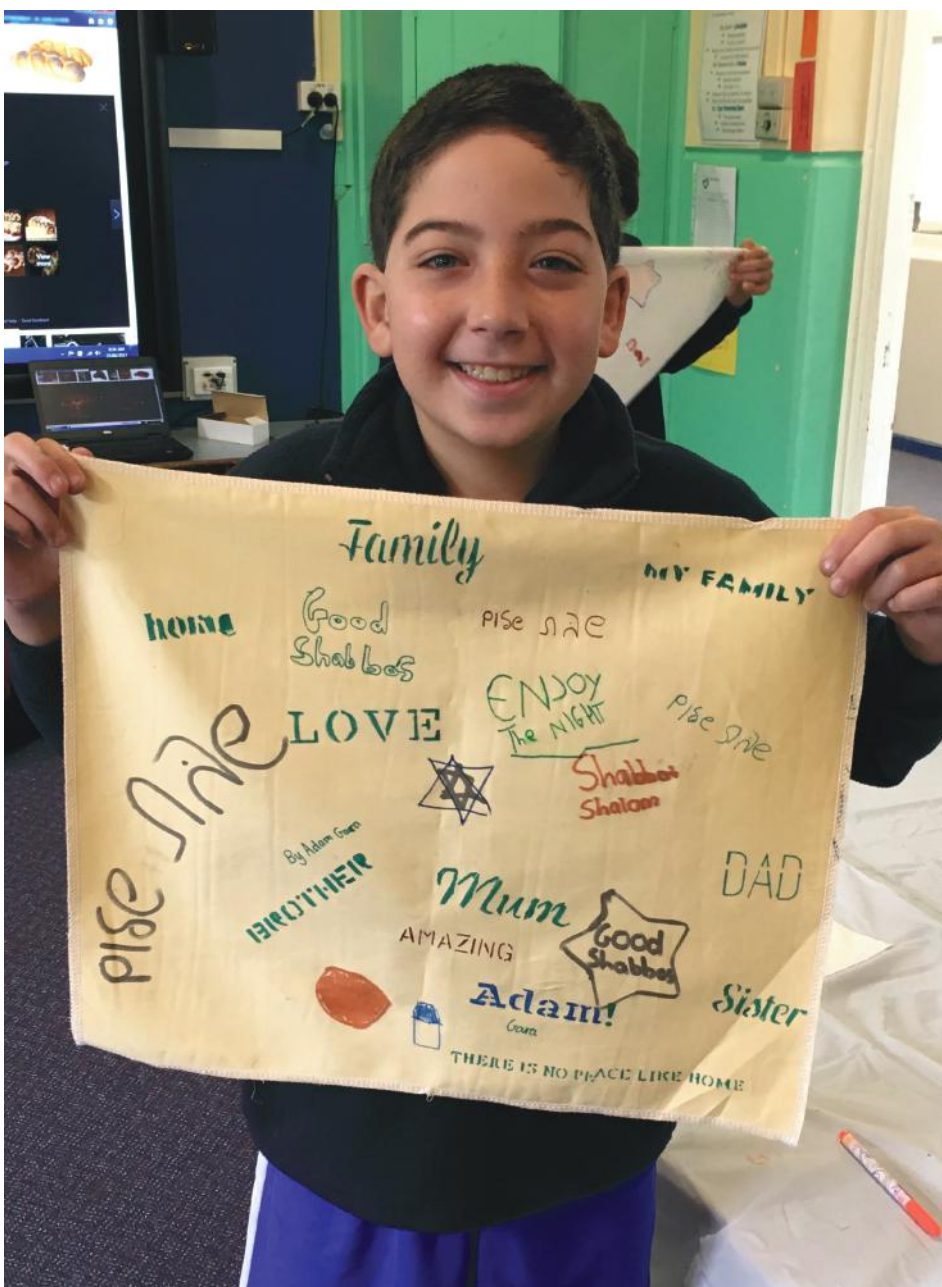


Rabbi Leavitt meeting some of the locals.



Rabbi Leavitt giving a class.

Jewish Enrichment Program



Students have been decorating each piece of their very own Shabbat essentials set.

Throughout 2017, one of The Great Synagogue's community engagement programs has been the Jewish Enrichment Program for pre-bar and -bat mitzvah students. The course is delivered in three locations: at Reddam House, and Rose Bay and Bellevue Hill Public Schools. It has been designed by The Great Synagogue's Community Educator, Michael Sassoon, to ignite more passion for Judaism for students in years 3-7 in the lead-up to their bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies.

The knowledge that truly becomes part of our identity and guides us through life is that which we have discovered or sought out on our own. This course intends to inspire this drive in students as they begin their personal Jewish journeys in earnest. Michael notes that "one student forwarded an impressive PowerPoint presentation full of colour and animation that represented his take on the Kashrut knowledge he had learnt in class. He was not asked to do this, he simply wanted to show what he now knows".

The course in 2017 generally anchors itself around the three pillars that, according to Pirkei Avot, support the world's existence: Torah, Tefillah (prayer), and Tzedakah (charity). Term 2 has focused on Kashrut, the synagogue and prayers, and our students also love to learn about Shabbat, festivals, and more.

Continued on page 30



Continued from Page 29



Students in the Great's JEP make use of the latest in technology in the classroom.

Another feature of the course is the technology that students use as a natural aid to learning. As Michael says, “Technology is the medium through which most students absorb much of their knowledge in the 21st Century. The medium shapes the messages that an educator wishes to offer to students, and he or she must deliver learning opportunities in the ‘language’ most receptive to the learners”.

The Great's JEP students harness much more than Kahoot!, Quizizz, YouTube, and PlayFactile (a form of Jeopardy). For instance, as students prepare for a synagogue experience, they have used the Nearpod platform's FieldTrip component to visit, compare and contrast many different synagogues around the world – including inside

Technology is the medium through which most students absorb much of their knowledge in the 21st Century.

Jerusalem's Western Wall. They also have access to an “always-on” “Prayer Dojo” allowing any student to practice a growing library of prayers anytime, anywhere, utilising recordings by both Michael and, soon, Great Synagogue Cantor Joshua Weinberger. “The focuses of this course,” says Michael, “are not only

to accustom students to the synagogue space as they reach the Jewish age of majority, making it both familiar and warm, but also to equip them with the skills and confidence to take as much of an active part in services as they choose. Whenever students walk through The Great's doors – or through those of any synagogue in the world, they should be able to feel this way. And that is why we focus strongly on synagogue and prayer literacy, primarily related to the bar and bat mitzvah experience, but beyond, as well”.

The JEP course combines principles of Harvard's Visible Thinking with a highly tactile, multi-sensory, “surround-sound” Judaism. Students create their very own *yadayim* – Torah pointers – and use them to practice pointing toward a



JEP Students 'taste' their Kashrut learning at Pita Mix, learning direct from Nathan the kosher supervisor.



JEP students at Reddam learn what one must enjoy at the Purim feast - with tasty substitutes

class Torah. They pop golden balloons with sweets inside and through this act understand an important lesson relating to the golden calf incident at Mount Sinai. They also leave the comforts of the classroom and quite literally "taste" their learning: students were recently hosted by manager Niv and family Barhom at an excursion to Pita Mix in Rose Bay to round out their Kashrut unit.

"Our pre-bar and -bat mitzvah students from grades 3-7 enjoy coming to The Great Synagogue Enrichment Program lessons," remarks Michael. "They have come to expect to have a lot of fun and win prizes, but of course the greatest prize of all is the knowledge, skills and overall Jewish confidence that they will carry – and that will carry them – throughout their lives.

The JEP course combines principles of Harvard's Visible Thinking with a highly tactile, multi-sensory, "surround-sound" Judaism.

"If your child or someone you know would like to join one of our three classes, please be in touch with the Great Synagogue today – we'd love to have them". ❁



Students at Rose Bay put the Purim megillah back in order in a race against other teams.

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Delving Deeper: *Jewish Education at The Great*

Varied, thoughtful and interesting adult education is a keystone of our offerings at The Great. This year there was another excellent selection of classes and lots of interest and participation.

From Rabbi Elton's pre-Shacharit 15-minute Rashi class on Shabbat morning, to the two-part class on synagogue composers, presented by Rabbi Elton and Chazzan Weinberger,

there was something for everyone. Rabbi Leavitt gave a pre-Shavuot class this year, and a special presentation on sibling rivalry in the Bible. Other courses included Talmud, in conjunction with the National Council of Jewish Women; a guide to the synagogue service; and training in Haftarah reading. Rabbi Elton has also given special presentations to the Australian Jewish Historical Society, the University of the Third Age and at Limmud Oz, which attracted members

and non-members alike.

Rabbi Elton is also free to learn individually for half an hour before Shacharit each weekday morning, and by arrangement at other times over the course of the week. He now learns with different young adults and children in different locations and in groups of various sizes over the course of each week and month. He is always happy to hear from you and work out together what you'd like to learn. ❁



Rabbi Elton speaking to the University of the Third Age in Cootamundra.



Great Composers class delivered by the ministers.



From the pre-Shacharit 15-minute Rashi class on Shabbat morning, to the two-part class on synagogue composers, there was something for everyone.



Adult Education Class.



Rabbi Elton visiting the Montefiore Home. INSET: Cantor Weinberger singing at the Montefiore Home.

New Year's Greetings

Rabbi Elton and Hinda Young wish the entire community a happy, healthy and prosperous new year. We look forward to another year of community and growth.

Wishing our family & friends a peaceful New Year, filled with only happy occasions. Fast well. Caroline, David & Juliet Lewis, Charlotte & Robbie Weiss. In loving memory of Naomi & Harold Lewis



Wishing our dear children, Hinda and Benjamin and The Great Synagogue family a sweet, healthy and peaceful new year. Mavis and Peter Elton

Sara and Ken Gresham together with Aylie and Tom Brutman, Jonathan, Daniel and Noah wish all the community Shana Tova and well over the fast.

Wishing all our family and friends Shana Tova and well over the Fast. Steve and Sharon Schach

We wish you a happy and peaceful year to come. Ron & Margaret Sekel

Chag Sameach to all, Jane & Eli Levi & Ezra Wexler



Ros and Alex Fischl and family wish all our friends at The Great Synagogue a Shana Tova. May you be inscribed for a healthy and happy year.

David Hartstein and Judith Cowan, Eleanor and Isabel Hartstein wish all their family and members of the congregation a happy and healthy New Year and well over the Fast.

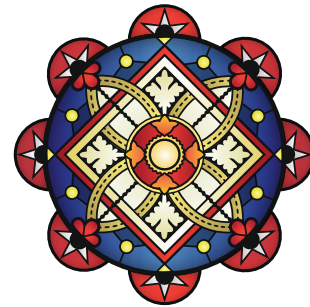
New Year's Greetings

*Wishing our family, "Great family" and friends a sweet, healthy, prosperous and peaceful New Year and well over the Fast.
Sue, Jake and Ben Selinger*

*Wishing all our friends in the "Great" community and beyond, Shona Tova, a happy and sweet new year!!!
David Newman and Family*



*Justice Stephen & Sandra Rothman & family wish all friends and congregants a healthy, happy new year - one of peace, prosperity, health and happiness.
L'SHANA TOVA U'M'TUCHA V'GMAR
CHATIMAH TOVA*



Wesley and Sari Browne & family wish the ministers, board and the entire Great Synagogue family a very healthy, happy and peaceful New Year.

*L'Shanah Tova
Wishing our Great community a sweet year.
From Lauren, Jackson & Mikaela Ryder*



*To our extended family and friends - Shana Tova for a healthy, happy, peaceful year.
Barbara and Max Freedman*

Hilary May Black and Gary Elsass and family wish the congregation, friends and family a sweet new year.



Another Busy Year for *the Women's Auxiliary*

The Women's Auxiliary has enjoyed another active and productive year. Members of the Auxiliary come to Shule for many Shabbatot and Yamim Tovim throughout the year to prepare a delicious Kiddush, which they sponsor for the benefit of the congregation. Their special occasion Kiddushim are splendid and admired, especially the marvelous spread for Grandparents Shabbat and at the Farewell Kiddush for Rev David and Stephanie Hilton.

The WA is now co-sponsoring the monthly Shabbat lunches and assisting with the preparation and presentation. Engaged couples are always delighted to receive a challah cloth and Great Synagogue Birken. The succah was

decorated beautifully again, and will be again this year. The program of outings continues and is popular, with excursions to the Archibald Exhibition, Town Hall and Queen Victoria Building. The guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting was Rebecca Bloomer, a teacher and author, who discussed "Books: Do We Need Them?"

The leadership team for the next year will be:

President: Ros Brennan

Vice President: Eleonore Solomon

Minutes Secretary and Publicity:

Ilana Cohen

Treasurer and Kiddushim: Denise Sher

Correspondence Secretary: Jeanette Rosenthal-Kahn ❁



Kiddush table.



WA Leadership Team.



Guest speaker Rebecca Bloomer.

A Fond Farewell to *Rev David & Stephanie Hilton*

After almost a decade of devoted service to the congregation, Rev David and Stephanie returned to London just before Passover this year.

The Synagogue marked their time with us, and Rev Hilton's retirement, with a special Kiddush sponsored by the Women's Auxiliary, who presented the Hiltons with a memento of their stay from their friend, and a Sunday reception, with tributes and the presentation of an engraved silver Havdalah set.

Rabbi Elton offered his appreciation in a Shabbat morning sermon:

"When Hinda and I arrived in Sydney nothing was too much trouble for the Hiltons – Shabbat meals, meals in their succah, lending pots and pans before ours arrived, explaining the unique aspects of the service at The Great, driving with me to Rookwood and Macquarie Park. I know that many other people have benefitted from the Hilton's generosity just as we have. Stephanie and David are a model for warm heartedness at the centre of our community.

As a Minister of the Synagogue, Rev Hilton has brought skills that any community would envy. He reads Torah, Haftarah and the Megillot with deep knowledge of Hebrew grammar and unique system of notes for each different type of text. The nusach – the modes and melodies for each service of the week and year – is in his marrow, and comes to him completely naturally, as one who has heard the synagogue service since his early childhood. David



Rev David and Stephanie Hilton delivering their farewell speech.

has sung in synagogue choirs since he was a boy, and I doubt there is anyone in Australia with his knowledge of the classical repertoire for shule choirs, from the Blue Book, to the arrangements of Emmanuel Fisher and Dudley Cohen, to the contemporary re-arrangements by Raymond Goldstein and Stephen Glass.

As a pastor, few can touch Rev Hilton. Empathy, compassion and warmth radiate from him. I know he has brought tremendous comfort to the sick and bereaved while he has been at this Synagogue. But he has also brought great meaning and significance to happy occasions. The couples married by Rev

Continued on Page 38



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I know that many other people have benefitted from the Hilton's generosity just as we have. Stephanie and David are a model for warm heartedness.



Louise Rosenberg, Stephanie and David Hilton.

Hilton were lucky indeed. The boys he has taught for bar mitzvah responded to his enthusiasm and concern. We have been fortunate to have on our clergy team someone able to do so much outside the normal run of abilities, and do it so well. His catering for lectures and special events is delicious. He actually understands the sound system used in the shule. He is flexible with his talents, without preciousness. He has led Shacharit on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and then gone into the loft to strengthen the choir.

David does not think in terms of contracted hours or days. He has always come to Shacharit on his days off to make up the minyan, and to lein. He is always available on evenings and weekends for a wedding, funeral, shiva or any other occasion. He and Stephanie

have been unstinting in their hospitality to members and visitors alike.

Perhaps the strongest concept I associate with David is enthusiasm. When he visits a hospital room he does not pop in for five minutes, he stays for an hour and really spends time with the sick person. When he took part in our kumzitz, our evening of song, he did not just turn up and sing a melody, he arranged an accompaniment on the electric keyboard. When he cooks, he sources the finest products and the most authentic ingredients. When I wanted the morning minyan to meet every day, he was 100% behind the idea. When I started a Rashi class at 8.30 on a Shabbat morning, he was always there. When we brought back Oneg Shabbat, David produced the Grace After Meals and song cards, the Mincha and Maariv

booklets, he leined. When we introduced reciting the Song of Songs, Ruth and Ecclesiastes on Pesach, Shavuot and Succot he stepped forward to read them. He is guided and directed by enthusiasm, and we have all felt the warmth that has produced.

As we move forward without him, I hope we will not just nurse fond memories. Rev Hilton and Stephanie would not want to be the focus of unproductive nostalgia. They should be a continuing inspiration to infuse warmth and enthusiasm into our communal life. We can honour their legacy by continuing their enthusiasm. I pray that the news that reaches Stephanie and David from this community will make them proud, and we shall hear good tidings from them for many years to come". 🌸

Unveiling of the *Rothfield Medals*

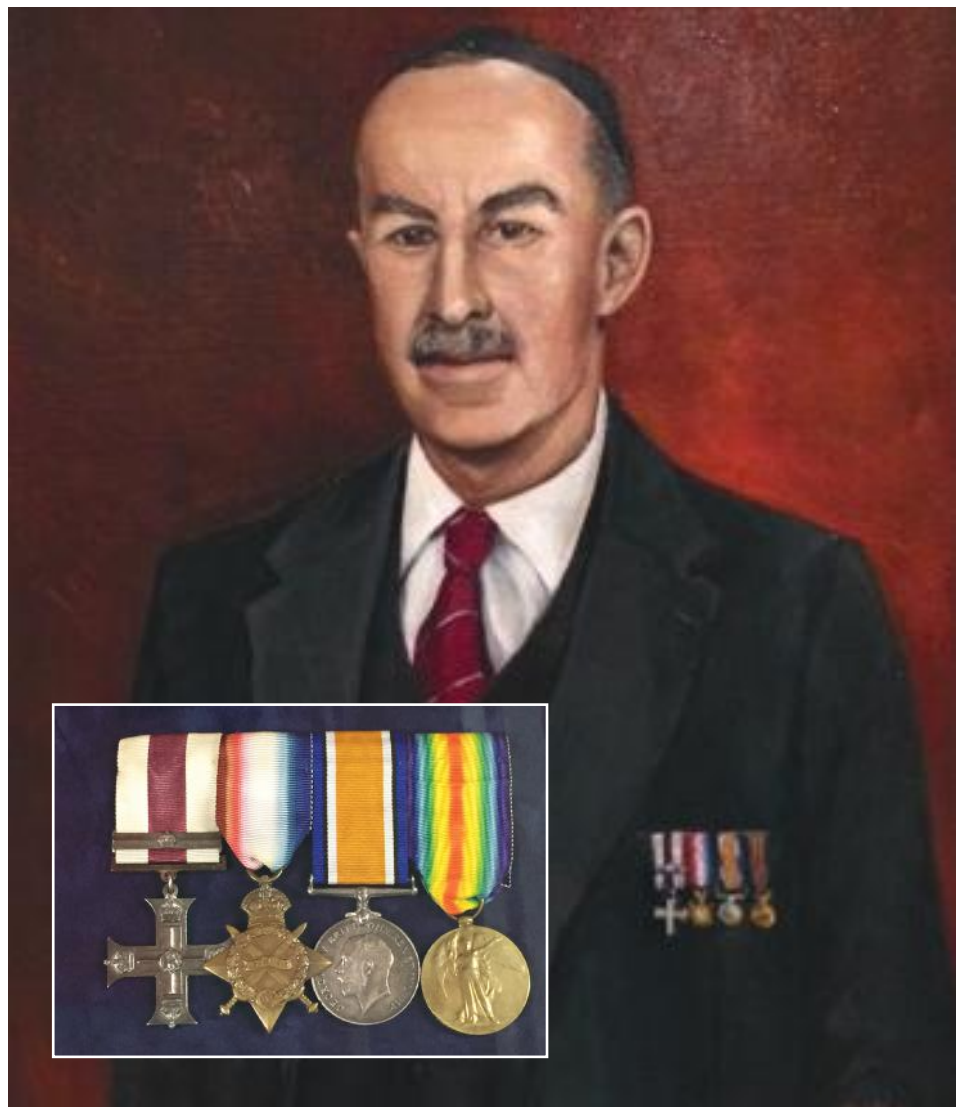
One of the most influential figures within The Great Synagogue was Abraham Rothfield. He ran the children's services, taught boys their bar mitzvah portions and ran the Hebrew School as well as being Headmaster of the Board of Jewish Education. John Lenn recalled him fondly in the last issue of The Great Vine. Rothfield was also a good 'baal tefilla' and for many years he led High Holy Day youth services at Shule. He was always known as 'Rothy'.

He was modest about his achievements but he was a hero of the First World War, and a winner of the Military Cross and Bar.

At the outbreak of World War I, he was already serving in a territorial unit of the British Army and was later commissioned a Lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry before being transferred to the Royal Flying Corps.

The citation to the Bar to his MC reads, "During the bombardment he walked along the top of the trench to reorganise the men. He was badly wounded but continued to direct operations until unable to do so through loss of blood."

For some time, the Synagogue collection has had a portrait of Rothfield wearing his medals. The medals themselves were owned by NAJEX until they were stolen. Last year, they came up for auction and with a generous anonymous donation the Synagogue bought them. They were unveiled next



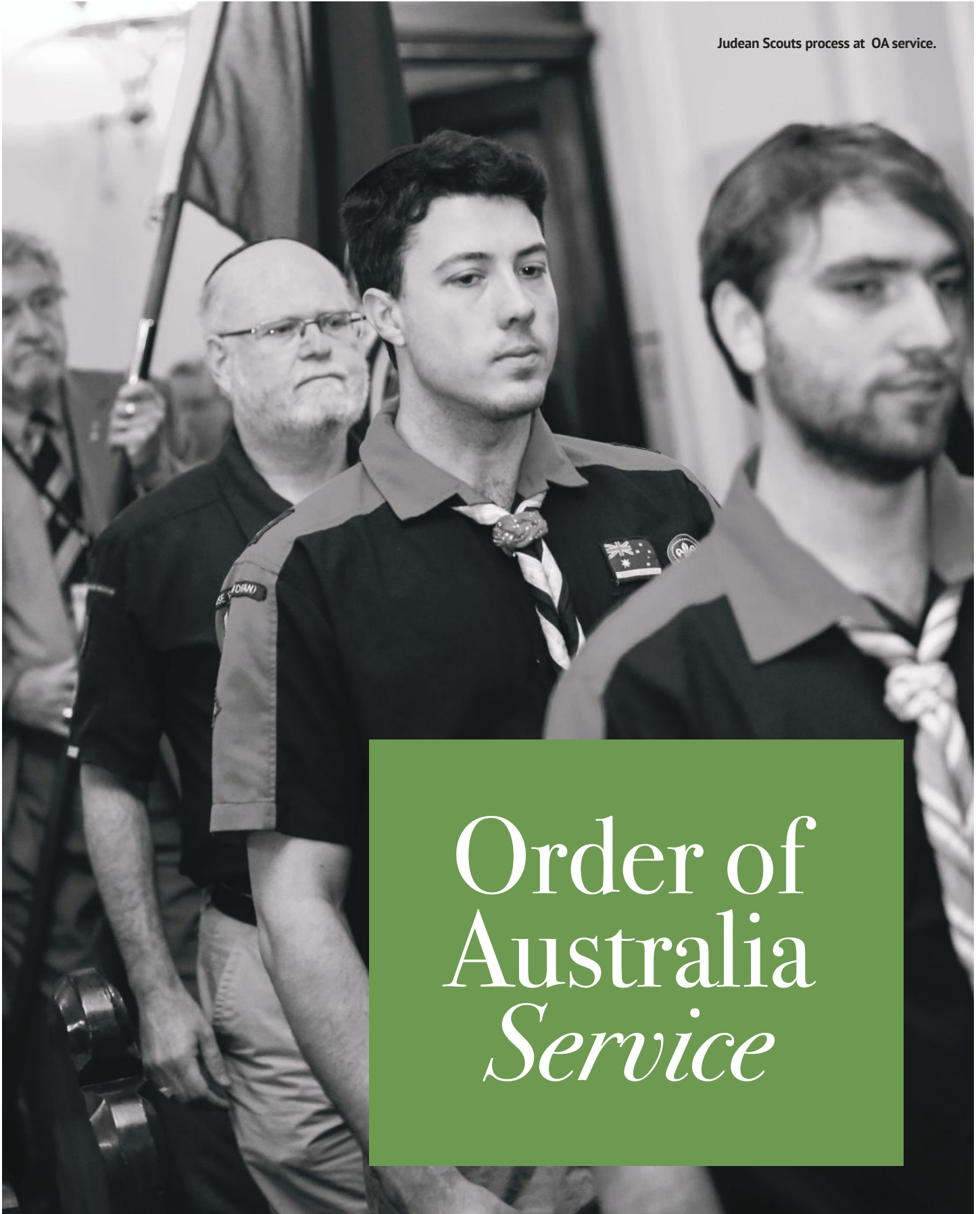
Abraham Rothfield.

to his portrait, in the War Memorial, on Anzac Shabbat. Professor Clive Kessler, one of Rothy's pupils, spoke movingly about his teacher, whose image and

decorations now enjoy the prominence they deserve, in a Synagogue where he made such an impact for many years. ❁



Judean Scouts process at OA service.



Order of Australia *Service*

Every year the Order of Australia Association holds a service in a major place of worship in Sydney. This year was the turn of The Great Synagogue, representing the Jewish community. The holders of awards in the Order filled the centre block of seats and overflowed into the rows around. MPs, council leaders, Rabbis, faith leaders and other dignitaries joined members of the congregation and others to show our respect for those who have given so much to our communities and have been honoured in the Order of Australia. We even had a bagpipe contingent from The Scots College! Rabbi Elton gave the address at the Service, and here are some of his remarks.

“In the Jewish masterpiece of moral teaching, *The Ethics of the Fathers* we learn this:

Ben Zoma said: ‘Who is honoured? One who honours others’

That sums up the ethos of the Order of Australia and the Order of Australia Association. The Order is the means by which our society honours those who have made an exceptional contribution to the common good. The Order and the Association are not concerned primarily with being honoured, but with honouring others, and that is why they are so worthy of our respect and celebration.

The Ben Zoma who left this statement to posterity was Simon the son of Zoma, a remarkable individual who lived in the second century of the common era. This is a story told about him:

Ben Zoma, seeing the crowds on the Temple mount, said, “Blessed be He who created all these who look after me. How much had Adam to weary himself with! Not a mouthful could he taste before he ploughed and sowed, and cut and bound sheaves, and threshed and winnowed and sifted the grain, and ground and sifted the flour, and kneaded and baked, and then he ate; but I get up in the morning and find all this ready before me.

In this story, when Ben Zoma stood on the holiest spot in the world, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, his mind was not

filled by other-worldly thoughts. Ben Zoma’s religious reaction was to thank God for the other people around him. Ben Zoma’s religious insight was that God makes His presence felt through people in this world doing His work; that God is amongst us, that God’s blessing increases, when we are supporting and assisting each other.

That is what the members of the Association do for us every day. By running voluntary and charitable organisations, leading communities, dedicating their careers to public service, placing their free time at the disposal of good causes and those in need, they improve the quality of our society immeasurably. That is a culture that we need to foster. By recognising individuals who take the lead and set an example, the Order of Australia plays a vital part in generating and sustaining a healthy and thriving civil society.

It is significant that as he stood on the Temple Mount, Ben Zoma referred back to Adam, the first man. When Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden all their needs were provided for. Ben Zoma was referring to the time after the sin with the apple, when the first couple were banished from the Garden and had to work in order to eat and be clothed.

They could have remained in that state and humanity could have continued along that path: doing just enough to get by, baking, without thinking about other people.

Ben Zoma is telling us, and rejoicing in the fact, that when there were others to consider, humanity did make the ethical leap away from selfishness and towards concern and care for other people. That is the meaning of Ben Zoma’s statement in the *Ethics of the Fathers*: it is when we honour others, by recognising that their welfare is worthy of our exertions and that their needs are deserving of our efforts, that we become honoured ourselves.

No one has made that choice more wholeheartedly than those who have been honoured by an award in the Order of Australia. They come from every background, from every faith and ethnic origin, from across the multicultural wonder that is the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Order of Australia and its Association nurtures the values that are the bedrock of a prosperous, successful, happy and blessed society. I pray that the Almighty will show his love, grace and kindness to all those with us this morning, all members of the Order and all who labour for the common good.” ❀



Cantor Weinberger processing during the OA service.



Rabbi Elton Gives the *ANZAC Address*

On ANZAC Day 2017 Rabbi Elton had the honour of giving the Address at the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, in the presence of His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, many dignitaries and a large assembly of veterans and their families. This is an excerpt from Rabbi Elton's Address:

"It is my privilege to give this year's Anzac Address, as a Rabbi representing the Jewish community. My predecessor as Chief Minister of The Great Synagogue, Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen took part in the dedication of the Anzac Memorial in 1934 and he and his successors served as Chaplains to serving men and women of our Defence Forces, and to veterans. I am proud to stand in that tradition as the Jewish Chaplain to the New South Wales branch of the Returned and Services League.

In this year of 2017 we are in the midst of First World War anniversaries. Three years ago we marked the centenary of the outbreak of War, two years ago Gallipoli, last year the Battle of the Somme and next year the Armistice and

The reassurance, the moral and spiritual support, provided by the Priest, did not take place in the thick of the battle – it came as the army was assembling.

the end of the War. The year 1917 was certainly not without incident, including the entry of the United States, and the capture of Beersheba by the Australian Light Horse, which the Australian Jewish community will be marking later in the year. But perhaps this is the year to turn our minds, not to the major events that are usually commemorated, but the day-to-day slog of war.

The Bible well understood the pressures and demands of the long periods between exceptional events.

Continued on Page 44

Rabbi Elton and the Hon General David Hurley Governor of NSW.







Continued from Page 42

Our debt to the men and women who took part in conflicts over the past century and longer, includes our gratitude that they endured those experiences and remained ready, willing and able.



Like today's armed forces, the ancient Israelite army was also served by military chaplains, by a Priest, who was specially anointed for the role. The Book of Deuteronomy records this instruction:

"When you come close to battle, the priest shall approach and speak to the people, and shall say to them: 'Hear, O Israel, you are coming close to doing battle against your enemies; let not your heart faint; fear not, do not be alarmed, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you'."

The reassurance, the moral and spiritual support, provided by the Priest, did not take place in the thick of the battle – there is rarely time for it then – it came as the army was assembling. These were times of great anxiety, fear and trepidation.

If we turn our minds back to 1917, we recall that soldiers who found themselves in the trenches of the Western Front had to live outside for weeks on end in biting cold, cutting wind, rain, sleet and snow in the winter, and the burning heat of the sun in the



Rabbi Elton delivering his address.

summer. They were surrounded by soul-numbing desolation; a landscape destroyed by war.

I share this account by a Vietnam veteran which sums up the challenge, in a different conflict but with the same realities:

"I remember the monotony...But it was a strange boredom. It was boredom with a twist that caused stomach disorders. [...] Well, you'd think, this isn't so bad. And right then you'd hear gunfire behind you and you'd be squealing pig squeals. That kind of boredom"

Our debt to the Australian and New Zealand men and women who took part in conflicts over the past century and longer, includes our gratitude that they endured those experiences and remained ready, willing and able, when the time came, to press forward. It also devolves a responsibility upon us to care for servicemen and women who were affected by the totality of their time at war, and not just in combat, simply and narrowly understood.

That is our continuing moral duty. On this Anzac Day let us renew our commitment to uphold it, and to recognise and honour the contribution of all those who served and endured, revere the memory of those who perished and support those who returned. May their service continue to inspire us all. 🌸



Special *Events*

Ashule is about more than just prayer and study. It should be a lively community centre with events catering to all the interests of its members, and bringing them together to spend enjoyable and interesting times with each other.

We have had a busy year with events, both religious and non-religious. There was the annual highlight of the Law Service and a fabulous reception which followed; a presentation and demonstration on the cuisine of Bali; the Falk Lecture, given by Rabbi Apple on Rev. Herman Hoelzel; a challah bake for the Shabbat Project; Edwin Black's lecture on IBM and the Holocaust; Zac Seidler's presentation on men's mental health; a Shabbat lunch to raise money for research into ovarian cancer; the evening of song in memory of Reb Benzion Shenker; the monthly communal Shabbat lunches; and more. 🌸



Homelessness Awareness Event, Succot 2016.



Zac Seidler talking about men's mental health.



Edwin Black lecture on IBM and the Holocaust.



Rabbi Apple delivering the Falk Lecture.

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More *Mechitza!*



L-R Heather, Zelda, Win.



In last year's issue of *The Great Vine*, we reported the latest project of the Judaica Textile Group – a new mechitza (partition between men and women used during services), which is attached to the front of the pews on the North side of the Synagogue on Friday night and certain other services. Their beautiful embroidery of Australian flowers has been so well-received, that they are now working on a new section for the pew permanently reserved for women at the North East corner of the men's section. We are looking forward to its installation, and thank the members of the Group for their splendid work! ❁



L-R Sybil, Ilana, Carol, Jaqui.



A New Tradition:

The Prayer for the Congregation Read by Women



The Great Synagogue has always been at the forefront of attempts within Orthodoxy to promote the role of women. We introduced confirmations and then bat mitzvahs at a very early date. Rabbi Apple created the individual bat mitzvah, which included the girl addressing the congregation from the pulpit. Women have carried a second Sefer Torah round their section when we have a Shabbat or Yom Tov that requires two Sefarim. At Simchat Torah in recent years there has been a separate Torah reading by and for women, and the Women's Tefillah Group have used the Shule for Shabbat Mincha. The aim is

always the same: to promote religiously meaningful rituals for women within Orthodox Jewish law.

We took another step in that direction this year with the creation of a new element of the service. We have heard from women that they want to perform an honour to mark a *yahrzeit* or a *simcha*, just as men do, rather than nominating a male relative to take part in the service on their behalf. After some thought we found a solution. For many years, perhaps since 1878, the Chief Minister has read the Prayer for the Congregation in English after the Chazzan has recited it in Hebrew, before reading the list of offerings. We have now moved that

English reading to the end of the service, just before announcements and *Adon Olam*. It is read by a woman marking a sombre or happy occasion, while two other women open and close the Ark.

This change has been very well received. Many women have been moved to tears by the opportunity to participate in the service; some have not been on the Bimah since they signed the Civil Register on their wedding day! Of course, not all women accept the honour, and there is no religious compulsion at The Great Synagogue. The change has not even materially lengthened the service, so everyone is happy! ❁

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Ya'amod *Maftir!*

John Lenn



Long ago and far away, cruel tyrants banned public reading of the Torah. There was consternation among the Jews. Would this ban last for two weeks? For two years? Forever? So the rabbis at the time got together and compiled a whole lot of readings from

the Prophets. These readings – known as haftarah or haftorah – reminded worshippers of the Torah portion that would have been read on that particular Shabbat. Sometimes the haftarah refers to the date or special occasion, such as a festival or new month. Many years later, after public Torah reading was resumed,

the custom of reciting a haftarah remained and, nowadays, is often the focal point of a bar mitzvah presentation in shul.

A glance at your Chumash will reveal, peppered throughout the Hebrew text, a series of squiggles and other diacritics known as trope symbols. They have

names, as shown in the accompanying illustration. These symbols define how each word and phrase is to be sung and accented. The cognoscenti know, however, that most singers take liberties and enhance the prescribed tune with more or less creative interpretations. There are, in addition, untold regional and cultural variations. The Ashkenazim, the Sephardim, the Chassidim and the Americans, for example, all have their distinctive and equally enjoyable styles.

Some of the Prophets wrote in an abstract, spiritual and deeply philosophical style; their haftarot can be quite challenging to read, as well as to understand. The Prophet Isaiah – who some would say deserves the title of the Jewish Shakespeare – wrote in such an exquisite and lofty manner that he was accorded the seven consecutive haftarot between Tisha B'av and Rosh Hashanah. These “Haftarot of Consolation” have given spiritual comfort to the Jewish People for thousands of years and will continue to do so in perpetuity. Isaiah’s words were also set to music by George Frideric Handel in the 18th century, to the eternal delight of the non-Jewish world.

Some haftarot tell famous or gripping narrative stories. Think, for example of the Book of Jonah, read in its entirety on Yom Kippur afternoon. As everyone knows, Jonah was swallowed by a whale. (Actually, it was a “big fish”.) One of my favourites is the moving passage from Samuel 1, recited when Shabbat falls on the day before the New Moon. The author takes us from the palace of Saul where we are appalled by the monarch’s insanity, to the fields where the Bible’s dearest friends, Jonathan the prince and David the future king, embrace and say farewell for the final, tragic time.

It is good for a bar mitzvah boy to know a bit about the haftarah’s subject matter in order to facilitate a more convincing interpretation. I used to wonder why my teacher, the Central Synagogue’s Reverend (later Rabbi) Ernest Wolff, never told me what my own haftarah, Bamidbar, was about. I learned

Some of the Prophets wrote in an abstract, spiritual and deeply philosophical style; their haftarot can be quite challenging to read, as well as to understand.

some years after that it contained “adult themes” which were inappropriate for the tender sensibilities of a child. If you are interested in studying that haftarah text or any other, I suggest you use a modern Chumash, with a contemporary and accessible translation. Some haftarot are short – for example, Ki Tetze is only ten verses – while the monumental haftarah for Beshallah

weighs in at an impressive 54 verses and contains, among other features, a gruesome assassination.

The duty of reciting a haftarah on Shabbat and festivals is given to the person who has been called up to Maftir, the last reading of the Torah. It goes, where possible, to one who is commemorating a milestone in the life of their family. At the appointed moment the rabbi calls, “Ya’amod so-and-so Maftir”, the signal for the honouree to ascend the Bimah. Once the Torah reading has been completed and the scroll displayed to the congregation and wrapped in its mantle, we may all settle back to enjoy the uplifting words and glorious musical setting of the day’s haftarah and its blessings. The choir will sing, “Amen”. The congregants will shout, “Shkoyach!” And all the rest is commentary. ❁

John Lenn is an experienced, popular and effective bar mitzvah teacher, and a member of the Board of The Great Synagogue.





Limmud Oz

By Joseph Constable

The full Limmud Oz three-day conference is hosted in Sydney every other year. In alternate years there is a one-day conference, which last year was chaired by our member Craig Shulman. This year Hinda Young was Volunteer Chair, and there were several volunteers from our Shule, including Jane Levi and Genevieve Cumming-Jaffe. Here, another of our members to volunteer gives his impressions.

“This year’s Limmud-Oz was my first experience of this festival of Jewish ideas. Although I signed up as a volunteer and attended organisational meetings for the six months leading up to the weekend, I was still blown away by the scale of the actual event.

It was a long weekend, and I thought most people would be escaping the winter or devoting their precious break to activities unconnected to Jewish lectures. When I arrived at UNSW on Sunday morning, I realised how wrong I was. Hundreds of people, young and old, were buzzing around from one auditorium to the next, excitedly discussing ideas they had just picked up from a session.

I soon discovered why people had chosen to spend their weekend at Limmud-Oz when I attended my first session, a talk given by Rabbi Fred Morgan on the history of Jewish-Christian relations. This was a subject relatively unknown to me, yet his speech was so engaging that I was engrossed for the whole hour. By the end, I had a



Joseph Constable, Limmud Oz 2017.



Hinda Young and Anna Stern, Co-Chairs of Limmud Oz 2017.

long list of questions and points for discussion with the speaker. To my surprise and pleasure, there was a perfect opportunity later that afternoon, when I ran into Rabbi Morgan in the dining area. I told him how much I had

enjoyed his talk, and we chatted for an hour while he generously shared many fascinating insights into Jewish history.

This enthusiasm for ideas and dialogue characterised the rest of the weekend. I found myself engaged in a dozen talks on a range of topics, all of the highest standard, followed by the unique and enriching opportunity to meet and converse with the speakers.

When I first arrived at Limmud-Oz, I didn’t know many of the other attendees. By the end, I felt part of a community of festival-goers who shared lecture rooms, a chill-out area, and many deep thoughts. Reflecting on the warm atmosphere, breadth of ideas, and the enthusiasm to learn, challenge and be challenged, I have scarcely ever felt so privileged to be Jewish”. ❁



The Thief

A Story by Ilana Cohen

Two long black legs hung out of the second storey window, a feminine hand grasped the windowsill. Anne lowered herself onto the downpipe. Soon she stood on the ground beside her father, a slightly solid man with greying hair. Together they carried the bags towards the van. They drove off into the city where the goods were dropped off, then they headed for home. Home to them was an almost unfurnished room, high in a condemned building.

Leo was getting too old for athletic climbing events, but he helped Anne carry the goods. He had years of experience in the field, he knew how and where to dispose of items. Anne was proud to follow the family's traditions and hoped one day to pass on this knowledge to her own children.

One night she slipped quietly into a luxurious house in Vaucluse. She saw on the table some beautiful candelabra. She added these to her collection and lowered the bag down to her father. Later whilst seated next to her father, she pulled out the candelabra. He recognised the items and told her, "This is a Chanukah menorah, a Chanukia". Although they were also Jewish, they had never celebrated the festivals, but Leo remembered these items from years past.

Anne was now completing the HSC and her thoughts passed to meeting a nice Jewish boy. But how was she to find one? They bought a Jewish newspaper, and she found a link to some functions she could go to.



The first event she went to was a dance. She had little choice when it came to dresses but hoped no-one would notice. The music was filled with a strong beat, the room was full of shadowed figures in a semi-darkened room. She paid admission and walked in, to a room full of strangers. The room itself was large, with groups of people chatting loudly. She felt uncomfortable and soon left. But determined to meet someone, she started to attend other functions and started to see familiar faces.

One of the groups went to a restaurant where she was seated beside a young man wearing a tailored jacket. Andrew introduced himself; he was a university student studying economics. They spent the evening chatting and he offered her a lift home. She gave the address of a school friend and said goodbye at the door. After he drove away, she made her way home.

Andrew had always been surrounded by

One night she slipped quietly into a luxurious house in Vaucluse, she saw on the table some beautiful candelabra. She added these to her collection and lowered the bag down to her father.

wealth. From his earliest moments it had embraced him like his mother's arms. Born in a private hospital and brought up in a Vaucluse mansion, with beautiful views.

He met Anne again, always picking her up in front of the same house he had dropped her at, they went on picnics and dinners; she tasted delicacies she had never dreamed of. One day he invited her to his house for Shabbat dinner. Leo took her to his family's house, she felt like she had seen this place before. As she entered the dining room she knew, there was an empty space where the Chanukiah had once been. She knew what she had to do.

Their engagement party was held on the lawn of his family's house, and when the family returned inside, the menorah was back in its original position.

Andrew and Anne did get married, but on a moonlit night, you will find her and her father, wandering the streets of Sydney, together. ❁



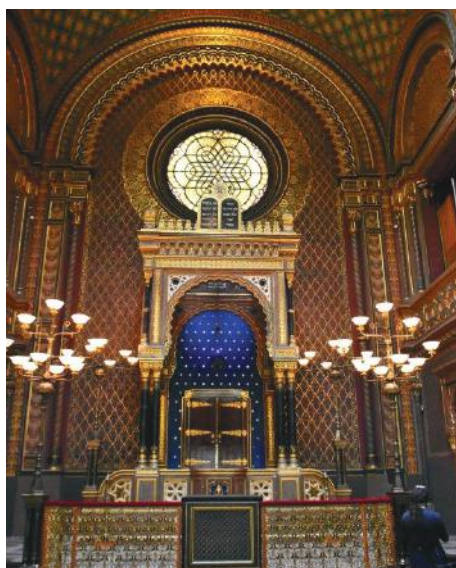
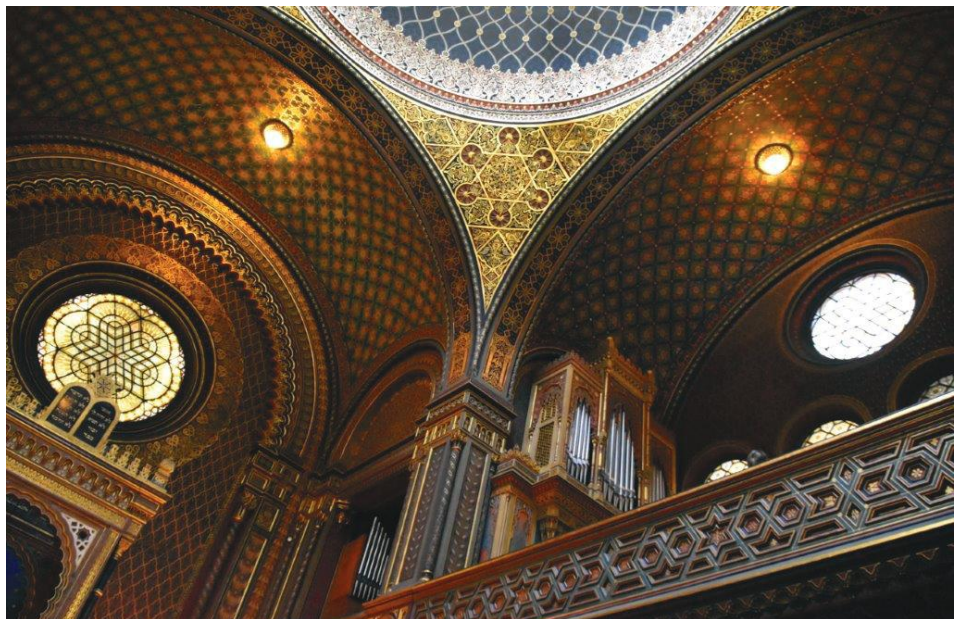
Travels in the Footsteps *of our Medieval Ancestors*

by Rosalind Fischl

On our recent trip to Prague, Alex and I paid a visit once again to the Pinchas Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of Josefov where the Holocaust memorial walls bear the names of lost family members: his maternal grandparents, his uncle, his aunt and her husband, and their young son, as well as other relatives among the eighty thousand names inscribed on the walls. The solemn intoning of the Kaddish prayer from a recording brought the substantial crowd of visitors to an unusual quiet, as befits such a place of reflection on a community cruelly exterminated during World War Two.

We visited several other synagogues and museums in Josefov, most notably the magnificent Spanish Synagogue, recently restored, with the history of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia from 1780 until the modern era, presented in display cases containing books, photographs, documents and personal items, together with treasures of synagogue silver gathered from all over the country. The interior is of a lavish Moorish style, with an ornate gilded organ on the upper gallery, signifying the change for this community to Reform services from 1837. The current synagogue opened in 1868, with the organ installed in 1880. Today it remains a museum and a stunning architectural venue for concerts of sacred music.

A stroll around the ancient cemetery in Josefov revealed the amazing sight



Interior of Spanish Synagogue, Prague.

of massed gravestones indicating the necessity of burying people in layers one above the other, up to twelve layers on one site, due to a severe shortage of space. It is the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe with twelve thousand graves from the 15th century, such as Rabbi and poet Avigdor Kara's grave dated 1439, until the most recent grave dated 1787. Situated in a confined area around the Chevra Kadisha, it offers a fascinating walk around to read headstones such as Rabbi Yehuda Leib ben Bezalel, the Maharal, 1526-1609, and businessman Mordecai Maisel, 1528-1601, who built a synagogue which is named after him and now houses a museum. Important graves are in the style called 'tumba', meaning tent, and

The unkempt state of the graves and numerous headstones lying at precipitous angles seem to me a metaphor for the precarious state of the Jews with their history of uncertainty and chaos.



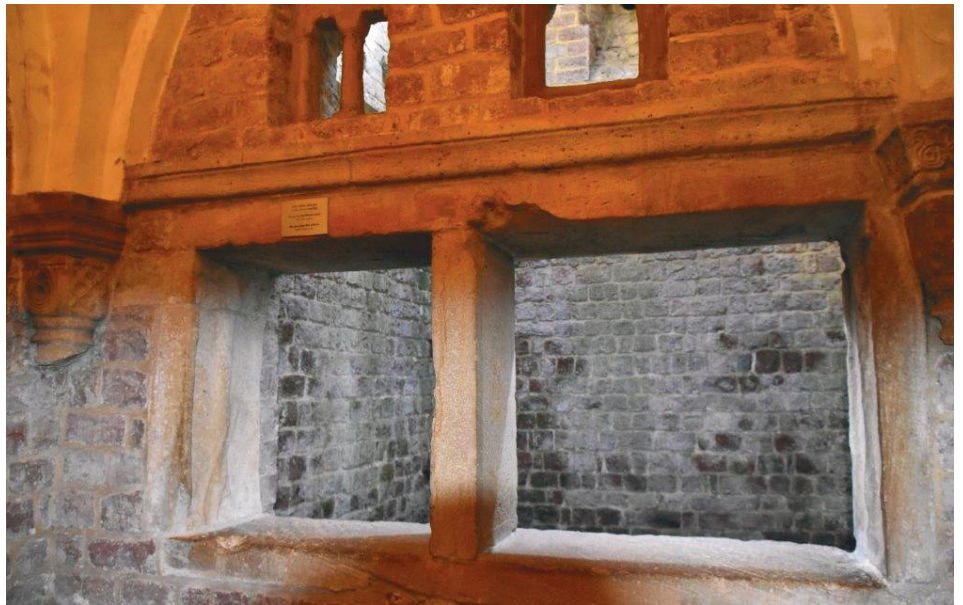
The covered entry to the Mikvah at Speyer.

are constructed like a small stone house above the burial site.

The unkempt state of the graves and numerous headstones lying at precipitous angles seem to me a metaphor for the precarious state of the Jews with their history of uncertainty and chaos, and the necessity of huddling together through a lack of space in the ghettos around Europe. To make order and to clean it up would be to change the natural appearance and to impose an air of normalcy, which would be at odds with their experience of everyday existence.

After Prague we travelled to Basel and then to Cologne we were reminded of the damage done by the bombing during WW2 and shown photographs of the devastation all around, leaving intact only the huge Gothic cathedral, built in stages over 600 years. It looms over the town today, stark and forbidding. The guide also pointed out the balcony of the nearby hotel where Hitler once spoke to the masses.

Just around the corner our guide drew our attention to a restoration of the original Town Hall which had been heavily damaged during the war. The decorative portico has already been repaired, and the building will soon house a Jewish Museum underneath the Town Hall place.



Inside the Mikvah waiting room, Speyer.

Several days later we arrived in Speyer on the Rhine. Having heard the history of Germany in medieval times from the Christian perspective, it was now time to discover the lost Jewish community of Speyer, with a visit to the SchPIRA Museum, located just across the square from where the town's huge Romanesque Cathedral dominates the landscape.

In such close proximity to this Christian edifice, the Jews of Speyer lived in medieval times, prospering there for more than 400 years. In the 11th century, Jewish

merchants and bankers came to Speyer from Italy and France, and in 1084, after Bishop Rudiger Hutzmann offered refuge to Jews fleeing Mainz, a community was established. The refugees were placed under the Bishop's protection and granted special rights.

The Jews at that time enjoyed extensive privileges, elected their own community leader and administered their own justice. All this in a period when Christian citizens were a long way from achieving any sort of municipal self-administration. In time,

Continued on Page 58



Continued from Page 57



The Jewish Cemetery in Josefov, Prague.

together with the communities of Worms and Mainz, the Jews of Speyer came to have a great influence on the spiritual and intellectual life of Jews throughout Western Europe and were the source and centre of Ashkenazi traditions.

About the year 1100 the community built a Romanesque synagogue, consecrated it in 1104, and around 1120 they built the mikveh, the ritual bath. During the 13th century, scholars came from afar to study with the 'wise men of Schpira', (the Hebrew word for Speyer). These renowned scholars taught Torah, Talmud and Kabbalah to rabbis, before they were sent to important communities such as Regensburg and Vienna.

Up until the 14th century there had been peaceful coexistence between the Christian and Jewish communities, but anti-Jewish sentiment arose once again, stirred by envy and resentment. By the year 1500, the medieval Jewish community of Speyer had ceased to exist, as many had left for the Holy Land and other places. Jews returned from 1621 onwards and established another synagogue in 1837, which was burned down by the Nazis on 9 November 1938.

Recent excavations have uncovered the ancient synagogue and an adjacent women's prayer hall, as well as the original



Recovered tombstones now housed in the ShPIRA museum, Speyer.

mikveh. Several artefacts, windows and floor tiles, as well as other fragments of the synagogue structure are placed in a museum which also houses gravestones dating from 1112 to 1443, recovered from nearby buildings, having been plundered from the original Jewish cemetery located near today's train station.

The synagogue was destroyed by arson in 1195, rebuilt in the Gothic style around 1250 and extended to include the separate women's prayer hall. At a later date, a vaulted ceiling was placed over the prayer hall and buttresses added to give



Bronze sculpture: The Wise Men of Speyer.

extra support. The recess of the Aron Hakodesh housing the Sifrei Torah can still be seen in the eastern wall of the original synagogue.

The remains of the mikveh are largely intact, accessed by a steep staircase to the underground area of the entry room to the bath, and of the bath itself. It was built around the same time as the synagogue and is of a beautiful design, said to be the earliest and biggest of its kind preserved in Europe today. In 1999, a glass and steel roof designed by Wolf Spitzer was erected to protect it from the elements.

After the Jews had left Speyer around the year 1500 the synagogue was used as the town's arsenal, and in 1689, when Speyer was incinerated in the Palatine War of Succession, the troops of Louis XIV of France destroyed the former synagogue as well.

This voyage of discovery of our medieval ancestors, and relatives lost during the Holocaust, left me with a feeling of privilege to have been born into a period of our history where we can live in relative peace with the freedom to practise our religion and pursue our destiny without persecution by local authorities. Long may it remain so. ❀

Photos courtesy of Alex and Ros Fischl



Rabbi Mendel Kastel OAM together with the Jewish House Board and Staff wish all of our friends a happy and sweet new year.

We thank all of our volunteers, our supporters and all the other organisations with whom we work to ensure the best outcomes for our clients.

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An Amazing Discovery

from the Library of Thomas Rowe

by Alan Landis

I was most fortunate to acquire recently an important book bearing Thomas Rowe's imprint/bookplate, a most influential source book for the interior decoration of our wonderful Synagogue. Thomas Rowe (1829-1899) was the British-born architect of our Shule, one of Australia's leading architects and the first Mayor of Manly.

The leather-bound gilt-embossed book, entitled *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume*, was published in its second edition in 1846. The author, Augustus Pugin (1812-1852), was the high priest (apologies, Rabbi) of the Gothic style of architecture and was responsible for the interiors of the Palace of Westminster – a building our Rabbi is very familiar with as he worked there for several years.

The book has two hundred and fifty hand-coloured and gilt plates, some very similar to, and a source of inspiration for, our Synagogue's decoration. This second edition is an enlarged version of the first and has many more illustrations.

The term 'Gothic' epitomises the essence of what Victorian architecture stood for. This was a style prevalent in Western Europe in the twelfth to sixteenth centuries and revived in the mid-eighteenth to early twentieth centuries.

This style is characterized by pointed arches, rib vaults and flying buttresses, together with large windows and elaborate tracery.



4 Patterns of Diapycus



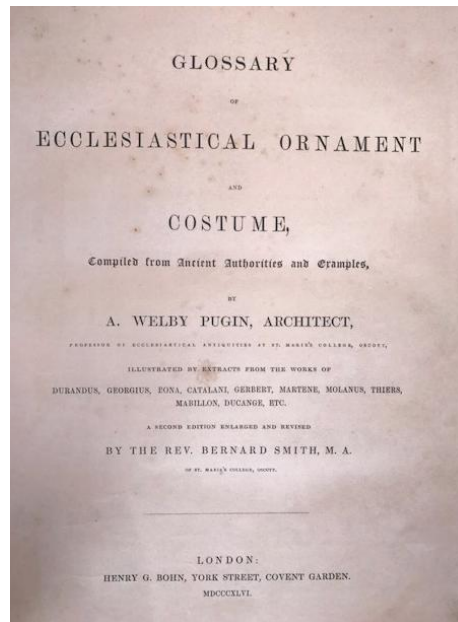
The book has two hundred and fifty hand-coloured and gilt plates, some very similar to, and a source of inspiration for, our Synagogue's decoration.

A further most important feature of this volume, which has Thomas Rowe's imprint, is that no other books owned by him are in the Rosenblum Museum or Falk Library.

My wife Judy Menczel and I are donating this unique historical document to the archives of our Shule as we approach the 140th Anniversary of its completion in March 2018, and to commemorate our ninth wedding anniversary.

We both feel this is the natural home for this fascinating book linking two such important people, Augustus Pugin and Thomas Rowe, with the decoration and architecture of The Great Synagogue.

Rabbi Elton writes: "We are truly grateful to Judy and Alan for this wonderful and generous donation and wish them many years of happiness and good health in the future!" 🌸



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Guide to the *High Holidays*



First night Selichot, 16 September 2017

Selichot are special prayers for forgiveness, which are recited from the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah. Again this year there will be a special choral service at The Great Synagogue for first night Selichot, which contains many beautiful and emotional melodies. It will take place on the evening of 16 September.

Although some recite every night of selichot after midnight, a more common custom is to recite them first thing in the morning. At The Great we begin each morning (apart from Shabbat) at 6.45 before Shacharit.

Rosh Hashanah, 21-22 September 2017

Rosh Hashanah celebrates the start of the Jewish New Year and its major theme is God's Kingship and it is when our judgment for the coming year is written (but not yet sealed). Rosh Hashanah takes up the first two days of the Ten Days of Repentance, when we concentrate on asking for forgiveness for our sins and resolving to do better next year.

The name Rosh Hashana is not used in the Bible. The Bible refers to the holiday as Yom Hazikkaron (the day of remembrance) or Yom Teruah (the day of the sounding of the shofar). One of the most important

observances of this holiday is hearing the sounding of the shofar in the synagogue. A total of one hundred notes are sounded each day. The shofar is not blown if the holiday falls on Shabbat.

A popular observance during this holiday is eating apples dipped in honey, a symbol of our wish for a sweet new year.

The common greeting at this time is Shanah tovah (for a good year). This is a shortening of L'shanah tovah tikatev v'taihatem, which means "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year".

Shabbat Shuvah, 23 September 2017

This is name given to the Shabbat that



Fast of Gedaliah, 24 September 2017

The day after Rosh Hashanah is a fast day to remember the Jewish leader Gedaliah, who led the people after the destruction of the First Temple, but was murdered by Jewish opponents. It is a sad day, when we repent our divisiveness and infighting. As this year the day after Rosh Hashanah is Shabbat, the fast is postponed until Sunday.

Yom Kippur, 29-30 September 2017

The name Yom Kippur means Day of Atonement, because it is set aside to atone for the sins of the past year, through prayer, fasting and other restrictions. On Yom Kippur, the judgment is sealed.

It is customary to wear white on the holiday, which symbolises purity; some people wear a kittel, a white robe.

The evening service is known as Kol Nidrei, named for the text that begins the service, in which we cancel all vows we made with God in haste or unwisely.

There are many additions to the regular liturgy. The most important addition is the confession of the sins of the community, which is inserted into the Amidah. All sins are confessed in the plural, emphasising communal responsibility for sins.

The concluding service of Yom Kippur, known as Ne'ilah, is one unique to the day. As this year Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, Neilah will be the only time we recite the prayer 'Avinu Malkeinu'. The service is sometimes referred to as the closing of the gates, when the doors of heaven are closing for another year. The service and the day ends with a very long blast of the shofar.

Succot, 5-11 October 2017

For forty years, following the Exodus from Egypt, we lived in huts in the wilderness and miraculous clouds of glory covered our ancestors, shielding them from the danger. We remember this by dwelling in a succah, a hut of temporary construction with a roof covering of branches, for the duration of the Succot festival.

Another Succot observance is the taking of the Four Kinds: an etrog (citron), a lulav

(palm frond), three hadassim (myrtle twigs) and two aravot (willow twigs). Our sages tell us that the Four Kinds represent the various types and personalities that comprise the community of Israel, whose intrinsic unity we emphasise on Succot.

The seventh day of Succot is called Hoshana Rabbah (Great Salvation) and closes the period of Divine judgement begun on Rosh Hashanah. A special observance is the aravah--the taking of a bundle of willow branches.

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, 12-13 October 2017

The two days of the holiday of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah constitute the finale of the holiday season, and a final chance to spend time with God before the working year resumes.

On Shemini Atzeret, in addition to the standard holiday service, Yizkor (a prayer supplicating God to remember the souls of the departed) is recited.

After the silent Amidah, the cantor in his repetition recites Geshem (Rain); this prayer consists of a series of piyutim (poetic verses) beseeching God to grant bountiful rain, and bring us all forms of prosperity.

On Simchat Torah we celebrate ending the cycle of reading the Torah and starting it over. On both night and day we dance in the Synagogue. In the morning, everyone takes part in the celebration by receiving an Aliyah. The last of these Aliyot is reserved for the children when they gather together and a tallit is spread over their heads. They all recite the blessing with an adult.

The next two Aliyot conclude the Torah and then begin the new cycle of the reading. The individuals honoured with these two Aliyot are known as Chatan Torah (Torah Groom) and Chatan Bereshit (Genesis Groom).

The morning concludes with a communal lunch sponsored by the Chatan Torah and the Chatan Bereshit, and at The Great, by the Neshei Chayil, the women we are honouring for their work for the community. ❀

falls during the week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is a time for introspection when we look at our actions and see what we have achieved and where we are heading.

The Rabbi gives a thorough and in-depth presentation on a High Holiday theme, called a Shabbat Shuvah Drashah. Rabbi Elton will give his Drashah before Kiddush on Shabbat.

The name Shabbat Shuvah comes from the first word of the Haftarah, taken from the Book of Hosea: Return (Shuvah), Israel, to the Lord your God because you have stumbled in your iniquity.



Services Times for the High Holiday & Festival Services

✧ Erev Rosh Hashanah

Wednesday 20 September, 2017

Candlelighting

Ma'ariv

Eruv Tavshilin

5.30 pm

6.00 pm

✧ First Day Rosh Hashanah

Thursday 21 September, 2017

Shacharit

7.45 am

Torah reading

9.15 am

Shofar and Musaf

10.15 am

Sermon and end of Services

Approx. 1.00 pm

Mincha

Approx. 1.30 pm

Candlelighting for Second Day

After 6.28 pm

Ma'ariv

6.30 pm

✧ Second Day Rosh Hashanah

Friday 22 September, 2017

Shacharit

7.45 am

Torah reading

9.15 am

Shofar and Musaf

10.15 am

Sermon and end of Services

Approx. 1.00 pm

Mincha

Approx. 1.30 pm

Candlelighting for Shabbat

After 5.32 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv

6.00 pm

✧ Shabbat Shuva

Saturday 23 September, 2017

Shacharit

8.45 am

Shabbat Shuva Drasha followed by

Kiddush and Mincha

11.00 am

Shabbat ends

6.31 pm

✧ Fast of Gedaliah

Sunday 24 September, 2017

Fast begins

4.27 am

Fast ends

6.20 pm

✧ Kol Nidrei (Erev Yom Kippur)

Friday 29 September, 2017

Mincha (enter from Castlereagh St)

1.15 pm

Candlelighting and Fast begins

5.37 pm

Kol Nidrei Service

5.45 pm

✧ Yom Kippur

Saturday 30 September, 2017

Shacharit

8.00 am

Torah reading

10.00 am

Sermon

11.00 am

Yizkor (Memorial Service)

Approx. 11.15 am

Musaf

11.40 am

Mincha, followed by Jonah read in English

by members of the congregation, and Ask the Rabbi.

3.45 pm

Sermon and Ne'ilah

5.30 pm

Ma'ariv and Shofar (Fast ends)

6.36 pm

✧ Erev Succot

Wednesday 4 October, 2017

Candlelighting

Mincha and Ma'ariv

Communal Dinner

Eruv Tavshilin

6.40 pm

6.45 pm

7.30 pm

✧ First Day Succot

Thursday 5 October, 2017

Shacharit

8.45 am

Lulav, Hallel and Torah reading

9.30 am

Kiddush followed by Mincha

12.45 pm

Candlelighting

After 7.39 pm

Ma'ariv

7.40 pm

Communal Dinner

8.00 pm

✧ Second Day Succot

Friday 6 October, 2017

Shacharit

8.45 am

Lulav, Hallel and Torah reading

9.30 am

Kiddush followed by Mincha

12.45 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv

6.00 pm

Candlelighting for Shabbat

6.42 pm

✧ Hoshanah Rabbah

Wednesday 11 October, 2017

Shacharit

Eruv Tavshilin

6.30 am

Mincha and Ma'ariv (enter via Castlereagh Street)

6.00 pm

Candlelighting

6.46 pm

✧ Shemini Atzeret

Thursday 12 October, 2017

Shacharit

8.45 am

Hallel followed by Torah reading

9.30 am

Yizkor (Memorial service)

Approx. 10.30 am

✧ Simchat Torah (evening)

Thursday 12 October, 2017

Mincha, Ma'ariv and festivities

7.30 pm

Candlelighting

After 7.44 pm

✧ Simchat Torah (morning)

Friday 13 October, 2017

Shacharit

8.45 am

Hallel and Hakafot (Torah processions),

Torah reading and festivities

9.30 am

Kiddush lunch followed by Mincha

Approx. 1.00 pm

Kabbalat Shabbat and Ma'ariv

6.00 pm

Candlelighting for Shabbat

6.47 pm

✧ Shabbat Bereshit

Saturday 14 October, 2017

Rabbi's class

8.30 am

Shacharit

8.45 am

Torah reading

9.30 am

Kiddush

11.30 am

Shabbat ends

7.47 pm

Weekday morning services between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and on Chol Hamoed Succot, will take place at 6.45 am, and at 6.30 am on Hoshanah Rabbah. Enter via Castlereagh Street.

An Eruv Tavshilin is made on Erev Yom Tov, when a Yom Tov is followed immediately by Shabbat. You will find instructions in your Machzor.



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Membership Application

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Your Details

Title: _____ Surname: _____ First Name/s: _____

Hebrew Name: _____ ben/bat _____

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Home Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Postal Address (if different) : _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Marriage Date / Place: _____

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Date / Place: _____ Bar Mitzvah Sedra: _____

Father's English Name (in full): _____

Father's Hebrew Name: _____ ben _____

Mother's Maiden Name (in full): _____

Mother's Hebrew Name: _____ bat _____

Please attach proof of Jewish status, eg a Ketubah, a letter from a Rabbi or a Certificate of Conversion.

Your Spouse

Applying For Membership

Title: _____ Surname: _____ First Name/s: _____

Hebrew Name: _____ ben/bat _____

Cohen, Levite or Israelite (circle one)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Date / Place: _____ Bar Mitzvah Sedra: _____

Father's English Name (in full): _____

Father's Hebrew Name: _____ ben _____

Mother's Maiden Name (in full): _____

Mother's Hebrew Name: _____ bat _____

Please attach proof of Jewish status, eg a Ketubah, a letter from a Rabbi or a Certificate of Conversion.

Yahrzeits

(Please include any family for our community records.)

English Name	Hebrew Name	Date of Passing	Relationship to you	Marked by

Your Children

(Please photocopy if more than 2 children to complete.)

Applying For Membership

CHILD 1 Surname: _____ First Name/s: _____

Hebrew Name: _____ ben/bat _____ M/F _____

Home Address (if different) : _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Marital Status: _____

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Date / Place: _____ Sedra: _____

School Attending: _____

Partner's Name: (if applicable) _____ Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Hebrew Name: _____ ben/bat _____

Applying For Membership

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Hebrew Name: _____ ben/bat _____ M/F _____

Home Address (if different) : _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ Marital Status: _____

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Date / Place: _____ Sedra: _____

School Attending: _____

Partner's Name: (if applicable) _____ Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Hebrew Name: _____ ben/bat _____

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

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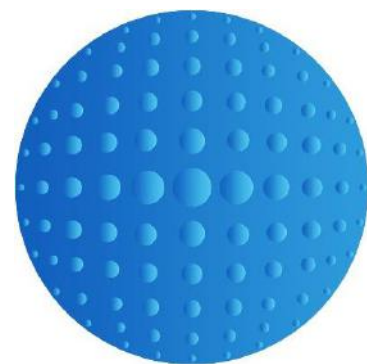


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